

SOME NOTES ON THE *MENCIUS*<sup>1</sup>

by D. C. LAU

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<sup>1</sup> This article deals with difficulties and points of interest encountered in the course of preparing a new translation of the *Mencius* to be published by Penguin Books in 1970. Most of the points are textual, but some, being concerned with interpretation, are of a grammatical or philosophical nature. It is perhaps worth pointing out that I have not in all cases followed the ideas put forth in this article in my translation, and for facility of exposition the wording of the translations used here is not always identical with that to be found in the complete translation.

- Yen Yen Jo-ch'ü 閻若璩, *Ssu shu shih ti san hsü* 四書釋地三續 (Huang ch'ing ching chieh 皇清經解, chüan 23).
- Yü (1) Yü Yüeh 俞樾, *Ch'un ching p'ing yi* 羣經平議 (Huang ch'ing ching chieh hsü pien 續編, chüan 1362-96).
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References to the Classics are to the *Shih san ching shu shu* edition noted above, and in the case of all other works not listed to the *Ssu pu ts'ung k'an* edition.

(1) I.A.3 五十者可以衣帛矣...七十者可以食肉矣...七十者衣帛食肉...  
Since Mencius has just said that "those who are fifty can wear silk" and "those who are seventy can eat meat", it is odd for him to go on to say "those who are seventy wear silk and eat meat" as the wearing of silk applies as much to those who are fifty as to those who are seventy. In the parallel passage in I.A.7 the text, instead of 七十者, reads 老者 which seems preferable.

(2) I.A.5 寡人恥之, 願比死者壹酒之。  
Chao Ch'i 趙岐 offers no gloss for the word 比. Chu Hsi 朱熹, however, says "比猶爲也." (Chu, p. 6) In the passage 且比化者無使土親膚, 於人心獨無悛乎? (II.B.7), it is not clear at all how Chao understands the text (MTSC 4B.1b), but Chu repeats the earlier gloss (Chu, p. 57). Professor W. Simon has argued very persuasively that 比 here should be taken in the sense of "by the time of". This is, of course, one of the most important uses of the word. Nevertheless, as far as the present passage is concerned, there seems to be room for dissent, and it is, perhaps, worth reviewing the merits of one of the alternatives.

The Pseudo Sun Shih 孫奭 commentary gives a paraphrase of the present passage: 今願近死不惜命者一洗除之 (MTCS IA, 12b). Sun's meaning is not very clear, but at least one thing is certain. He is offering 近 as a gloss of 比. Yü Yüeh 俞樾 has also independently - because, as has been noticed by Simon (p. 802, n. 3), he seemed to have had a version of the Sun commentary which read 爲 in place of 近 - arrived at the same conclusion that 比 ought to be taken in the sense of 近. He quotes, in support, a passage from the *Ch'i yü* 齊語: 夫管夷吾射寡人中鈞, 是以瀆於死, and Wei Chao's 韋昭 commentary; 三君皆云, 瀆近也 (*Kuo yü*, 6.1b). Yü then goes on to add that 比 and 瀆 are interchangeable because they share the same initial ('一聲之轉') (Yü (1), 1393.3a).

Now the glosses of both Sun and Yü give the sense of the expression 比死者 as "one verging on death". In connexion with Sun's gloss, Simon makes the following objection:

We shall see that this commentary got very near to what I consider the correct interpretation of the passage. It operates with a well-known meaning of *bih*, viz., *bih jinn yee* 比近也 ("close to, near"), which is in fact the primary meaning of *bih*. However, this meaning "close to" refers usually to space. When referring to time, *bih* has acquired, as we shall see, a very special meaning which is quite different from the meaning of "on the point of, on the verge of" suggested by the Pseudo Suen Shyh's paraphrase. As is well known, the meaning "on the point of" is expressed in Chinese by *jiang* 將 or *chieh* 且 (p. 792).

The main point of the argument seems to be this. When 比 means 近, this refers usually to space. When it refers to time, it has a special meaning, viz., "by the time". Now there does not seem to be any evidence that 比, when it means "close to, near", refers to space. In fact, the gloss 比近也 as given in the *Kuang ya* (KYSC, p. 331) is much more likely to have been intended to be taken in the sense of 親近, just as the *Shuo wen* gloss 比密也 (SWKL, pp. 3651-2) is to be taken in the sense of 親密. In both cases, 比 does not, in the first instance, refer either to space or to time, but to close relationship between persons, as, for example, in the expression 朋比. If we prefer to take 比近也 as referring to space, the meaning would be "close together" rather than "close to". But the meaning of "close to" is, as a matter of fact, not relevant to the example under discussion. As Simon points out, there is an idiomatic use of 比 which means "side by side". One can go further and say that in the construction "比 x", if x is the object and 比 is taken in a spatial sense, it is natural for the meaning to be taken as "placing the x's side by side", as, for instance, 比肩 means "a line of shoulders" and 比屋 "a line of roofs". Thus by paraphrasing 比死 as 近死, the Pseudo Sun Shih commentary could not have meant this to be taken spatially, but could only have meant this to be taken in the sense of "verging on". The question, then, would simply be this. Does 比 have such a meaning or not? The mere fact that 比 has the special meaning of "by the time" does not rule out the possibility of its possessing, side by side with this meaning, another of "verging on". Again, though it is true that the meaning "on the point of" is expressed in Chinese by 將 or 且, it does not follow that either 比 cannot also mean "on the point of" or that there cannot be any difference between the meaning of 比 and that of 將 or 且, even though they all generally mean "on the point of". As a matter of fact, a case can be made for differentiating them. 將 means "going to" with no reference to "imminence". The action thus indicated can take place any time in the future. 且, perhaps, indicates the near future. But 比, in the sense of 瀆, would indicate imminence.

Now the gloss of 頽 for 比 is worth examining. There is a possibility of a phonetic connexion. 比 is the phonetic in 玼 which is a variant form of 蟻 which, in turn, is a homophone of 頽. There is a passage in the *Shih chi* 史記: 又比殺三趙王 where Ssu-ma Chen 司馬貞 glosses 比 as 頽 ("in rapid succession") (p. 407). As 頽 is the same as 頽, it would seem that 比 has two meanings which are similar to two meanings of 頽.

