7. Transcendence

One 05c Warring States person, Yén Hwéı, seems to have possessed a kind of breath control technique, most likely derived from Northeast India by trade contact via Burma, Assam, and the lower Brahmaputra River.[1] It involved mental concentration and reduced sensory input; it gave its adepts calm within and insight without. By the 04c, this proto-Dàuism was cultivated for its own sake and taught in schools; the Dàu/Dý Jīng is the record of one such school. This special knowledge gradually spread. In the middle 03c, it was adopted by several primitivist movements, whose textual record is in the Jwāngdž. Out of this came: first, a statecraft theory of strength based on weakness, which we have met in earlier chapters; then a philosophy of resignation and acceptance; and finally, a hope to transcend worldly dangers.

The 05th Century

Yén Hwéı. Among the disciples of Confucius, Yén Hwéı 顏回 stands out as unique, celebrated for his poverty and for his equanimity. These are standard attributes of the meditation adept, who schools himself in ignoring externals:

> **7:1** (LY 6:11, c0460). The Master said, Able[2] indeed was Hwéı! One dish of food, one dipper of drink, living in a narrow alley – others could not have borne their sorrow, but Hwéı did not waver in his happiness. Able indeed was Hwéı!

Meditation involves emptying the mind of all else and focusing on one subject. Yén Hwéı had this ability to an unsurpassed degree:

> **7:2** (LY 6:7, c0460). The Master said, Hwéı: he could go three months without in his heart departing from rýn. The others: they can manage it for a day or a month, but that is all.[3]

Confucius taught by gnomic maxims and cryptic precepts; students were expected to work out their implications by reflection. With his unparalleled mental ability, Yén Hwéı outperformed the other disciples in this task:

> **7:3** (LY 5:9, c0470). The Master said to Dž-gùng, Of you and Hwéı, who is abler? He answered, How dare Sż even *look* at Hwéı? If Hwéı hears one thing, he gets ten; if Sż hears one thing, he gets two. The Master said, Not as good as him: you and me *both* are not as good as him.

This modesty of Confucius will presently be reversed.

[1]One difficult but negotiable route was traced in 1905-1906; see Young **Journey**. In Hàn, an effort was made to develop the southwest route for use by caravans. It failed.

[2]賢哉. The word syén 賢 is usually given a moralized sense “worthy,” but its basic meaning is “capable.”

[3]Here too, note the emphasis, not on Hwéı’s moral qualities, but on what he can *do*.

Dzv̄ngdž, the fourth head of the Confucian school, was from Wǔ-chńng, in southern Lǔ, and seems to have been in contact with Indian traditions. In the Analects school, he found a special friend in Yén Hwéı:

> **7:4** (LY 8:5, 0436). Dzv̄ngdž said, Able yet inquiring of the less able; versatile yet inquiring of the limited; having yet seeming to lack; full yet seemingly empty; wronged yet not retaliating – long ago a friend of mine used to devote himself to these.

Seemingly lacking, yet possessing; seemingly empty, yet in a mystical sense full – these are ways in which the meditation adept is often described.

The portrait of Confucius in LY 7, the chapter Dzv̄ngdž wrote, is sometimes reminiscent of the oldest record of the Buddha: the Mahâ-Parinibbâna Sutta (MPnS). In LY 7, and only there, Confucius is a wandering sage:[4]

> **7:5** (LY 7:29, c0450). In Hù County[5] it was hard to find anyone to talk with. A youth presented himself. The disciples had their doubts, but the Master said, We are involved with his coming forward, but not with his going away. Why be so fastidious? If someone purifies himself and comes to us, we accept his purification; we do not guarantee his future conduct.

The Confucius of LY 7 speaks of fifty years for self-cultivation:[6]

> **7:6** (LY 7:17, c0450). The Master said, Give me several more years; with fifty to study,[7] I might come to be without great faults.

And he keeps nothing back from his students:[8]

> **7:7** (LY 7:24, excerpt, c0450) . . . Do you disciples take me as concealing something? I conceal nothing from you . . .

The Analects school had not previously been interested in Confucius' death. But LY 7, which is arranged as a description of his life, ends with his death, and with his renunciation of the consolations of conventional religion:

> **7:8** (LY 7:35, c0450). The Master was very ill. Dž-lù asked to offer a prayer. The Master said, Is this done? Dž-lù replied, It is. The Elegy says, "We prayed for you to the higher and lower divinities." The Master said, Chyōu's praying was done long ago.

Some of these MPnS-like details in LY 7 were to become part of the later picture of Confucius. Others remain eccentric to this day: a development of the Confucius persona that was not taken into the Confucian mainstream..

[4]The beginning of the MPnS shows Buddha and his disciples wandering from town to town. (Later texts anachronistically picture him as the abbot of a monastery).

[5]Location unknown, but probably near to modern Tńng; south of the Lǔ capital area.

[6]In MPnS 5:27, the Buddha speaks instead of fifty-*one* years for self-cultivation.

[7]Sywé 學 "study," which in the next century will mean book-learning, is here a more personal effort of self-improvement: not in memorization, but in moral progress.

[8]MPnS 2:32.

Dzv̄ng Ywǽn, the elder son of Dzv̄ngdž, succeeded him in 0435 as head of the Analects school; his small collection of his father's sayings makes up the LY 8 core. His own writings, in LY 9, develop some of Dzv̄ngdž's themes.

In a developing tradition, traits characteristic of minor figures are often later reassigned to the tradition's central figure. In LY 9, the superiority which Confucius had conceded to Yén Hwéı in LY 5 (#**7:3**) was transferred to Confucius himself, with Yén Hwéı being now the admirer from below:

> **7:9** (LY 9:11, c0405). Yén Ywǣn sighed deeply, and said, I look up at it and find it lofty; I try to bore into it and find it hard; I behold it in front of me, and then suddenly it is behind. Our Master in his solicitude is good at guiding people. He broadens me with culture, limits me with propriety. I want to desist, but I cannot, and when I seem to have utterly exhausted my capacity, it still seems that there is something there, towering up majestically. Though I want to go toward it, there is no path to follow.

Another Indianate touch is seen in Dzv̄ng Ywǽn's remake of his father's version of the Confucius death scene (**#7:8**). The emotional point of the remake is Confucius' embarrassingly low rank at the time of his death:

> **7:10** (LY 9:12, c0405). The Master was very ill, and Dž-lù had the disciples act as attendants. When the illness moderated, he said, Of long standing indeed are Yóu's dissemblings! I have no attendants, but you act as though I had attendants. Who will I deceive? Will I deceive Heaven? And besides, for my own part, than die in the arms of attendants, would I not rather die in the arms of you disciples? And even if I cannot have a grand funeral, will I be dying by the roadside?

This is very appealing: the affection of Confucius' disciples is enough for him.[9] But we may also note that it echoes the MPnS description of Buddha's death.[10]

Methodological Moment. Not only so, but that detail of Buddha's death in MPnS is a *late addition* to MPnS. How can we tell? Because that paragraph (a disciple's complaint that Buddha should not be dying in some minor town) interrupts the narrative, and because the location of Buddha's death suggests the later cult of relics and pilgrimages. Then LY 9 (c0405) knew a *later stratum* of MPnS. Since legends take time to accumulate around a revered figure, and since the cult of relics is a second, legendary growth, the first MPnS stratum, and the event it describes, must be earlier. We have just taken a step toward confirming the validity of the traditional early 05c date for Buddha's death, against recent arguments that it was more than a century later.

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[9]Affection between the Buddha and his disciples is emphasized in the MPnS.

[10]In MPnS 5:17-18, the disciple Ânanda's complaint is that Buddha is dying in an inappropriately unimportant town; compare the "roadside" of the preceding passage.

The 04th Century

In the 06c,[11] as India urbanized and trade prospered, there appeared the first of the Upanishads. These are popular, not priestly texts: they show outsiders teaching the priestly Brahmins or besting them in argument. Of them, the early Brhad-Âranyaka (BrA) and the later Îśâ Upanishad (IsU) were written in Videha, which was near the lower Ganges Valley, the homeland of Buddhism.[12] Both these Upanishads are echoed in several Chinese meditation texts.

Breath control is basic to the Upanishadic worldview. Thus:

7:11 (BrA 3:9, excerpt, 06c?).