Now if we follow Simon in taking 比 as "by the time", then 比死者 means "by the time of death". But if we take 比 as "verging on", then the expression will mean "one who is verging on death". Now one of the important features of the construction where 比 is used to mean "by the time", as pointed out by Simon, is that "the end of the time clause is sometimes marked by *jee* 者 or *yee* 也" (p. 795). This being the case, there is a clear point of difference between the two interpretations and this may prove to be useful in deciding, in a specific case, which is more likely to be right. On Simon's interpretation 者 marks the end of the time clause and cannot, therefore, be at the same time, the indicator of the agent, while on the second interpretation 者 has, precisely, to be taken as an indicator of the agent.

As far as the *Mencius* text is concerned, it is possible to interpret 比 in either way, because the agent of the main verb 願 is still 寡人. Thus, it can either mean "I am ashamed of this and wish, by the time of death, to wash it all away", or "I am ashamed of this and wish [myself as] one verging on death to wash it all away".

There is, however, another text where the expression 比死者 is to be found which seems to have been overlooked by commentators of the *Mencius* but may turn out to be helpful towards the solution of our problem. In the *Yen tzu ch'un ch'iu* 晏子春秋 (1/8) we find 比死者勉爲樂乎 (11a). This example is different from that of the *Mencius* in that 比死者 is the agent of the verb and can only mean "Should those verging on death not try their best to enjoy themselves?"<sup>2</sup> This being so, the 者 in 比死者 is an indicator of the agent and this rules out its being, at the same time, the marker of the end of the time clause. To put it in another way, if we insist that 比死者 be taken as a time clause, we are forced to leave the main verb without an agent. Thus whereas the *Mencius* example admits of both interpretations, the *Yen tzu ch'un ch'iu* admits only the interpretation "one who is verging on death".

Both Yü Yüeh and Simon (pp. 801-2) have pointed out that King Hui of Liang was an old man at the time of his interview with Mencius. If we remember that he, in fact, died not long after the interview, though the interpretation "before I die" is appropriate, "one verging on death" would add a poignant note to the remark.

<sup>2</sup> We can leave open the question whether 比死者 refers to the speakers or to others, as this does not affect the point at issue, *viz.*, that 比死者 is the agent of the main verb.

There remains the interpretation of the passage in II.B.7. On our interpretation, it can be translated rather literally as: "Moreover, one verging on decomposition, not to let the earth come in contact with the skin, does this not afford some satisfaction to the heart of man?" 比化者 is here a nominal unit in the absolute position serving as a point of reference for the word 膚.

(3) I.A.6 "孰能與之?"

“對曰：‘天下莫不與也。王知夫苗乎？七八月之間旱，則苗槁矣。天油然作雲，沛然下雨，則苗浡然興之矣。其如是，孰能禦之？今夫天下之人牧，未有不嗜殺人者也。如有不嗜殺人者，則天下之民皆引領而望之矣。誠如是也，民歸之，由水之就下，沛然誰能禦之？’”

It is odd that when the question is 孰能與之, in the answer the point to be repeated is 孰能禦之, 誰能禦之. It seems likely that 與 is a mistake and that the question should also be 孰能禦之. Thus in the answer Mencius throws back the original question in a rhetorical form at the questioner. But if we emend the question, we have to emend the immediate answer as well. Instead of 天下莫不與也, the text should read 天下莫之能禦也.<sup>3</sup> 莫之能禦 is a cliché to be found more than once in the *Mencius*. In the next section we find 保民而王, 莫之能禦也 (I.A.7), and in II.A.1 there is 行仁政而王, 莫之能禦也. The example from I.A.7 is of particular interest, as the same wording is often to be found in sections that form a group dealing with the same topic. Here both I.A.6 and I.A.7 deal with, amongst other things, the inevitability of the benevolent ruler becoming a true king. Furthermore, there are parallels to the present section. In VII.A.16 we find 若決江河, 沛然莫之能禦也 which parallels closely the final sentence of the present section. Again, in the *Shuo yüan* 說苑 6/5 we find 今天油然作雲, 沛然下雨, 則苗草興起, 莫之能禦 (6.5a). Thus we can see that both 孰能禦之 and 誰能禦之 have parallels which read 莫之能禦. Can it be that in some versions of the *Mencius* the text reads 孰能禦之 and 誰能禦之 echoing the question, while in other versions the text reads 莫之能禦 echoing the opening words of Mencius' answer?

Is there any good reason why 禦 should have been corrupted to 與? Could this have come about through some phonetic connexion? According to Karlgren's reconstruction, 與 was *ɕjo* in Archaic and *jwo* in Ancient (GS 89b), while 禦 was *ngjo* in Archaic and *ngjwo* in Ancient (GS 60p). 能 is *nang* in both Archaic and Ancient (GS 885a). Now it is quite easy to see how *nang ngjwo* could easily be corrupted to *nang jwo*, but this could only have happened after the transition from Archaic to Ancient, and however early we place this, it is too late for our purposes, as the text was

<sup>3</sup> 天下莫之能損益也 (*Hsin tzu*, 13.7a) is a sentence of similar construction.

most probably corrupt by Chao Chi's time. But the *xio* of Karlgren's reconstruction is not beyond question. It is well known that 與 is often used in ancient texts for 舉. Wang Yin-chih cites Yü Fan's 虞翻 gloss 與謂舉也, and Cheng Hsüan's 鄭玄 commentary to the *Chouli* 周禮: 故書舉爲與 (14.5b), and Wang Yi's 王逸 comment on the *Ch'i chien* 七諫: 與舉也 (*Ch'u tz'u*, 13.3a). He then goes on to show other cases where 與 is used for 舉: *Li yün* 禮運, 選賢與能 (*Li chi chu shu*, 21.3a); (2) *Chiu chang* 九章, 與前世而皆然兮 (*Ch'u tz'u*, 4.12b) and (3) *T'ien chih chung* 天志中, 天下之君子與謂之不祥 (*Mo tzu*, 7.10a).<sup>4</sup> Wang Nien-sun also gives an example from the *Wang chih* 王制: 制與在此亡乎人 (*Hsün tzu*, 5.18a).<sup>5</sup> There is also an instance of 舉 used for 與, again given by Wang Yin-chih: 豈唯寡君舉羣臣實受其賜 (*Tso chuan*, Chao 3).<sup>6</sup> The array of evidence is impressive, and there is, in fact an example of 與 being used for 舉 in the *Mencius* itself.<sup>7</sup> Now Karlgren gives *kjo* for 舉 in Archaic, and it seems possible that 與 also had a guttural initial of some sort. Now if 與 had a guttural initial or at least an initial cluster including a guttural element<sup>8</sup> in Archaic, then we can see how the corruption could have come about.