> On what are you and your self (âtman) founded?
> On the out-breath.
> On what is the out-breath founded?
> On the in-breath.
> On what is the in-breath founded?
> On the inter-breath.
> On what is the inter-breath founded?
> On the up-breath.
> On what is the up-breath founded?
> On the link-breath.
> Of this self (âtman), one can only say "Not . . . not . . ." He is ungraspable, for he cannot be grasped. He is undecaying, for he is not subject to decay. He has nothing sticking to him, for he does not stick to anything. He is not bound; yet he neither fears nor suffers injury . . .

Breath control typically involves the suppression of desires:

7:12 (BrA 4:4, excerpt, 06c?).

> When they are all banished,
> those desires lurking in one's heart,
> then a mortal becomes immortal
> and attains Brahman in this world.

Considerably later comes the Îśâ Upanishad, named for the Lord (variously Îśâ or Îśvara) Âtman, a concept of breath or the self as filling the universe:

7:13 (IsU, excerpts, 04c?).

> This whole world is to be dwelt in by the Lord (Îśâ),
> Whatever living being there is in the world . . .
>
> Although unmoving, the One is swifter than the mind,
> The gods cannot catch it, as it speeds on ahead,
> Standing, it outpaces all others who run . . .

[11]Precision is impossible; we here follow Olivelle **Upanisads** xxiv and following, except that we doubt that a long lull occurred in the middle of the Upanishadic period.

[12]Michael Witzel, cited in Olivelle **Upanisads** xxxix.

It moves – yet does not move.
It is distant – yet near at hand . . .

When a man sees all beings
within his very self,
and his self within all beings,[13]
It will not seek to hide from him . . .

An Analects reference to Yén Hwéı in c0360 calls him "empty" (kūng 空), a common term for one whose mind has been emptied of distractions by breath control. He is contrasted with Dž-gùng, who was seen as a successful merchant:

7:14 (LY 11:18a, c0360). The Master said, Hwéı is almost there, is he not? He is often empty 空. Sż does not accept his fate, and has traded to advantage. If we reckon up his results, then he is often on the mark.

There is "empty" success and "full" success, and the former is the better.

The Dàu/Dý Jīng we have met as a statecraft text of mystical type. Its oldest chapter treats meditation in the paradoxical style of the Îśâ Upanishad:

7:15 (DDJ 14, c0346).

Look but cannot see it:
  its name is Yí 夷.
Hearken but cannot hear it:
  its name is Syī 希.
Feel but cannot find it:
  its name is Wēı 微.
These three are inexplicable,
So we put them together into One.

If we combine "these three" into one, we get approximately phonetic Ishvaı.[14]

Its top is not bright,
Its bottom is not dark,
Continuous, it cannot be named,
And it returns to where there are no creatures.
This is called the Form that has no form,
the Image of what has no substance;
This is called the ineffable.
If you go to meet it, you do not see its head;
if you follow after it, you do not see its back.

[13]This theme is precisely echoed in the late Mencian writings; see **#7:25**.

[14]The suggestion that these three lines are an esoteric way of spelling out Îśvara, Lord Âtman, is due to Liebenthal **Lord**. Against it is the fact that two of these lines are reversed in the 02c Mǎwángdwēı text of the DDJ, the oldest text of this passage. But MWD reverses other things too, up to and including the "Dàu" and "Dý" sections of the text itself, so its evidence against the received order is not necessarily conclusive

Hold to the ancient Way
to master modern situations.
To be able to know the ancient Beginning:
This is called the main thread of the Way.

So a knowledge of an ancient and powerful entity, the Dàu 道 which cannot be directly apprehended, but is something like the Way the universe works, is here to be applied to contemporary problems. A further claim is that others, in ancient times, were already skilled in this application:

7:16 (DDJ 15, c0344).

Those who of old were good at being officers
Were exquisite 微, subtle 妙, mysterious 玄, profound 通;
So deep they cannot be known.
For them, I therefore make this ode 頌:
"Cautious, like crossing a stream in winter,
Hesitant, like fearing neighbors on all sides,
Unassertive, like one who is a guest,
Reticent, like something dissolving,
Simple, like uncarved wood,
Turbid, like muddy water."
He who, though muddy, can be still, will gradually come clear.
He who, though calm, can yet move, will gradually come alive.
One who keeps to this Way does not wish to be full.[15]

The goal is to be part of a process, and not its final stage. The image of crossing a stream in winter (over uncertainly firm ice) may remind us of the last words of Dzv̄ngdž in 0436; they quote a poem which is now part of the Shī:

7:17 (LY 8:3, 0436). When Dzv̄ngdž fell ill, he summoned the disciples at his gate, and said, Uncover my feet, uncover my hands. The Poem says:

Tremblingly and full of fear,
As though I verged the deep abyss,
As though I trod the thinnest ice –[16]

but now and hereafter, I know I have come through safely, my little ones.

Dzv̄ngdž seems to have been the inventor of the Last Words topos in Chinese literature; this he did in his portrait of Confucius' death in LY 7:35 (**#7:8**). Here, he stars in his own script, and sounds the same note as did "Confucius:" a difficult crossing safely negotiated. Did the language of the meditation texts – a personal peace difficultly achieved – affect this summary of his life?

[15]We here follow the Gwōdyèn text. The later standard text has several additional lines, which add little to the thought of the passage.

[16]These lines match our Shī 195, but *almost* match Shī 196, whose sense is more appropriate to Dzv̄ngdž's statement. The text, and undoubtedly the inventory, of the Shī seem to have been still in a somewhat fluid condition at the time of Dzv̄ngdž's death.

The DDJ school founder died in 0336 and was succeeded by the person who was later always associated with the text: Lǐ Dān or Lǎudž. He moved quickly to develop the statecraft side of the school's teachings. The Indian concepts of oneness and wholeness (#**7:13**, #**7:16**) now recur in a paradoxical form:

7:18 (DDJ 22, c0336).

> Be crooked, and you will be whole 全.
> Be bent, and you will be straight 直.
> Be exhausted, and you will be filled 盈.
> Be worn, and you will be renewed 新.
>
> Have little, and you will gain.
> Have much, and you will be troubled.
> Thus the Sage holds to the One
> and is the pattern for the world:
>
> Does not show himself,
> and so is famed.
> Does not assert himself,
> and so is known.
> Does not obtrude himself,
> and so succeeds.
> Does not flaunt himself,
> and so endures.
> It is just because he does not contend
> that no one in the world can contend with him.
>
> What of old they said, "Be crooked and you will be whole" –
> How can it be mere words?
> If you are truly whole 全,
> then you will cause others to give you their loyalty.

Here is the new promise of a practical statecraft ("give you their loyalty") and a new kind of ruler: reticent rather than assertive, and yet wholly successful.

At the end of the 04c, as the DDJ school under Lǎudž's leadership developed its meditationist model for the ruler, the position of the meditative Yén Hwéı in the increasingly ritualized Analects tradition became untenable. The Analects proprietors first tried to ritualize him:

> **7:19** (LY 12:1, c0326). Yén Ywǣn [the formal name of Yén Hwéı] asked about rv́n. The Master said, To overcome the self and turn to propriety is rv́n. If one day he can overcome himself and turn to rv́n, the world will turn to rv́n along with him. To be rv́n comes from the self; does it then come from others? Yén Ywǣn said, I beg to ask for the details. The Master said, If it is improper, do not look at it. If it is improper, do not speak of it. If it is improper, do not do it. Yén Ywǣn said, Though Hwéı is not quick, he begs leave to devote himself to this saying.

To see Yén Hwēı, who in an earlier century (#**7:3**) was praised as unequaled among the disciples for his perception and his grasp of Confucius' maxims, here reduced to begging for clarification like a novice, is a painful spectacle.

The meditative Way was also practiced in Chí, and a group associated with the statecraft text Gwǎndž constitute a third Dàuist tradition. The earliest of the Gwǎndž meditation chapters is the Nèı Yè 內業 or "Inner Project." Here is a selection from the end of its first stratum:

7:20 (GZ 49:15, first half, c0333).

> If your Essence abides, you will be naturally vital 自生,
> externally, there will be calm and prosperity.
> Store it within, to make a source 泉原,
> and, boundless (hàu-rán 浩然), it will confer peace.
> Take it as the deep well of Breath.
> If that deep well runs not dry,
> the Four Limbs will be firm.
> If that spring is not spent,
> the Nine Apertures will connect.
> You can then reach the limits of Heaven and Earth,
> and encompass the Four Seas.

In a later stratum, this text would claim meditation as a way of knowledge:

7:21 (GZ 49:20, c0305).

> To ponder deeply 思索 produces wisdom,
> idleness and carelessness produce worry.
> Cruelty and arrogance produce resentment,
> sorrow and trouble produce illness,
> and when illness becomes acute, you die.
>
> If you meditate but do not put it aside,
> you will be ill within and weak without.
> Do not make plans in advance,
> or your vitality will lose its dwelling.
>
> In eating, it is best not to be full;
> and in meditating, it is best not to go all the way.
> Do it with moderation,
> and the thing will come to pass of itself.

This sort of claim seems to have produced a final break in the Analects school, between intuitive and acquired knowledge:

> **7:22** (LY 15:31, c0300). The Master said, I once went all day without eating, and all night without sleeping, in order to meditate [sz̄ 思 "think"]. I gained nothing. It is not as good as studying [sywé 學 "reading texts"].

Mencius in his early days had practiced meditation, probably under Lǎudž's master Shāng Rúng. During his first visit to Chí, in c0332, he made contact with the Chí meditation group, and from them picked up the term "boundless" (hàu-rán 浩然), which does not occur in the Lǔ text DDJ. The Analects school's rejection of meditation had not yet occurred, and for Mencius, as for Yén Hwéı before him, meditation usefully sharpened the mind. It also, as the early Nèı Yè said, could be "stored within," to confer a sort of personal peace.

This comes out in a private conversation of c0316:

7:23 (MC 2A2a, excerpt, c0316).

. . . I venture to ask wherein the Master is superior [to Gàudž].

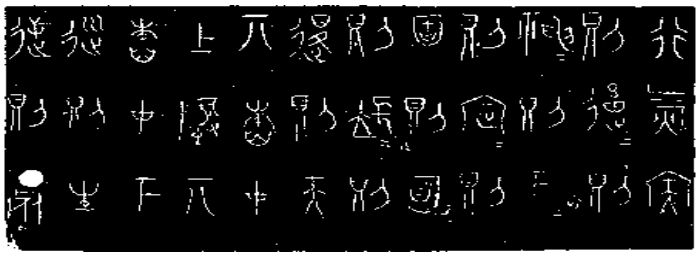
I know words. I am good at nourishing my boundless 浩然 breath.

I venture to ask, what is the boundless breath?

It is difficult to say. As breath, it is very great and very firm. If it is nourished straightforwardly and is not injured, it fills up all between Heaven and Earth. As breath, it accompanies righteousness 義 and the Way 道; without these, it is starved. It is something that arises when righteousness accumulates; it is not something one can capture with a sudden rush of righteousness. If one's conduct produces discontent in the heart, then it will starve. It was for this reason that I said that Gàudž has never understood righteousness – it is because he makes it external. There must be some effort toward it, but do not correct it. Let the heart not forget it, but do not try to help it grow. Do not be like the man of Sùng.

In Sùng, there was a man who was worried that his rice plants were not growing, so he pulled them longer. After doing this for a long time, he came home and said to his people, I am really tired out today; I have been helping the rice plants to grow. His son hurried out to look, and the rice plants were all withered . . .

Mencius's concluding joke would nicely illustrate the practical advice given in GZ 49:20 (#**7:21**): don't push too hard.



By the end of the 04th century, there appeared another meditation group. Its leader carried a staff topped by a twelve-sided jade finial, on which was engraved the above text describing stages of breath control:

7:24 (Jade inscription text "行氣," c0310). "Circulating the Breath"

Once it is intaken, let it accumulate 畜
Once it has accumulated, let it spread 神[17]
Once it has spread, let it descend 下
Once it has descended, let it stabilize 定

[17]Reading shv́n 神 "spirit" as shvn̄ 伸 "spread out."

Once it has stabilized, let it be firm 固
Once it has become firm, let it grow 明[18]
Once it has grown, let it mature 長
Once it has matured, let it return 復
Once it has returned, let it ascend to Heaven 天
Heaven: its roots are on high 上
Earth: its roots are below 下
When this is followed, one lives 生
When it is violated, one dies 死

Meditation is here said to assure a long life for the practitioner. Letting the breath fill Heaven (as in **#7:13**) is the key to this result. The later Mencians imagined Mencius as making an equally comprehensive mystical statement:

7:25 (MC 7A4, excerpt, c0268). All things are complete in me . . .

Mencius died in c0303, before the Analects break with meditation. But that break caused problems for his successors. They added a section to the MC 2A2 conversation, to deal with it. The questioner sets a trap for him . . .

7:26 (MC 2A2b, excerpt, c0297). Long ago, I heard that Dž-syà, Dž-yóu, and Dž-jāng each had one aspect of the Sage, while Rǎn Nyóu, Mǐndž, and Yén Ywǣn had all of him in miniature. I venture to ask, with which are you more comfortable?

[He said] We will let that one go.

. . . which he simply dodges. Yén Hwéi had become an undiscussable topic.

We are here witnessing a major intellectual realignment. The DDJ had taken over the Confucian terms Dàu and Dý. The Analects school then renounced meditation, which meanwhile had been taken up by the Gwǎndž people in Chí. The Mencians were caught in this crossfire of shifting orthodoxies.

For his part, the Nèi Yè author moved in the opposite direction, combining his Way with Confucian elements: the Shī poems and ritual and music.

7:27 (GZ 49:22, excerpt, c0305).

The vitality of all human beings
must be based on tranquility 平正.
And the way you lose it
will always be happiness and anger, sorrow and worry.
And so, to stop anger, nothing is as good as the Shī,
to banish sorrow, nothing is as good as Music,
to set a limit to Music, nothing is as good as Ritual,
to conserve Ritual, nothing is as good as respect . . .

[18]Reading míng 明 “bright” [an attribute of spirits] as mýng 萌 “sprout.”

The 03rd Century

Magic. In India, feats of magic such as levitation were ascribed to the Buddha, at first only in a symbolic sense:

> **7:28** (MPnS 1:33-34, mid 05c). But the Blessed One went on to the river. At that time, the River Ganges was brimful and overflowing, and wishing to cross to the opposite bank, some began to seek for boats, some for rafts of wood, while some made rafts of basket-work. Then the Blessed One as instantaneously as a strong man would stretch forth his arm, or draw it back again when he had stretched it forth, vanished from this side of the river, and stood on the further bank with the company of the brethren.
>
> [34] And the Blessed One beheld the people looking for boats and rafts, and as he beheld them he brake forth at that time into this song:
>
> They who cross the ocean drear
> Making a solid path across the pools –
> Whilst the vain world ties its basket rafts –
> These are the wise, these are the saved indeed![19]

The lesson is that only by exceptional means (the magical crossing of the river), not by conventional ones such as this-worldly boats or rafts, can one be saved.

Protection from dangers is explicit in the Upanishad texts:

> **7:29** (BrA 3:7, 06c?) . . . He is undecaying, for he is not subject to decay. He has nothing sticking to him, for he does not stick to anything. He is not bound; yet he neither fears nor suffers injury . . .

and also in the Chinese jade inscription which we met earlier:

> **7:30** (Jade Inscription text "行氣," excerpt, c0310).
>
> When this is followed, one lives 生
> When it is violated, one dies 死

But the theme is less common on the Chinese side of the mountains. Here is the only instance of invulnerability in the DDJ:

> **7:31** (DDJ 50, excerpt, c0297). We go forth to life, and go in to death. The companions of life are thirteen; the companions of death are thirteen.[20] The danger spots for a man during his lifetime are also thirteen. And why? Because he is trying to get too much out of life.
>
> I have heard it said that for him who is skillful at living: on land, he will never meet a tiger or a rhinoceros; in the army, he will never be harmed by arms and armor. The rhinoceros has nothing to stick his horn into; the tiger has nothing to lay his claws on; the weapon has nothing to stab at. Why is this? Because he has no "death ground."

Here, a medical analogy is used to make a mystical point.

[19]The translation is by Rhys Davids.

[20]The vital points are also the vulnerable points. Life contains the risk of death.

A wish to avoid injury was natural enough in these times. Chí Sywān-wáng, who dismissed his minister Mencius after the Yēn military disaster of 0315, did not abandon war; but he proceeded deliberately, by setting the six Jì-syà philosophers to first work out the theory of the rise and fall of states (page 75). His successor, Mǐn-wáng, was notably more impatient for conquest, and his Chí advisors had all they could do to restrain him. That concern also affected the Lǔ meditation center from which the DDJ was giving advice to the world. This piece acknowledges that the final goal of government is world conquest, but advises that the way to conquer the world is by leaving it alone.