To return to the text of the *Mencius*, we can see that there is much to be gained in the unity of the argument by adopting such an emendation. Having been told that the Empire would be united by one who was not fond of killing, King Hsiang went on to ask, "Who can stop him?" and Mencius' answer was "No one in the Empire can stop him." What follows will then be just an elaboration on this answer.

(4) I.A.7 我非愛其財而易之以羊也。宜乎百姓之謂我愛也。 According to the traditional interpretation, the major pause is taken after the first 也, and the meaning, then, is "It was not the case that I substituted the lamb for it through grudging the expense." But the remark "It is only natural that the people should have thought me miserly" does not, then, follow, for if it is not through grudging the expense that the King substituted the lamb for the ox, why is it natural for the people to have thought him miserly? The first major pause should be taken after 財, so that the negative force of 非 does not extend to the part of the sentence beginning with 而 which serves the same purpose as 然而. This would give the sense, "It was not true that I grudged the expense, but I *did* use a lamb instead of the ox." Thus, it is, indeed, natural for the people to have thought the King miserly.

<sup>4</sup> CYSW, p. 568.

<sup>5</sup> TSTC, II.11.

<sup>6</sup> CYSW, p. 732.

<sup>7</sup> See (15) below.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of the possibility of an initial cluster in such cases, see Bodman, pp. 61-2.

(5) I.B.16 行或使之, 止或尼之。行止非人所能也。吾之不過魯侯天也。

It is easy to get the impression that Mencius was quite oblivious to all the philosophical activities around him. It is interesting, therefore, to find a case where a seemingly ordinary remark turns out to contain a reference to philosophical problems that very much interested his contemporaries. In chapter 25 of the *Chuang tzu* 莊子 we find Shao Chih asking, 季真之莫爲, 接子之或使, 二家之議, 孰正於其情, 孰偏於其理? (CTCS, p. 916). ("Of the two theories—the 'nothing does it' of Chi Chen and the 'something causes it' of Chieh Tzu—which has got it right and which is one-sided?") This concerns the problem of the universe. The question is: behind the universe is there a controlling power, a lord, or not? 或使 represents the view that returns an affirmative answer to this question, while 莫爲 answers it in the negative. Furthermore, for Chuang Tzu, the problem whether there is a sovereign lord (*chen chün* 真君) over the multifarious phenomena in a man's mind is parallel to that about the lord of the universe.

In chapter 38 of the *Kuan tzu* there is a passage dealing with the same question: 天或維之, 地或載之。天莫之維則天以墜矣, 地莫之載則地以沉矣。夫天不墜, 地不沉。夫或維而載之未夫。又況於人[乎]。人有治之, 辟之若夫雷鼓之動也。夫不能自搖者, 夫或持[emend to 搖]之。夫或者, 何若然者也? 視則不見, 聽則不聞; 洒乎天下滿, 不見其塞; 集於顏色[emend to 肌膚], 知於肌膚[emend to 顏色]; 責其往來, 莫知其時; 薄乎其方也, 轉乎其圓也, 轉乎莫得其門。(13.8b). ("There is something that suspends Heaven; there is something that supports Earth. If there is nothing to suspend it, Heaven would have fallen; if there is nothing to support it, Earth would have sunk. Now if even Heaven and Earth would probably have fallen or sunk unless there is something which suspends and supports them, how much more so with man! There is something which manages a man, just as is the case with the movement of thunder-drums. That which cannot shake itself must have something to shake it. But what is this 'something'? It cannot either be seen or heard; it fills the world without blocking it up; it permeates the flesh and skin and manifests itself in the complexion of the face. You may demand to know when it comes and goes, but no one knows the time. It is square and it is round, and being round,<sup>9</sup> no one can find the way in.") It is here concluded from the fact that Heaven does not fall and Earth does not sink that there must be "something" which keeps the one from falling and the other from sinking. So we can see that 或維 and 或載 are just instances of 或使.

<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the text is corrupt and should read "being square as well as round".

The parallel with the *Chuang tzu* does not end here. It is further argued that if this is the case with Heaven and Earth it must be even more so with man. There must be "something" which manages man. This presumably refers to the heart (*hsin* 心), as the description "you may demand to know when it comes and goes, but no one knows the time" is the kind of language that is used of the heart. For instance, in chapter 49 of the *Kuan tzu* it is said of the heart that "no one can fathom its going and coming (一往一來, 莫之能思)" (16.2b).

Enough has been said to show that the term 或使 is used in the writings of the Warring States period to refer specifically to the "something" which is behind the universe and responsible for its workings. Mencius' use of this term is no exception. Having said that "when a man goes forward, there is something which urges him on; when he halts there is something which holds him back", Mencius goes on to say: "It is not in a man's power either to go forward or to halt. It is due to Heaven that I failed to meet the Marquis of Lu." This mention of the agency of Heaven as opposed to human agency shows that the "something" of 或使 refers, indeed, to Heaven.

It is interesting that Mencius, too, describes the heart in terms similar to those used in the *Kuan tzu*. In VI.A.8, we find Confucius quoted as saying, "Hold on to it and it will remain, let go of it and it will disappear. One never knows the time it comes or goes, neither does one know the direction", on which Mencius comments, "It is perhaps to the heart this refers." Not only does Mencius share with the *Kuan tzu* the view that the heart is elusive but also that it informs the body with its own quality: "That which a gentleman follows as his nature, that is to say, benevolence, righteousness, the rites and wisdom, is rooted in his heart, and manifests itself in his face, giving it a sleek appearance. It also shows in his back and extends to his limbs, rendering their massage intelligible without words" (VII.A.21). Although as a Confucian, Mencius differs from the *Kuan tzu* in attributing moral qualities to a man's nature, nevertheless there is a great deal of common ground between the two. According to the *Kuan tzu*, the heart is the seat of the *ching ch'i* 精氣 which is part of the *tao* 道, whereas, according to Mencius, man's endowment of incipient moral tendencies is that which links him to Heaven.