7:32 (DDJ 57, excerpt, c0291).

Govern the state by the regular 正
Deploy troops by the unexpected 奇[21]
Capture the world 取天下 by nondoing 無事
How do I know that this is so?
If Heaven requires many abstinences, the people will be fractious
If the commoners use clever devices, there will be confusion
If people multiply knowledge, strange things will emerge
And thus the Sage says,
I have no doing, and the people of themselves become rich;
I have no actions, and the people of themselves are transformed;
I love quiet, and the people of themselves are orderly 正;
I desire to not desire, and the people of themselves are simple.

A critic might note that the only advice the text has for conquering other states is based on its doctrine about ruling the state one already possesses.

Despite many warnings, Chí Mǐn-wáng in 0287 prepared to invade Sùng. The aged Lǎudž issued a reminder about a better and milder policy:

7:33 (DDJ 66, excerpt, c0287).

The Sage who would be in front of the people
will take his place behind them;
[the one] who would be above the people
will take his place below them.

In 0286, Chí invaded and annexed Sùng. In 0285, much as in 0314, Chí was driven out by a coalition of powers who feared its sudden doubling of territory, and was almost destroyed. The Chí King died in exile, and it was several years before the next King and his generals could expel Yēn from Chí territory.

Lǎudž's successor, his grandson Lǐ Jù 李注, took over the DDJ school at this time, and from this point on, the DDJ no longer has a meditationist basis. Lǐ Jù's first effort was a warning against this sort of rash aggression.

[21]There is here an allusion to the basic military terms 正 "frontal attack" and 奇 "flank attack;" see Sūndž 5 (**#4:25**).

Remarkably, the warning is based on three principles of the early Micians: love for others (#**4:4**), frugality (#**4:5-6**), and renunciation of war (#**4:3**):

7:34 (DDJ 67, c0285).

All the world say my Way is great, but it seems not to be useful.
Yet it is just because it is great that it seems not to be useful.
If it were "useful," it would long ago have become small.

I always have three treasures; I protect and guard them.
The first is Kindness,
The second is Frugality,
The third is Not Daring to Be First in the World.
I am kind, and thus I can be bold.
I am frugal, and thus I can be magnanimous.
I do not dare to be first in the world,
and thus I can become Steward of the Sacrificial Vessels.
If one abandons kindness and yet is bold,
If one abandons frugality and yet is magnanimous,
If one abandons humility and yet takes first place,
he will die.

So one who goes to war with kindness will be victorious,
and one who mounts guard with frugality will be secure.
Heaven will establish him,
and with its Kindness will safeguard him.

Responding to the same situation, and perhaps addressing the new Chí ruler (Syāng-wáng, r 0283-0265), the Gwǎndž meditationists started a new text, the Syīn Shù 心術 or Mental Technique, to follow and summarize the old Nèı Yè. The first two paragraphs, no more meditationist than Lǐ Jù's new-style DDJ, are essentially administrative advice:

7:35 (GZ 36:1, c0283). The heart within the body occupies the position of the ruler. The Nine Apertures have their duties, like the assignments of the officials.

If the heart is set upon the Way,
the Nine Apertures will be obedient.
If likes and desires fill and overflow,
the eye will not see colors,
the ear will not hear sounds.
Therefore it is said:
If the superior departs from the Way,
the inferiors will fail in their tasks.

7:36 (GZ 36:2, c0283).

Do not run for the horse;
let it use its own strength.
Do not fly for the bird;
let it work its own wings.

The third parallels the DDJ 67 position on caution in foreign policy:

7:37 (GZ 36:3, c0283).

> Do not move ahead of things,
> so as to observe their tendency
> If you move 動, you will lose your position;
> If you are still 靜, you will succeed naturally 自得.

Somewhat later, DDJ entered a protest against increasing state executions:

7:38 (DDJ 74, excerpt, c0267). If the people do not fear death, why frighten them with death? If I put the people in constant fear of death, and they still do irregular things, I might then arrest and kill them, but who would dare? There is always the Executioner[22] to kill. Now, to do the killing for the Executioner may be called cutting for the Master Carpenter. And who cuts for the Master Carpenter will rarely but hurt his hand.

The Jwāngdž Primitivists. Governmental severity also got a response from the Jwāngdž Primitivists, JZ 8-10. We have seen how the government's wish for standardization, as expressed by Syẃndž in terms of lǐ . . .

7:39 (SZ 19:5b, excerpt, c0276). Ritual trims what is too long, stretches out what is too short, eliminates excess, and remedies deficiencies . . .

. . . was met by the Primitivists, who accepted even extra fingers as natural:[23]

7:40 (JZ 8:2, excerpt, c0275). He who makes Normality 正 his norm 正 does not lose sight of the conditions of his original nature. What is joined is not for him "webbed;" what branches off is not "extra." What is long does not seem excessive; what is short does not seem deficient . . . So what is naturally long is not to be cut; what is naturally short is not to be stretched . . .

The Mencian school did not go that far in opposing the idea of standardization; for them, there were reasonable biological and social norms:

7:41 (MC 6A12, excerpt, c0273). Suppose your nameless finger[24] were bent and could not be straightened. It is not an illness, and it is not painful, but if there were someone who could straighten it, you would not think the road to Chín or Chǔ too long to travel, because your finger is not like those of other people . . .

Like Syẃndž's argument for an explicitly artificial social world, in the Human Nature argument with the Mencians, the defense, not of the crane's long legs, but of tumors and other exiguous growths, was hard to maintain over time.

[22]司殺者, the One in Charge of Killing, reminiscent of the deity 司命, the One in Charge of Fate [length of life], who is featured in two of the Nine Songs (see p177).

[23]For a fuller sample of the early Primitivist writings, see **#6:48-54**.

[24]"Nameless finger" 無名之指 for the fourth finger is a translation of the Sanskrit term anâmikâ (Zhu **Linguistic** 1-2).

And in the end, the Jwāngdž 8 group agreed. They recast their position:

> **7:42** (JZ 8:1, excerpt, c0273). Joined toes, extra fingers – these come from Nature, but are contrary to Virtue. Growths and tumors – these come from Form, but are contrary to Nature. Excessive practice in Benevolence and Righteousness may be [said to be] as fundamental as the Five Organs, but they are against the Way and Virtue . . .

Such was the sparring back and forth between the rival schools.

This passage from the Jwāngdž mixes magic and ordinary caution:

> **7:43** (JZ 17:1f, excerpt, c0270). A man of perfect virtue 德: fire cannot burn him, water cannot drown him, cold and heat cannot harm him, birds and beasts cannot injure him. Not that he makes light of these things, but that he distinguishes between safety and danger, is at peace with fortune or misfortune, and is careful about comings and goings – nothing can harm him.

Deep Reality. Here magic is rejected for something else. Lyèdž is distracted from his studies with his master Húdž by a shaman with magical powers, and winds up taking refuge in not making distinctions:

> **7:44** (JZ 7:5, excerpt, c0253). In Jvng there was a shaman named Jì Syén, who could foretell the life or death of men, the survival or extinction of states, fortune or disaster, long life or short, down to year, month, week and day, as though he were divine. When the people of Jvng saw him, they would run to get out of his way. Lyèdž went to see him and his mind was intoxicated. Coming back, he reported to Húdž, I used to think that the Master's way was the last word. But now there is another . . .
>
> Húdž said, I gave you the outline, but not the substance. You think you have gotten the Way? . . . Try bringing him, and showing me to him.
>
> Next day, Lyèdž brought him to see Húdž. When they had gone out, he said to Lyèdž, Alas, your master is dying; he cannot recover; he will not last a week. I saw something very strange, like wet ashes. Lyèdž went back, weeping and drenching his collar with his tears, and reported this to Húdž. Húdž said, Just now I appeared to him with the Pattern of Earth – still and silent, nothing moving, nothing standing up. He probably saw in me the Workings of Virtue Closed Off. Try coming again with him.
>
> Next day, he brought him again to see Húdž. When they had gone out, he said to Lyèdž, It is fortunate that your master has encountered me. He will get well; he is fully alive. I have seen signs of his revival. Lyèdž went in, and reported this to Húdž. Húdž said, Just now I showed him Heaven and Earth, without name or substance, but with the bodily mechanism working from the heels.[25] He has probably seen the Working of the Good. Try coming again with him.

[25] A special kind of breathing is said to come "from the heels."

> Next day, he brought him again to see Húdž. When they had gone out, he said to Lyèdž, Your master is unstable; I cannot examine him. Let him become stable, and I will examine him again. Lyèdž went in, and reported to Húdž. Húdž said, I showed him the Great Void Without Distinctions. He probably saw the Working of the Balanced Breaths. Where swirling waves gather, there is an abyss. Where still waters gather, there is an abyss. Where running waters gather, there is an abyss. The abyss has nine names,[26] and these are three of them. Try coming again with him.
>
> The next day he brought him again to see Húdž, but before he had taken his place [as a guest], he broke and ran. Húdž said, Pursue him. Lyèdž did pursue him, but could not catch up with him. He returned and reported to Húdž, saying, He is vanished, he is gone; I couldn't catch up with him. Húdž said, Just now I showed him the Ancestor Who Was Before Anything Existed. I appeared to him empty[27] and compliant, not knowing Who or What, at once indistinct and fluid. Therefore he fled.
>
> After this, Lyèdž considered that he had not yet even begun to study. So he went back home, and for three years did not leave his house. He did the cooking for his wife; he fed the pigs as though he were feeding people. He did not prefer one thing over another; from "fine carving" he reverted to "plain material." He took his place like a mere clod of earth. Amid confusion, he was secure. And in this Oneness he ended his days.

So Lyèdž ends, not in study of another, but in isolation and self-concentration. He singlemindedly pursues nondiscrimination. The highest art is to use no art, but simply to "take one's place" among things.

Survival. Of comparable importance, in dangerous times, was the question of how not to get killed before one's time. Against the sword, as we have seen, magic was invoked, bẃut more to the taste of the Jwāngdž people was avoidance through inconspicuousness, like a useless tree. Consider (says a tree criticized by a carpenter as useless) what happens to the *useful* trees . . .

> **7:45** (JZ 4:4b, excerpt, c0267) . . . As soon as their fruit is ripe, they are torn apart and abused. Their big limbs are torn off, their little limbs are pulled every which way. Their usefulness makes their life bitter, and so they don't get to complete their Heaven-allotted years, but perish midway.

The Mencians agreed that an *allotted* lifespan is not a *guaranteed* lifespan:

> **7:46** (MC 7A2, c0269). Mencius said, There is nothing that is not fated, but one accepts only what is a proper fate. Thus those who understand Fate do not stand under a tottering wall. Those who die for their principles (道) have met a proper fate, but to die in fetters is not a proper fate.

Courage is appropriate to the gentleman, but not recklessness.

[26]Ywǣn 淵 "abyss" is also the alternate personal name of Yén Hwéı.

[27]Again the quality "empty" (here syw̄ 虛), associated with Yén Hwéı in **#7:14**.

Government service imperiled one's chance of living out one's allotted span. Hence the Jwāngdž stories about leaving office to care for one's health:

> **7:47** (JZ 28:1, excerpt, c0248). Yáu wanted to hand over the world to Syw̌ Yóu, but Syw̌ Yóu would not accept it. He then tried to hand it over to Dž-jōu Jī-fǔ, but Dž-jōu Jī-fǔ said, To make me the Son of Heaven, that would be all right. But just now I have a painful disease, and I am on the point of putting it in order; I don't have time to order the world . . .

The archetypical Jwāngdž anti-service statement is also the shortest one:

> **7:48** (JZ 3:4, c0270). The swamp pheasant only gets a peck of food every ten paces, or a sip of water every hundred paces, but it does not want to be more lavishly provided for in a cage. Even if it were treated like a king, its spirit would not think well of it.

This is probably the central cry for freedom in all of Chinese literature.

The Useless Tree. It was not enough to opt out; one had to avoid *invitations* to office, since refusing invitations gave offense, and offense was risky. Some thus sought to keep from being noticed. Their parable was the Useless Tree:

> **7:49** (JZ 4:5a, c0268). Dž-chí of Nán-bwó was wandering near the Hill of Shāng, and there he saw a great tree, different from all the others; a thousand four-horse chariots could have sheltered in its shade. Dž-chí said, What manner of tree is this? It must be extraordinarily useful. But when he looked up at the small branches, they were too bent and twisted for roof beams or rafters, and when he looked down at the great trunk, it was too gnarled and knotty for coffins or caskets. He tasted a leaf, and his mouth was burned and sore; he sniffed it, and it was enough to make a man drunk for three days. Dž-chí said, After all, the tree is useless, and that is why it has grown so large.
>
> Ah! The Spiritual Man for just this reason seeks to be useless too.

Lowliness is the only safety. The less you have, the less can be taken from you.

Methodological Moment. The book called Jwāngdž often mentions Jwāng Jōu 莊周, or Jwāngdž 莊子, "Master Jwāng." This does not mean that Jwāng Jōu wrote the book; on the contrary, it is not Warring States style for people to tell stories about themselves in the third person. Worse, some stories portray Jwāng Jōu as deluded or imperceptive. Not only did Jwāng Jōu not write these stories, neither did his friends or followers. But then what can we learn about him from these stories? Might he have written some of the nonstory material? We cannot reach an answer to that within the limits of this page and the next, . . . and so this Methodological Moment must be abandoned before it starts.[28]

---

[28]But data relevant to authorship will be along presently. **Methodological Moral**: Humanistic research needs acquaintance with the data, and acquaintance needs time.

What, for example, were Jwāng Jōu's ideas? We may start by looking at passages critical of him, which show him as *not* understanding some essential philosophical point:

> **7:50** (JZ 2:6, c0255). Once Jwāng Jōu was dreaming he was a butterfly, happily fluttering around as a butterfly, completely satisfied, and not knowing he was Jōu. Suddenly he awoke, and there he was: unmistakably Jōu. And he could not tell if he was Jōu dreaming he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was Jōu. But between Jōu and a butterfly, there must be *some* distinction. This we call the Transformation of Things.

This is philosophically suggestive, but *in the story*, Jwāngdž is confused: his idea of himself does not include both his waking self and his dreaming self.

> **7:51** (JZ 20:8, c0256). Jwāng Jōu was wandering in Dyāu-líng Park, when he spied a magpie flying from the south; its wings were seven span broad, its eyes more than an inch around. It brushed against Jōu's forehead and settled in a chestnut grove. Jwāng Jōu said, What kind of bird is this? Its wings are huge but they don't carry it away; its eyes are big, but they don't see. He hitched up the skirt of his robe, strode forward, and took aim with his crossbow. Then he saw a cicada; it had found a nice bit of shade and had forgotten itself. A mantis stretched its arms to seize it; seeing a chance of gain, it had forgotten its form. The strange bird had come up and spied an opportunity; seeing the opportunity, it had forgotten its own reality. Jwāng Jōu was distressed and said, Alas! Things are so hostile, each making trouble for the next. He shouldered his crossbow, turned, and ran. The gamekeeper pursued him, cursing at him.
>
> Jwāng Jōu got home, and for three months did not see anyone. Lìn Jyw̄ went up and asked him, Why has the Master not seen anyone for so long? Jwāng Jōu said, I guarded my form and forgot my self; I watched the turbid stream and lost the clear abyss. I heard from my master, "When you go to a place, follow its customs." Now, I wandered in Dyāu-líng and forgot my self; the strange magpie brushed against my forehead and wandered into the chestnut grove, forgetting *its* reality. The gamekeeper took me for a poacher. This is why I have not seen anyone.

He was confused between his small hunting agenda and his larger life. We may notice that in this story, as in few stories in the book, Jwāngdž has disciples.

Death. Next comes a more cosmic confusion:

> **7:52** (JZ 18:4, c0254). Jwāngdž went to Chǔ, and saw an empty skull. bleached but preserving its shape. He poked at it with his horsewhip, and asked, Did the Master in seeking life forget reason, and so come to this? Were you in charge of affairs in some doomed state, suffered execution, and so came to this? Did you do some evil deed, and ashamed to leave your father and mother, your wife and children, an ill reputation, come to this? Did you encounter freezing and starvation, and so come to this? Did the course of the seasons bring you to this?

At this point he ceased speaking. He pulled the skull over, and resting his head on it, he went to sleep.

In the middle of the night, the skull appeared to him in a dream, and said, You talk like some sophist. Everything you say reflects the cares of the living. The dead have none of these. Do you want to hear about the pleasures of the dead? Jwāngdž said, Yes. The skull said, The dead have no ruler above, and no subjects below. They also do not have the tasks of the four seasons, but have Heaven and Earth for their seasonal cycle. Not even the happiness of a King, facing south and ruling, could exceed it.