We can see, then, that Mencius takes for granted a great deal of the prevalent theories concerning man and his relationship to the universe. The only thing is that he puts a moral complexion on the current theory and harnesses it in support of Confucius' teaching.

(6) II.A.1 德之流行, 速於置郵而傳命。

The traditional interpretation takes both 置 and 郵 as nouns – either taking both as meaning relay horses (Chu, p. 35) or taking 置 to refer to post by

relay horses and 郵 to refer to post by messengers on foot (Chiao, 6.8a). Construed in this way, 置郵而傳命 would be a nominal unit in which 而 intervenes between the exposed element and the nucleus, and the whole unit would be object to 於.<sup>10</sup> But there is an alternative way of construing the sentence. 而 can be taken to be linking two verbal units, in which case 置 has to be taken as a verb and 置郵 would mean "setting up relay stations". The *Lü shih ch'un ch'iu* 呂氏春秋 (ch. 19, part 3) quotes this saying as: 德之速, 疾乎以郵傳命 (19.7b), where 以郵 is parallel to 傳命. As the word 以 here is a verb it gives some support for 置 in the *Mencius* text being taken as a verb as well.

(7) II.A.2 自反而不縮, 雖褐寬博, 吾不慄焉。

"If, on looking within, one finds oneself to be in the wrong, then even though one's adversary be only a common fellow coarsely clad . . ." As 慄 means "to be afraid", it is very difficult to make sense of the final clause with its negative. The traditional interpretation ". . . I must not make him afraid", taking 慄 as a causative, is forced. There are two objections. First, as 慄, not being an action verb, normally takes no object, it is difficult to see how it can be used as a causative verb. Second, the negative would normally demand an inversion of the object. It may be argued that this does not happen in this case because 焉 is used as object, but the use of 焉 as object is in itself odd. Yen Jo-ch'ü 閻若璩, though he does not follow this interpretation, nevertheless finds it necessary to explain away the negative. He suggests that 不 should be taken as equivalent to 豈不 (Yen 23.18b), a usage unsupported elsewhere in the *Mencius*.

The only reasonable way of getting out of the difficulty is to take 不 as a mistake for 必, as a confusion between the two characters is not unknown in ancient texts. In the passage in chapter 16 of the *Kuan tzu*: 故曰上無固植, 下有疑心; 國無常經, 民力必竭; 數也, (6.2a) Wang Yin-chih says that 必 is a mistake for 不 (TSTC, 7.78) while in the passage in the *Yen tzu ch'un ch'iu* (3/18): 所求于下者, 不務于上; 所禁于民者, 不行于身, (3.18b) he says that 不務 should be 必務 (*ibid.*, 8.122) In a passage in chapter 37 of the *Mo tzu*: 凡出言談則必可而不先立儀而言 (9.10b), Yü Yüeh says that 必 should be 不 (Yü (2), 195).

Neither Wang nor Yü suggests that the confusion is due to phonetic resemblance, though this cannot be entirely ruled out. It is true, the only evidence we have of the archaic pronunciation of 不 points to its being a homophone of 否 \*pǐŋg and therefore quite different from that of 必 \*pǐət. But Karlgren remarks, "All the modern dialect readings reveal an Anc. puaet, which points to an Arch, \*pwət, cognate to 弗 \*piwət" (GS, 999). If this is the case, then the confusion with 必 may well be due to phonetic resemblance.

<sup>10</sup> See Graham (1), pp. 213-14.

(8) II.A.2 志壹則動氣，氣壹則動志也。今夫蹶者趨者是氣也，而反動其心。

The words 蹶 and 趨 are usually taken to mean "to stumble" and "to hurry" respectively. This gives the sense, "Now stumbling and hurrying are the *ch'i* yet in fact palpitations of the heart are produced." Now "stumbling" and "hurrying" may bring on a shortness of breath, but it is odd to say that they are the *ch'i*.

In his comments on a passage from chapter 105 of the *Shih chi*, 齊郎中令循病，衆醫皆以爲歷人中，而刺之 (p. 2799), Wang Nien-sun says that 人 should be emended to 入,<sup>11</sup> citing as his evidence the definition in the *Shih ming* 釋名：厥，逆氣從下厥起上行入心脇也。<sup>12</sup> The opening part 厥，逆氣 is also found in the *Shuo Wen*,<sup>13</sup> except that 厥 is there written 厥. The *Shih ming* definition can be translated, "Chüeh is *ch'i* going the wrong way. It rises the wrong way from below and goes up into the heart and the side." We can see from the *Shih chi* text that the character is also written 歷. This definition fits the Mencius passage very well, for, as 蹶 is *ch'i* "that goes the wrong way", one can see why Mencius says that it is the *ch'i* which, as we have suggested, would be surprising if 蹶 is taken to mean "to stumble". Moreover, this furnishes support to Chao's interpretation of the opening sentences in the passage. He takes 壹 as 噎, meaning "blocked". (Chiao, 6.14a). If the *ch'i* is going the wrong way, then it is, indeed, blocked.

But whether this suggested interpretation of 蹶 can stand or not depends on whether one can find evidence for 趨, similarly, being the name of an illness connected with the *ch'i* or, at least, for its being a loan for another character with such a meaning, but so far I have not found such evidence, though the word is, in fact, used in the same chapter of the *Shih chi* to describe the 脈氣 (pp. 2814-15). I have included this suggestion here in the hope that scholars knowledgeable on early Chinese medical works may be able to throw light on the matter.

(9) II.A.2 必有事焉而勿正心勿忘勿助長也。

It is difficult to make good sense of this passage. Ku Yen-wu 顧炎武 quotes Ni Ssu's 倪思 theory that 勿正 is a corruption from 忘 (Ku, 7.16b). This is surely right, as the passage will then make straightforward sense: "You must work at it and never let it out of your mind. While you must not let it out of your mind, you must not forcibly help it grow either."