Jwāngdž did not believe him. He said, If I could have the Arbiter of Fate again give you life and form, make you bone and flesh, return you to your father and mother, your wife and children, your native village and your friends, would you want it? The skull opened its eyes and wrinkled its brow, and said, How could I ever cast away the happiness of a King facing south and once again take on the toils of human existence?

With his conventional view of life and death, Jwāngdž can understand only life.

But in this piece on death, someone else holds the conventional view:

7:53 (JZ 18:2, c0250). Jwāngdž's wife had died. Hwèıdž went to mourn for her. Jwāngdž was just then sitting with his legs stretched out, beating on a bowl and singing. Hwèıdž said, You lived with her; you raised children with her; you grew old in body along with her. It's bad enough that when she dies you don't weep for her. Isn't it a little too much to beat on a bowl and sing?

Jwāngdž replied, Not so. To be sure, when she had just died, how could I but feel distressed? But then I thought back to how at the beginning she had no life, and not only had no life but had no form, and not only had no form but had no spirit. Then there was a change, and she had spirit. The spirit changed, and she had form. The form changed, and she had life. Now she has changed again, and come to die. This is just like the seasonal progression of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. She has become weary, and for a moment has gone to rest in some great room. Were I to follow noisily after her with weeping, she herself would think I did not understand the ways of fate. Therefore I stopped.

Jwāngdž here sees life as part of something larger.

Methodological Recap. We have now seen Jwāngdž portrayed either as not understanding the larger picture, or as expounding it to someone else. When friends and enemies agree, it is possible that we have a workable result, and that this is the key Jwāngdž issue. We may then adopt it as a hypothesis that Jwāngdž's characteristic trait is *the larger view*, an understanding which he himself may have reached only after some time, or after previous confusion, or more likely, which others (his opponents in the text) held in a different form.

The large view is the basis of what we may call philosophical resignation. Death calls on people for whatever philosophical resignation they may possess. Some of the most touching passages in the Jwāngdž deal with just this theme. They do not all mention Jwāng Jōu, but they are compatible with the general tone of his thought, as far as that can now be isolated from the rest of the book. They may then belong to, or be consistent with, "his" part of the book.

Here is a gentle one:

> **7:54** (JZ 2:4, excerpt, c0245) . . . How do I know that loving life is not a delusion? How do I know that hating death is like losing one's way in youth and not knowing how to get back? Lady Lì was the daughter of the Border Warden of Aì. When Jìn first obtained her, she wept until the tears soaked her robe. But when she came to the King's place, shared the King's couch, and ate dainty foods, she came to regret that she had wept. How do I know that the dead do not regret having earlier longed for life?

And here is a more fantastic and lyrical one:

> **7:55** (JZ 6:3a, c0273). Dž-sz̀, Dž-yẃ, Dž-lí, and Dž-lái were talking together: Who can regard Nothing as the head, Life the back, and Death the rump; who understands that life and death, survival and extinction, are a single body? I will be his friend. The four looked at each other and laughed.[29] There was no discord in their hearts, and they became friends.
>
> Presently, Dž-yẃ fell ill. Dž-sz̀ went to inquire about him. He said, Mighty indeed in the Creator; he is making me all crooked! My back sticks up like a hunchback, my five organs are on top, my jaw is hidden in my navel, my shoulders are higher than my neck, and my hair grows up toward the sky. His vital forces were all disordered, yet his heart was unconcerned. He dragged himself over to look at himself in the well, and said, Alas! the Creator is certainly making me all crooked!
>
> Dž-sz̀ said, Do you hate it? Dž-yẃ said, No; what should I hate? In a little while, he will transform my left shoulder into a rooster, and with it I will be able to mark the hours of night. In a little while, he will transform my right shoulder into a crossbow, and with it I will be able to get an owl to roast. In a little while, he will transform my buttocks into wheels, and my spirit into a horse, and I will be able to ride around in it, how will I have any more need of a chariot?
>
> Getting is for a season, and losing is a matter of compliance. If one accepts the season, and abides in compliance, sorrow and joy have no place to enter in. This is what the ancients called being freed from bonds. One cannot free oneself: things have their knots; but things have never been able to defeat Heaven. So what should I hate?

Change is inevitable, emotions are futile, and the best course for the individual is to accept what cannot be otherwise. This too amounts to the large view.

[29]This is the laugh of philosophical recognition; it is often heard in Dàuist literature.

Hwèıdž. Jwāngdž is frequently paired with Hwèıdž, who was found by the authors of part of the text to be a suitable foil for the values they wanted to express through Jwāngdž. Hwèıdž or Hwèı Shī 惠施 was a real enough person. He seems to have served Ngwèı Syāng-wáng at the end of the 04c and into the early 03c. He was a student of rhetoric; several paradoxes are associated with him. One is called "hard and white" (the problem of nonexclusive attributes).[30] In Jwāngdž stories, Hwèıdž represents that artificial logic, or sometimes the common sense of the conventional man. Here is a story about large and small:

> **7:56** (JZ 1:6, excerpt, c0240). Hwèıdž said to Jwāngdž, The King of Ngwèı gave me some seeds of a great gourd. I planted them, and they grew a gourd big enough to hold five stone.[31] I filled it up, but it was so heavy I couldn't lift it. If I had split it to make dippers, they would have been too big to dip into anything. It's not that it wasn't fantastically big, but I figured that it was useless, and so I broke it up.
>
> Jwāngdž said, Your Excellency is certainly ineffective in using big things . . .[32] Now, you had a five-stone gourd. Why didn't you make it a great barge, and go floating around the rivers and lakes, instead of worrying that it was too big to dip into anything? Your Excellency still has a tangled mind.

And here is a story about other realms; in this case, other species. Hwèıdž takes a view of knowledge which is sometimes encountered in our own time:

> **7:57** (JZ 17:7, c0247). Jwāngdž and Hwèıdž were wandering above the weir on the Háu. Jwāngdž said, The minnows go wandering about at their ease – this is what fish like. Hwèıdž said, You are not a fish; how do you know what fish like? Jwāngdž said, You are not me; how do you know that I don't know what fish like? Hwèıdž said, I am not you, and I certainly don't know you. You are not a fish, and so the proof that you don't know what fish like is complete.
>
> Jwāngdž said, Let's go back to the beginning. You asked me *how* I knew what fish like, so you already knew *that* I knew it when you asked. As for *how* I knew it – I knew it by being here above the Háu.

This is a plea for intuition instead of intellection, and for the possibility of empathy and feeling between individuals. It can also be seen as an answer to **#7:50**, the butterfly story, where Jwāng Jōu *did not understand* the other realm. In this story, he does; it is now Hwèıdž who represents the less intuitive view.[33]

[30]This problem was discussed by the Mician logicians; see Graham **Disputers** 84.

[31]In weight of liquid; the dried gourd was used as a container.

[32]At this point Jwāngdž tells the story of the silk-washing formula; **#2:57.**

[33]The piece is very witty. Hwèıdž's question ("*How* do you know") implies that Jwāngdž *does* know, and merely inquires as to his *means* of knowing. Further, the adverb in the question is literally "*From where* do you know" 安知, and it is answered by another adverb of place from which, "*from being here on the Háu*." See Brooks **Yēn**.

A reader might feel that this plea for emotion is inconsistent with Jwāngdž's suppression of his emotions at the time of his wife's death (#**7:53**). Somebody apparently noticed that, and added this piece to the text by way of explanation:

> **7:58** (JZ 5:6, c0247). Hwèıdž asked Jwāngdž, Can a man really be without emotions? Jwāngdž said, He can. Hwèıdž said, A man, and yet he has no emotions – how can one call him a man? Jwāngdž said, The Way gave him an appearance, Heaven gave him form, how can you not call him a man? Hwèıdž said, Given that we call him a man, how can he not have emotions?
>
> Jwāngdž said, That is not what I mean by emotions. What I call having no emotions is when a man does not let his loving and hating do harm to him internally, but constantly follows what is natural and does not try to increase his life. Hwèıdž said, If he does not try to increase his life, how will he be able to maintain his self? Jwāngdž said, The Way gave him an appearance, Heaven gave him form, and he does not let his loving and hating do harm to him internally. But now you are treating your own spirit as external, you are wearying your essence. You lean on a tree and sing, you droop on your desk and doze. Heaven picked out your form, but you still sing of "hard and white."

It is Hwèıdž who is disconnected from his inner being, and clutters his mind up (#**7:56**) with logical quibbles. The way to handle your emotions is to go ahead and have them, but not to let them run around loose inside and cause damage.[34]

The famous sophist Gūngsūn Lúng 公孫龍, who is traditionally associated with logical problems such as the "white horse" or substance and attribute, appears in person in this next piece. He complains to Prince Móu of Ngwèı that for all his skill in the art of rhetoric and in Confucian philosophy, he is baffled by the words of Jwāngdž. Small wonder. In the course of answering him, Prince Móu tells this story:

> **7:59** (JZ 17:4, excerpt, c0244) Have you alone not heard of the frog in the collapsed well? He said to the Turtle of the Eastern Sea, "How happy I am! I hop around the well railing, or I go back and rest in a place where a tile has fallen out. When I go in the water, it supports me under my armpits and my chin; when I slide in the mud, it covers my feet and reaches my ankles. I look at the crabs and tadpoles, and none is my equal. To have charge of a whole pool of water; to command all the joys of a collapsed well: this is the ultimate! Why does not Your Excellency come some time and see?"

This invitation is accepted, with hilarious results:

[34]Jwāngdž in #**7:57** had defended the idea that we can know other entities; here, he defines how our emotions should be kept from interfering with what we do. We may observe that these would make useful guidelines for the modern historical investigator. A certain intellectual tact is inherent in some of the sayings attributed to "Jwāngdž."

> The Turtle of the Eastern Sea's left foot was not yet in before his right thigh had become stuck. At that, he worked himself loose, withdrew, and told about the Sea: "A thousand leagues would not measure its size; a thousand fathoms would not compass its depth. In the time of Yŭ there were floods nine years out of ten, but the waters never rose; in the time of Tāng there were droughts seven years in eight, but the distance between its shores did not grow less. Never to alter or shift, whether for an instant or an age; never to advance or recede, whether the inflow is great or small – this is the great delight of the Eastern Sea!"
>
> When the frog in the collapsed well heard this, he was thunderstruck with surprise, bewildered and at a loss.[35]

The master metaphor for largeness occurs earlier in that chapter. It describes the Autumn Flood and the Sea, and refers in passing to the previous story:

> **7:60** (JZ 17:1a, excerpt, c0270). The time of the autumn floods had come. The hundred streams poured into the River. Its current swelled so much that, from one bank to the other, you could not tell a horse from an ox. At this the Lord of the River greatly delighted, thinking that the beauty of the world was all his. Following the current, he journeyed east until he came to the Northern Sea. Look as he would to eastward, he could see no end to the waters. The Lord of the River began to wag his head, and seeing how great the waters were, he looked afar off at Rwò, the God of Ocean, and said with a sigh, The vulgar saying has it, "He who is broadly learned in the Way thinks none equal to himself." That describes me. In the past, I heard men belittling the learning of Confucius and making light of the righteousness of Bwó-yí. At first I did not believe them, but now I have beheld your endlessness. If I hadn't come to your gate, I would have been in danger. I would forever have been laughed at by the Masters of the Great Method 大方之家.
>
> Rwò of the Northern Sea said, With a frog in a well, you can't speak of the ocean; he is limited by his dwelling. With a summer insect, you can't speak of ice; he is confined to a season. With a pedantic scholar, you can't discuss the Way; he is bound by his doctrines. Now you have emerged from your banks and seen the Great Sea, so you realize your insignificance. You can now be told about the Great Principle 大理 . . .

The Inner Chapters of the Jwāngdž (JZ 1-7) are traditionally supposed to be the real Jwāng Jōu. And indeed, a number of Jwāngdž stories are to be found there. But for some readers, JZ 17 is the heart of the matter.

[35]The "frog in the well" is a common Indian metaphor for one who knows things only on a small scale, and is unaware of anything larger. Maitri Upanishad 1:4 "Be pleased to deliver me; in this cycle of existence I am like a frog in a waterless well." (Hume **Thirteen** 414). Giles **Chuang** 159 remarks that the image "is commonly used in Bengali colloquial;" compare Boyer **Get**, a modern Indian success manual

Methodological Moment. Of these two pieces, it might seem that the Frog story in JZ 17:4 is earlier, and that JZ 17:1, which takes for granted a familiarity with that story, is later. But this reasonable inference does not work. It was not the custom in this period for living persons to be named in stories, and 17:1 does not mention Jwāngdž, whereas 17:4 does. Then JZ 17:4 belongs to a later stratum than 17:1. If (as some suspect) Jwāngdž himself wrote 17:1, then the story must have been generally current in his time, and 17:4 simply retells it for its own purposes. Moral: Our first impression may sometimes need more work. In particular, we may sometimes need more material, to solve a given problem, than happens to be directly available in the text in question.

Going With the Flow. However appealingly it is presented, the worldview that seems to have been most closely associated with Jwāng Jōu is essentially one of philosophical resignation in the face of higher power, whether that power is Heaven, the cycle of life and death, or the great ocean which takes to itself the smaller streams. It amounts to relinquishing any personal purpose. There is also a second strand in the book "Jwāngdž" which does not involve Jwāng Jōu. It recommends a more activist stance. The advice of these passages is to accept limitations on action, but not to give up altogether on what it is that one wants to *achieve* by action.

The idea of cautious ambition has parallels in the meditation literature, or (with the DDJ) in the statecraft literature which had earlier roots in meditation:

7:61 (GZ 36:15, excerpt, c0279).

> And so one must understand
> the word that need not be spoken 不言之言,
> the deed that need not be done 無爲之事

7:62 (DDJ 73b, excerpt, c0270).

> The Way of Heaven:
> not to contend, but to be good at winning,
> not to speak, but to be good at getting answers . . .

7:63 (DDJ 76, excerpt, 0262).

> The strong and mighty will be put low,
> The soft and weak will be put high.

This is a philosophy of noncontention: not trying to dominate a situation, but to guide it from a position of weakness. It has a parallel in some Jwāngdž stories which counsel reticence, but also envision a purpose. The typical story of this type does not feature Jwāng Jōu, but rather Confucius, or various rulers and court officers. The element of mental concentration is often prominent, and is used to acquire the art of fitting in with the immediate situation. "Confucius," advising Yén Hwéı in #**5:94**, had told him to go along with the ruler's wishes, but obviously in the hope of later having a chance to influence him.

Some such purpose is usually visible in the typical Jwāngdž "skill story." One example, also featuring Confucius and Yén Hwéı (here, Yén Ywā̆n) is:

> **7:64** (JZ 19:4a, c0258). Yén Ywā̆n asked Jùng-ní, I once crossed over at Goblet Deep, and the ferryman handled the boat like a god. I asked him, Can boat handling be learned? He said, It can. A good swimmer will soon be able to do it. As for one who dives below the surface, he may never have seen a boat but will immediately manage it. I asked further of him, but he wouldn't tell me. May I venture to ask what he meant?
>
> Jùng-ní said, "A good swimmer will soon be able to do it" – that means he has forgotten the water. "As for one who dives below the surface, he may never have seen a boat, but will immediately manage it" – that is because he sees the deep as dry land; he sees a boat overturning as a carriage being upset. Overturnings and upsettings might be occurring everywhere in front of him, but they could not enter his [mental] abode. Where could he go that he would not be at his ease?

He is at home in the medium, and thus remains unperturbed. So also:

> **7:65** (JZ 20:3, c0263). Bĕıgūng Shv̀ was going to collect taxes for Wèı Líng-gūng in order to make a set of bells. He made a platform outside the gate of the outer wall, and in three months the bells were completed, both upper and lower tiers. Prince Chìng-jì gave him audience, and asked, What art do you employ? Bĕıgūng Shv̀ answered, In the midst of the Oneness, I would not dare employ anything. But Shv̀ has heard, "When you are done carving and polishing, go back to the simple." Dull, I am without understanding; placid; I am without uncertainty. Mysteriously, wonderfully, I bid farewell to what goes, and welcome what comes: what comes cannot be prevented, what goes cannot be stopped. I follow the violent, I go with the devious, I let them reach what end they will. And so from morning to evening I collect taxes and levies, without meeting the slightest resistance. How much less one who was on the Great Path!