(10) II.B.4 求牧與芻而不得，則反諸其人乎？抑亦立而視其死與？

<sup>11</sup> TSTC, 3.25.

<sup>12</sup> Wang Hsien-ch'ien, p. 396.

<sup>13</sup> SWKL, p. 3325.

This is one of the forms which alternative questions "Is it . . . ? Or is it . . . ?" take. Each question ends with a different interrogative particle. This is found again in VI.A.1, 子能順杞柳之性而以爲柶椽乎？將戕賊杞柳而後以爲柶椽也？ The only difference is that in this example 也 is used in place of 與 with which it is interchangeable in such contexts.

The ignorance of this form of alternative questions has given rise to an interesting case of the misinterpretation of a passage in the *Chuang tzu*. In chapter 19 there is a story about a hunchback who never misses when picking cicadas. This led to the following exchange: 仲尼曰，"子巧乎有道邪？" 曰，"我有道也"。 In his commentary, Ch'eng Hsüan-ying 成玄英 says, "怪其巧一至於斯，故問其方" (CTCS, p. 640). It is not very clear how he understood the passage, but it is likely that his comment has played a part in misleading subsequent editors and translators into taking the first part as an exclamation. Wang Hsiao-yü 王孝魚, in his edition of the *Chuang tzu chi shih*, puts an exclamation mark after the 乎 and a question mark after the 邪. (CTCS, p. 639). Japanese translators of the *Chuang tzu* have always read this as: Kimi wa takumi naru kana! Michi ari ya.<sup>14</sup> Professor Burton Watson, following this tradition, translates the passage as, "What skill you have! Is there a special way to this?"<sup>15</sup>

The same passage is also to be found in chapter 2 of the *Lieh tzu* (2.5b). In his modern edition, Yang Po-chün punctuates in the same way as Wang Hsiao-yü, by putting an exclamation mark after the first sentence and a question mark after the second (Yang (3), p. 40). Dr. A. C. Graham, following Yang, translates, "What skill! Is it because you have the Way?" (Graham (2), p. 45). Japanese translators, too, treat this passage in the same way as they do the *Chuang tzu* passage.<sup>16</sup>

Now apart from the *Mencius* examples which show that the *Chuang tzu* passage should also be taken as consisting of alternative questions, there is proof in the *Chuang tzu* itself. In chapter 22, in the story about the buckle maker, we find "子巧與？有道與？" 曰，"臣有守[emend to 道]<sup>17</sup>也。" Now Wang Hsiao-yü, in face of this, punctuates with two question marks.<sup>18</sup> Japanese translators, however, vary in the way they translate this passage. Both Hattori and Makino relent and translate both as questions with "ka", but both modern translators stick to their guns and persist in "kana" for the first sentence and "ka" for the second (Fukunaga, III, p. 692; Ichikawa and

<sup>14</sup> e.g., Hattori, 6.38; Makino, p. 68; and, more recently, Fukunaga, II, p. 480; and Ichikawa and Endō, p. 507.

<sup>15</sup> Watson (1), p. 120; Watson (2), p. 199.

<sup>16</sup> Ōta, p. 159; Kobayashi, however, translates, "Shi ga takumi ya michi ari ka?" (p. 93), but shows in his paraphrase which follows, "Anata no sono udemae ni wa nanika tokubetsu no waza demo aru deshō ka?" that he does not understand it as alternative questions.

<sup>17</sup> TSTC, 16.26.

<sup>18</sup> CTCS, p. 760.

Endō, p. 593). Watson also chooses to follow Fukunaga's lead (Watson (2), p. 244).

In the *Lieh tzu*, as in the *Chuang tzu*, there is a further example of this question. In chapter 8 we find 孔子問之曰, “[子]<sup>19</sup>巧乎? 有道術乎?”<sup>20</sup> This time Yang Po-chün punctuates with two question marks,<sup>21</sup> but Graham ignores his punctuation and translates, “What skill! Have you some special art?” (Graham (2) p. 166).

Having shown that 子巧乎 must be taken as a question in the context of 子巧乎有道邪, we may, perhaps, go a step further and say that even taken by itself 子巧乎 can only be taken as a question. 乎 often appears as a final particle in a rhetorical question or in a sentence expressing a wish – in which case there is always a modal word like 其 – but it never appears as a final particle in an exclamatory sentence meaning “How . . . !” In such exclamatory sentences which, incidentally, are quite rare, 乎 appears after an initial adjectival unit, usually consisting of a single word, for example 宜乎百姓之謂我愛也 (I.A.7). (“How natural it was for the people to have thought me miserly!”) In this respect 乎 is similar to 哉, for instance, 大哉堯之爲君 (III.A.4). (“How great Yao was as a ruler!”) But 哉 differs from 乎 in one important respect. It can also appear at the end of the sentence, for instance, 管仲之器小哉 (*Analects*, 3/22). (“How small Kuan Chung was in his capacity!”) It is perhaps the similarity between 乎 and 哉 that has misled translators into taking the final 乎 as exclamatory.

(11) II.A.12 王庶幾改之! 王如改諸, 則必反予。

The *Feng su t'ung yi* 風俗通義 quotes this with 之 and 諸 transposed (7.2b). This is the correct reading. In I.B.1 we find 王庶幾無疾病與! This shows that sentences with 庶幾 expressing a wish end with an exclamatory particle. The present text should be no exception. Moreover, there is no good reason why the first part of the second sentence should end with a 諸, as it is a straightforward if-clause. The only complication is that further on we find: . . . 天下之民舉安。王庶幾改之! 予日望之。 It is very likely that here, too, 改之 was originally 改諸, and was corrected to 改之 by some misguided editor to bring it into line with the earlier sentence.

<sup>19</sup> Supplied from parallels in the *K'ung tzu chia yü* 孔子家語 (2.9a) and the *Shuo yüan* 說苑 (17.16a), as suggested by Wang Shu-min, 4.25b. See also Yang (3), p. 158.

<sup>20</sup> Although this story is also to be found in chapter 19 of the *Chuang tzu* (CTCS, p. 656), the version there seems defective and this question does not appear there. It seems that there was a genre of story all concerned with people with surpassing skill, and the crucial point of the story consists in this question as to whether this was skill or something far beyond skill – the possession of the Way. Although we have only three extant stories belonging to this genre, there probably were others that have been lost.

<sup>21</sup> Japanese translators, too, take both sentences as questions. Ōta, p. 278; Kobayashi, pp. 377–8.

after the corruption had crept in. That the reading should be 改諸 is confirmed by the *Lun heng* 論衡 (chapter 30) where this is quoted as 民舉安。王庶幾改諸! 予日望之 (10.13a).

(12) III.A.1 今滕 . . . 猶可以爲善國。

This expression 善國 is awkward. I suspect that the word 國 is an interpolation. 猶可以爲善 is similar in construction to 王由 (= 猶) 足用爲善 in II.B.2 and can be translated “. . . It is big enough for you to do good.”

(13) III.A.5 夫夷子信以爲人之親其兄之子爲若親其鄰之赤子乎?

It is obvious that the repetition of 爲 poses a problem. Wang Yin-chih has suggested that the second 爲 should be taken as equivalent to 有 (CCST, p. 60). This is unconvincing. When 以爲 is used to mean “to consider x as y”, the object x is always interposed between 以 and 爲, and we only find 以爲 together when the object is not expressed.<sup>22</sup> In the present case, the object 人之親其兄之子 is expressed and there is a 爲 following it, and there is no reason why there should be another 爲 preceding it. The first must be an interpolation. There is one other example of a similar construction in the *Mencius*: 夫公明高以孝子之心爲不若是忍 (V.A.1), and there 爲 appears only after the object.

(14) III.B.1 如不待其招而往何哉。

It is usual to take the pause after 往, though it is not very clear what sense the sentence will make. Both Chao and Chu seem to want the sentence to mean, “How much less can a man go without waiting for his summons!” Yang, however, translates “How would it be if I were to go without waiting for the summons of the feudal lords?”<sup>23</sup> It seems this is an instance of the construction “如 x 何” where x is the object. There are two other instances of this construction in the *Mencius*. (1) 君如彼何哉! (I.B.14), (2) 吾如有萌焉何哉! (VI.A.9). The first can be translated “What can you do about Ch'i?”, and the second as “What can I do with the few new shoots that come out?” The present text should also be translated, “What can one do about those who go without even being summoned?”

The difficulty is with the repetition of this sentence further on with 也 instead of 哉. But as it is difficult to make good sense of the sentence with 也, one must assume that it is a corruption and, if this is so, then it is likely that this is a corruption from 哉.

<sup>22</sup> Or when the expression is followed by a verbal unit, e.g., 一心以爲有鴻鵠將至 (VI.A.9). But this usage does not concern us as it constitutes a separate usage with a different meaning.

<sup>23</sup> 假定我竟不等待請候的招致便去, 那又是怎樣的? (Yang (1) p. 139).



(15) III.B.3 不由其道而往者與鑽穴隙之類也。

This sentence is ungrammatical as it stands. There have been various suggestions – that 與 should be read as 賦, that 之 is an interpolation and that 如 should be read as 與 (see Yang (1), p. 145, n. 12). None of these suggestions seems satisfactory. 與 is here used for 舉.<sup>24</sup> This is supported, on the one hand by the fact that 舉, meaning all, is found six times in the *Mencius*,<sup>25</sup> and, on the other, by the sentence in VII.B.31, 是皆穿隙之類也, which is similar both in grammatical structure and in meaning to the text in question, except that it has 皆 which is synonymous with 舉. The sentence, when emended, can be translated, "All those who go without following the right way are no different from the men and women who bore holes in the wall."

(16) III.B.10 三咽然後耳有聞, 目有見。

In his *Shih san chiu* 釋三九,<sup>26</sup> Wang Chung 汪中 points out that 三 is often used not in its exact sense of "three" but in the vague sense of "many". Amongst the examples he cites are a number from the *Analects of Confucius*: (1) 焉往而不三黜 (18/2), (2) 季文子三思而後行<sup>27</sup> (5/20), (3) 唯雉三嗅而作 (10/21), (4) 令尹子文三仕爲令尹... 三已之 (5/19), and also the above passage from the *Mencius*. While he follows Wang's suggestion in his *pai hua* translation in his *Lun yü yi chu*,<sup>28</sup> Yang Po-chün has not followed it in the present passage. Surely Wang's point applies to this as it applies to most of the passages from the *Analects*? There is another example similar to the *Mencius* passage. In a story about another starving man in the *Lü shih ch'un ch'iu* we find 爰旌目三餽之而後能視, (12.5b). If 三 is to be taken to mean "three", it is odd that one starving man should take "three gulps" while another should take "three sips" before either could see.

(17) IV.A.15 存乎人者莫良於眸子。

By using 存在 to gloss 存, Chao seems to be taking the word as meaning 察 (see Chiao, 15.9a). This is followed by Yang in his modern translation, "If you examine a man, there is nothing better than examining his eyes."<sup>29</sup> But there is no justification for taking the word in this sense. In VI.A.8 we find 雖存乎人者, 豈無仁義之心哉. Chao again says, 存在也 (11.B.1b), but this time he seems to be taking the word to mean "to be in".

<sup>24</sup> For evidence of the words being interchangeable, see (3) above.

<sup>25</sup> I.B.1., 舉疾首蹙頰而相告曰 (twice), 舉欣欣然有喜色而相告曰 (twice), II.B.12., 天下之民舉安, and VI.A.7, 故凡同類者舉相似也.

<sup>26</sup> Wang Chung, 1.2b.

<sup>27</sup> It is likely that Wang's theory does not apply to this example, for as Confucius commented, "Twice is quite enough." 三 is here contrasted with 再 "twice" and may, in fact, be used in the exact sense of "three".

<sup>28</sup> See Yang (2), particularly p. 4, n. 2.

<sup>29</sup> "觀察一個人, 再沒比觀察他的眼睛更好了" (Yang (1), p. 177).