This is indebted not only to the DDJ but to the Gwă̆ndž (#**7:21**). Even the chore of collecting taxes will benefit from a reticent, indeed, a compliant, approach. Would not a ruler benefit still more? That is the tacit question behind the story. In this next piece, that question is asked directly:

> **7:66** (JZ 7:3, excerpt, c0258). Tyēn Gvn wandered by Yīn Mountain. On the bank of the Lyáu River, he met a Nameless Man, and asked him, I beg to ask about ruling the world. The Nameless Man said, Begone! You are a low fellow! How inappropriate this question is! I am just about to accompany the Creator, and when *that* gets boring . . . How dare you disturb my mind with talk of putting the world in order?
>
> He asked again. The Nameless Man said, Wander your mind in the simple, blend your breath with the vast, follow things as they naturally are, do not intrude the personal – and *then* the world will be in order.

That is, ruling is of its nature a mundane matter, of no interest to a higher being. But if one *will* rule, imitating the detachment of the higher being is best.

To "follow things as they are" is the theme of many of these "skill" stories. Here is the most famous of them:

> **7:67** (JZ 3:2, c0263). Cook Dīng was cutting an ox for Lord Wv́n-hwèı. The reach of his arm, the shift of his shoulder, the tread of his foot, the lean of his knee – so warily, so guidingly, he plied his knife so slidingly; not a note was out of tune. It could have been a "Mulberry Grove" dance; it would have suited a "Boar's Head" performance. Lord Wv́n-hwèı said, Excellent! Good indeed! Can skill really attain to such perfection?
>
> Cook Dīng sheathed his knife and replied, What your servant loves is the Way; it goes beyond mere skill. When your servant first began cutting up oxen, everything he saw was an ox. After three years, he no longer saw a whole ox. And at the present time, your servant encounters the ox with his whole spirit, he does not observe it with his eyes at all. Where the senses reach their limit, the spirit carries on as it will, in accord with natural logic: along the large contours, through the large openings, following the line of least resistance.
>
> The smallest bit of tendon I have never attempted; much less any solid bone. A good cook changes his knife yearly; he cuts. An ordinary cook changes his knife monthly; he hacks. Your servant's knife is going on for nineteen years, and it has cut up thousands of oxen, but the edge of the blade is as sharp as if it were fresh from the whetstone. At the joints there is always some space, and the edge of the blade has no thickness. If one inserts what has no thickness into what has some space, ever so carefully, there will always be enough room for the moving blade. It is for this reason that, after nineteen years, the edge of the blade is as sharp as if it were fresh from the whetstone.
>
> Even so, when I come to a tight place, I see the difficulty. I proceed carefully. My gaze is fixed, my motions are slow, I move the knife ever so slightly – and then, all at once, it is cut through, like earth crumbling to the ground. I withdraw my knife and stand erect. I look all around me; I linger there until I am fully satisfied. And then I put my knife in good order, and store it away.
>
> Lord Wv́n-hwèı said, Good! I have heard this Cook Dīng's words and I have learned from them how to care for my own life.

In Jwāngdž, the Indianate meditation tradition has been agreeably Sinicized. His doctrine of caution became the standard Dàuist message for later ages; the second philosophy of China's official class. In this view, the important thing is to avoid opposition, to achieve one's purpose without conflict.

Chí Versus Lŭ. Between these two centers of meditation text production, the DDJ in Lŭ is clearly the ancestor and senior member. Toward that ancestor, the texts coming out of the Gwăndž meditation circle tend to be indebted, and sometimes even anthological. Even when the DDJ under Lĭ Jù's leadership dropped all mention of meditation, the Gwăndž people continued, in their statecraft mode, to parallel the current DDJ offerings.

In GZ 38 (Bái Syīn 白心 or "Pure Heart"), the last Gwǎndž meditation text, the parallels continued, but the Bái Syīn had a Legalist tinge, already visible in GZ 36. Thus, in contrast to this comment from the DDJ:

> **7:68** (DDJ 77, excerpt, c0259). The Way of Heaven is to diminish those with excess to supply those with scarcity. The Way of Man is different; it takes from those with scarcity to augment those with excess.

we have this less sentimental idea from the Bái Syīn:

> **7:69** (GZ 38:2, excerpt, c0257) [The Sage] must follow change in making decisions; and understand the times in making allocations. When there is much, he may be generous; then there is little, he must be stringent. Things have their excess, but they also have their insufficiency.

The Bái Syīn was more enthusiastic about the recurrent Jwāngdž power theme of Going with the Flow. Here are two allusions to those stories:

> **7:70** (GZ 38:8, excerpt, c0254).
>
> They wrote in books what is wrong 惡,[36]
> spoke in words what is superficial 薄
>
> **7:71** (GZ 38:8, excerpt, c0254). What they could not express by name or word, or embody in form or color, was what they were unable to hand on. Of those who reach the ultimate, their teaching may or may not survive. Therefore it is said,
>
> Who crosses water in a boat is in harmony with the water 水,[37]
> Who acts rightly toward others is blessed by the spirits 鬼 . . .

When in 0255 Chǔ conquered half of Lǔ, the DDJ was ready with an assurance that after all, a reduced territory is better:

> **7:72** (DDJ 80, c0253). Make the country small 小國, and make its people few 寡民. Let there be mechanical contraptions but they are not used; let it be that the people regard death as a serious matter and do not serve afar. Though there be boats and carts, no one will ride them; though there be arms and armor, no one will array them. Let people again knot cords and use them [instead of writing]. Let them find their food sweet, their clothes fine, their dwellings comfortable, their customs good. Let neighboring villages be within view, and dogs and chickens be heard back and forth, yet the people grow old and die without ever going from one to another.

This is truly pathetic. To Lǔ, a state undergoing conquest and facing extinction, the DDJ has nothing to offer but a celebration of picturesque primitivism.

Counsels of reticence are paltry unless they promise later action. What gives point to all advice of this sort is the element of supernatural power within. Without that magic, the Gospel of Weakness loses most of its charm and force.

[36] See **#5:106**, above.

[37] See **#7:64**, above.

The Limits of Transcendence. In 0249, when Chǔ took the other half of Lǔ, and Syźndž exercised his authority as governor of the area, not only the Dàu/Dý Jīng enterprise, but the Analects school, the Mician ethicists, and both Mencian groups, ceased to think and write. In the Jwāngdž groups which still remained active, we see a new assertiveness: no longer hiding from the world, but soaring above it. This piece was put at the head of the Jwāngdž text:

> **7:73** (JZ 1:1, excerpt, c0236). In the northern deep there is a fish whose name is the Kūn. The size of the Kūn is I know not how many thousand leagues. It transforms itself into a bird whose name is the Pźng. The wing span of the Pźng is I know not how many thousand leagues. When it launches into flight, its wings are like clouds draped across the heavens. This bird, when the ocean currents shift, sets out for the southern deep.

It makes a brave show, and no doubt about it. But it must be added, and be it noted to their credit that the Jwāngdž compilers *do* add it, that not everyone, whether in the story or out of it, really believes in this stuff. It continues:

> . . .The cicada and the dove laugh at this; they say, When we rise up and fly toward yonder green elm tree, sometimes we don't make it, but drop back to earth again. What is this about nine myriad leagues to the south?

Here, finally, is Lyèdž (a different Lyèdž than the one we met on page 195, but the Jwāngdž is a very diverse text), displaying his own supernatural powers:

> **7:74** (JZ 1:2, excerpt, c0236). Lyèdž traveled on the wind, perfectly content with himself, and only returned after a week and five days.

Those supernatural powers the author immediately qualifies:

> . . . As far as good fortune went, he had nothing to complain of. But though he was spared the trouble of walking, he still had to depend on *something*. Now, had he mounted the regularities of Heaven and Earth, driven the chariot of Six Breaths, and traveled to the Limitless, on what need he have depended? Therefore it is said, The highest man has no self, the divine man has no achievement, the sagely man has no fame.

No achievement indeed. The doubts of the little birds, and the limitations of Lyèdž the Magician, are ridiculed, but to replace them, we have only a highest man who has no powers of his own, and simply vanishes into the universe.

There is a yearning quality to these animal or human flights of fancy; a reaching beyond the possible into some higher realm where human limits do not apply, and worldly dangers no longer threaten. The imagery was powerful. But the Jwāngdž ends with no more substantial appeal than that of imagery.

At bottom, the meditationist attitude to the hazards of the time was not to dispute the ground with them, but to rise above it all. This has just one defect: it leaves the ground open to those who are prepared to take it over.

And with the ultimate triumph of those stronger spirits, the makers of war and the architects of Empire, we will conclude.