If 存 means in this instance "to be in", there is no reason to suppose that it should have a different meaning in the passage in question, which can be translated, "there is in man nothing more ingenuous than the pupils of his eyes".

(18) IV.A.22 人之易其言也, 無責耳矣。

Chao offers two interpretations of this passage. First, that a man speaks lightly is because he has never been taken to task for saying the wrong things. Second, the reason a man refuses to reprimand the ruler is that he is not in a position of responsibility to offer advice.<sup>30</sup> In his second interpretation he has to introduce a negative element into the first half of the sentence and this is unsatisfactory. Chu follows, with a slight change in wording, Chao's first interpretation.<sup>31</sup> Yü Yüeh offers a new interpretation, "If a man speaks lightly, it is not worth taking him to task."<sup>32</sup> None of these interpretations seems satisfactory, but Chao is right, in his second interpretation, in taking the word 責 as meaning "responsibility" rather than in the sense of "taking someone to task". As the first part of the sentence is concerned with speaking, it is no accident that the expression 言責 "responsibility for offering advice" is, in fact, used by Mencius (II.B.5). If we combine this with the first part of Chao's interpretation, we arrive at a more satisfactory interpretation of the whole passage, "If a man speaks lightly it is simply because he has no responsibility of office." Thus the idea expressed is not very different from Mencius' criticism in III.B.9 of 處士橫議 "people with no official positions being uninhibited in the expression of their views".

(19) V.A.4 而舜既爲天子矣, 敢問瞽瞍之非臣如何?

Chao interprets this as meaning, "No one in the Empire is not a subject of the King, yet you say that the Blind Man is not a subject. Why?"<sup>33</sup> Yang translates, "Since Shun was already Emperor, may I ask why the Blind Man was not his subject?"<sup>34</sup> Both interpreters have been misled by the 如 of 如何. Here 如 is used for 而.<sup>35</sup> "非 x 而何" is an idiomatic expression meaning "if it is not x, what is it?" The present text would, then, mean "Now after Shun became Emperor, if the Blind Man was not his subject, what was he?"

<sup>30</sup> 人之輕易其言, 不得失言之咎責。一說, 人之輕易不肯諫正君者, 以其不在言責之位者也 (7B.10a).

<sup>31</sup> "人之所以輕易其言者, 以其未遭失言之責故矣" (Chu, p. 108).

<sup>32</sup> "無責耳矣, 乃言其不足責也。猶曰, 若而人者, 吾無責焉爾" (Yü (1), 1394.3a).

<sup>33</sup> "竊天下僭土之瀆無有非王者之臣而曰瞽瞍非臣, 如何也" (Chao, 9A.10a).

<sup>34</sup> "如果舜既做了天子, 請問瞽瞍却不是臣民又是什麼道理呢?" (Yang (1), p. 216).

<sup>35</sup> See (28) below for cases of 而 used for 如.



(20) V.A.8 “有諸乎？”孟子曰，“否，不然也。”

V.A.5, 6, 7 all have the same question and answer, except that there is no final 乎. “有諸” is a set formula to be found also in I.A.7; I.B.1, 2, 8; II.B.8, 9; and VI.B.2. The present text is not only out of step with the other sections but also grammatically incorrect in having the extra 乎.

(21) V.B.1 伯夷... 思與鄉人處，如以朝衣朝冠坐於塗炭也。

This passage is found also in II.A.12, where the text reads, 立於惡人之朝，與惡人言，如以朝衣朝冠坐於塗炭。推惡惡之心，思與鄉人立，其冠不正，望望然去之，若將浼焉。By comparison, we can see that the text in V.B.1 is defective. It is not in the company of a fellow-villager that Po Yi feels as if he were sitting in mud or pitch while wearing court cap and gown. It is being at the court of a bad man and conversing with him that gives him this feeling. Moreover, Po Yi does not object to the company of a fellow-villager as such but to his cap being awry. Even then, all he did was to walk away in disgust.

(22) V.B.1 思天下之民匹夫匹婦有不被堯舜之澤者，若已推而內之溝中。其自任以天下之重也。

The final sentence is obviously incomplete with only a nominal unit. Yang has suggested that the word 此 should be added to the beginning.<sup>36</sup> Thus the sentence would mean “This is because of his taking on the responsibility of the Empire.” But this is incorrect, and it so happens there is no need for conjecture. In IV.B.7 the same passage is found except that there are the words 如此 at the end. Thus the sentence means, “It is to this extent that he considered the Empire his responsibility.”

(23) VI.A.4 吾弟則愛之，秦人之弟則不愛，是以我爲悅者也... 長楚人之長，亦長吾長，是以長爲悅者也。

The character 悅 is not found in the *Shuo wen*, and in the Classics only the character 說 is used. With the philosophers, the position is confused. The *Analects of Confucius* has no 悅 except as a variant reading in 1/1. In both the *Mo tzu* and the *Chuang tzu*, 悅 is to be found, but in the *Hsün tzu* there are only two instances of 悅 and only one of these is used in the sense of to be pleased.<sup>37</sup> Thus it would seem that in ancient works only 說 was used even where the meaning is “to be pleased”, and that the occurrence of 悅 in some works is due to later editors, perhaps with a view to helping the reader. The *Mencius* belongs to this category. But it is always possible for an editor to have misunderstood a text and substituted a 悅 where the meaning is, in fact, not “to be pleased”. The present passage

<sup>36</sup> Yang (1), p. 234, n. 3.

<sup>37</sup> The other is, according to Sun Yi-jang 孫詒讓 (6.13a), a loan for 悅.

seems to be a case in point. This does not make good sense unless one reads 說 instead of 悅, in which case it can be translated, “My brother I love, but the brother of a man from Ch'in I do not love. This means that the explanation lies in me... Treating an elder of a man from Ch'u as elder is no different from treating the elder of my own family as elder. This means that the explanation lies in their elderliness.”

(24) VI.A.11 人有雞犬放，則知求之；有放心而不知求，學問之道無他，求其放心而已矣。

This passage is found in the *Han shih wai chuan* 韓詩外傳 (4/27) where between the two sentences there is the added passage, 其 (= 豈) 於 [emend to 以] 心爲不若雞犬哉！不知類之甚矣，悲夫！終亦必亡而已矣。The sentence 不知類之甚矣 is similar to 此之謂不知類也 in VI.A.2 and 弗思甚也 in VI.A.13, and 終亦必亡而已矣 is also to be found in two other sections in the same book.<sup>38</sup> It would seem that the *Han shih wai chuan* has a more complete text.

(25) VI.A.16 今之人修其天爵，以要人爵，既得人爵，而棄其天爵，則惑之甚者也，終亦必亡而已矣。

Commentators tend to take the final sentence as referring to the loss, in the end, of the “honours bestowed by man”. But grammatically this is difficult, as 亡 here has no object. Furthermore, this line is to be found also in VI.A.18: 此又與於不仁之甚者也，亦終必亡而已矣.<sup>39</sup> It is difficult here to see what it is that is supposed to be lost if 亡 is taken to mean “to lose”. From Chao onwards, commentators all take this to refer to “the benevolence he did practise”, but this seems forced. I think that, in both cases, 亡 means “to perish” and can be translated “in the end he is sure only to perish”.<sup>40</sup>

(26) VI.B.7 葵丘之會，諸侯束牲載書而不歃血。

There is doubt as to whether 載 is a verb here or not. Chao comments, 但加載書，不復歃血。<sup>41</sup> The interpretation turns on whether 載書 is taken as a term object to the verb 加, or whether 加載 is Chao's way of indicating that 載 is to be taken as a synonym of 加. Mao Ch'i-ling 毛奇齡 favours the first while Chiao Hsün favours the second.<sup>42</sup> It seems possible to settle the point by investigating the usages of 載 and 載書. Cheng Hsün's 鄭玄 commentary to the *Chou li* says, 載，盟辭也 (36.5b), “Tsai is the text of the covenant.” Again, Tu Yü's 預杜 commentary to the *Tso chuan*

<sup>38</sup> Compare (25) below.

<sup>39</sup> And also in VI.A.11 if we follow the *Han shih wai chuan*. See (24) above.

<sup>40</sup> This applies to the sentence as supplied from the *Han shih wai chuan* referred to in (24) above.

<sup>41</sup> MTCS, 12B.2a.

<sup>42</sup> Chiao, 25. 3b-4a.

says, 載書, 盟書 (Duke Hsiang 9), which also amounts to saying that 載書 is the text of the covenant. Now 載書 appears ten times in the *Tso chuan* and it is always a single term, never a verb-object construction. There is a case of 載 being used on its own, 載在盟府, 太師職之 (Duke Hsi 26). Even here it is clear that it is a noun, meaning the "text of the covenant". It would seem that Chiao is wrong about the meaning intended by Chao. All he was doing was to add the verb 加 to make the sense of the text clearer, without intending it to be taken as a synonym of 載. Perhaps he was doing no more than echoing the Ku-liang commentary which says, 葵邱之盟, 陳牲而不殺, 讀書加于牲上 (Duke Hsi 9), where the word 加 is used.

(27) VI.B.12 君子不亮, 惡乎執。

The word 惡 has two pronunciations. In the level tone, it is an interrogative word; in the falling tone it is a verb. Traditionally, it has always been taken in the level tone in the present passage. Chiao, however, quotes Ho Yi-sun 何異孫 of the Yüan who argued in favour of the falling tone.<sup>43</sup> Amongst modern commentators Takeuchi Yoshio is the first one I know of who follows this interpretation. He translates the present passage as: Kunshi no kakawarazaru wa shū wo nikumeba nari.<sup>44</sup> This is, in fact, mistaken, because the particle 乎 does not intervene between verb and object. The particle that does so is 夫.

Even if we take 惡 in the level tone as an interrogative, there still remains the question whether 執 is a verb to which 惡 is the object or not. Chao seems to take it in this way, as he comments, 若爲君子之道, 舍信安執之. ("If one were to follow the way of the gentleman, where can one hold on to if one lets go of fidelity?") (12B.10a). Chu seems to do the same. His comment is, "惡乎執", 言凡事苟且無所執持, (" 'Wu hu chih' means that in all things one is easy-going and there is nothing one holds on to firmly.") (p. 185).

This way of construing the sentence seems to me to be mistaken as well. 惡 in 惡乎 cannot be the object of the verb which follows it. Furthermore, the word that follows 惡乎 has to be an adjective, not a verb. This is clearly shown in other examples in the *Mencius*: (1) 敢問夫子惡乎長 (II.A.2) ("May I ask wherein are you strong?") 長 here is an adjective and as an adjective it is often used in sentences of the form "A 長於 y" ("A is strong in y"), where "於 y" occupies the same position in the answer as 惡乎 in the question. (2) 惡乎宜乎? (III.B.5) ("Wherein would it be suitable?") The expression is used in the same way in the *Analects*, 君子去

仁, 惡乎成名. ("If a gentleman forsakes benevolence, wherein can he be known?") 成名, a verb-object construction, is used in place of a single adjective. Thus 執 has to be taken as an adjective. It cannot mean "to hold on to" but has to mean "inflexible". This use of the word is attested in the *Chuang tzu*. We find in chapter 4 將執而不化 (CTCS, p. 141), and in chapter 25 有主而不執 (p. 909). On this interpretation the present passage can be translated, "Other than adherence to his word, wherein can a gentleman be guilty of inflexibility?"

(28) VII.B.3 以至仁伐至不仁, 而何其血之流杵也?

The *Lun heng*, in quoting this, is right in having 如何 in place of 而何. This is not the only example in the *Mencius* of 而 used for 如. It has been pointed out by Wang Yin-chih that 而 in 望道而未之見 (IV.B.20), should be read as 如 (CCST, p. 143). The use of 而 for 如 in these two examples is comparable to the use of 如 for 而 noted in (19) above. The present passage can be translated, "How could it be that 'the blood spilled was enough to carry staves along with it', when the most benevolent waged war against the most cruel?"

<sup>43</sup> Chiao, 25. 12b.

<sup>44</sup> Takeuchi, p. 281; Kanaya Osamu in his recent translation follows Takeuchi in taking 惡 as a verb: Kunshi no makoto narazaru wa torawaruru wo nikumeba nari (p. 425).