

Impartiality and wuwei

1. Heaven has light and does not care that men are in darkness; Earth is fruitful, and does not care that men are impoverished; the sage (聖) has virtue (德) and does not care that men are imperiled.
2. Although Heaven does not care that men are in darkness, if they open their doors and windows, they will assuredly get light for themselves; but Heaven does nothing (無事).
3. Although Earth does not care that men are impoverished, if they fell the trees and harvest the plants, they will assuredly get wealth for themselves; but Earth does nothing.
4. Although the Sage does not care that men are imperiled, if the people (百姓) conform to the superior and accept their lower status, they will assuredly get peace for themselves; but the Sage does nothing.
5. So the Sage in high position does not harm (不害) men, though he cannot keep men from harming each other. It is the people themselves who eliminate the harm.
6. The Sage possesses the world (天下 = “Empire”) as something he has been given, not as something he has taken; the people take care of the sage, and are not cared for by him; for the sage does nothing.

1: Laozi Ch. 5: *Heaven is not humane: it treats the myriad creatures as straw dogs. The sage is not humane: he treats the people as straw dogs.* Xunzi also stresses the indifference of Heaven and Earth to human concerns.

2: “Does nothing” translates the phrase *wushi*, 無事, which has much the same meaning as *wuwei* 無為. It might also be translated “is not involved”.

4. I have replaced 準 with 順, following Thompson.

“The Sage” is the standard English translation of the phrase 聖人 *sheng ren*. However, in Chinese philosophy the Sage is not merely a wise man, but the wise founder and ruler of a political unit -- usually an empire or kingdom, though in the *Daodejing* it seems to be a stateless utopia. It's a contested term, and the Daoist Sage is different than a Confucian or other Sage. (The American Sages would be the Founding Fathers, perhaps including Lincoln, FDR, or even Ronald Reagan).

5: *The Sage in high position does not harm* (不害) *men*. In chapter 60 of *Laozi* it is said that when the Empire follows Dao the spirits 鬼神 do not harm men, nor does the Sage harm men; in *Laozi* 81, it is said that the Way of Heaven benefits and does not harm. In the *Nei Ye* chapter of *Guanzi* (thought to be from the same tradition as *Laozi*; p. 75, Roth) it is said that the sage is not harmed by men nor vulnerable to others' harm; sageliness is identified with the vital essence 精, which is manifested in the world as the spirits, and in men as sageliness. (As it happens, *bubai* 不害 “does not harm” is Shen Buhai's given name.)

These assurances suggest that the Sage historically traces back to intimidating shaman-like figures who were in communication with the unseen world and possessed of spiritual powers, and who were thus capable either of benefit or of harm, though the Daoist sage is purely benevolent.

(More here:

<http://haquelebac.wordpress.com/2010/11/27/the-freestanding-sage-in-the-daodejing/>)

I B

#7 – #15

7.

毛嬙、西施，天下之至姣；
衣之以皮俱，則見者皆走；易之以玄錫，則行者皆止。

8.

由是觀之，則玄錫色之助也，姣者辭之，則色厭矣。

9.

走背跋躡窮谷，野走千裏，藥；走背辭藥則足廢。

10.

故騰蛇遊霧，飛龍乘雲；
雲罷霧霽，與蚯蚓同矣，則失其所乘也。

11.

故賢而屈於不肖者，權輕也；不肖而能服賢者，位尊也。

12.

堯為匹夫，不能治其鄰家，而桀為天子，能亂天下。

13.

由此觀之，賢未足以服眾，而勢位足以屈賢也。

14.

故無名而斷者，權重也；弩弱而矜高者，乘於風也；身不肖而令行者，得助於眾也。

15.

故舉重越高者，不慢於藥；愛赤子者，不慢於保；絕險歷遠者，不慢於御。此得助則成，釋助則廢矣。

16.

夫三王五伯之德，參於天地，通于鬼神，周於生物者，其得助博也。

Vehicles and helpers

7. Mao Qiang and Xi Shi were the loveliest women in the world. If they had been dressed in demon garb, passersby would have fled from them; if they had changed into fine black linen, passersby would have gathered to look at them.

8. From this we can see that fine black linen is a helper (助) of beauty: if lovely women fail to wear it, their beauty will not please.

9. If porters can cross mountain valleys and walk hundreds of miles through the wilderness, it's because they salve their feet; if the porters fail to salve their feet, their feet will be hurt.

10. Thus

*The serpent soars with the mists, the dragon rides the clouds;
but if the mist and the clouds clear, they both become crawling
worms*

-- because they've lost their vehicle (乘).

11. So, if a worthy (賢) bows down to mediocre man (不肖) it's because the worthy's authority (權) is not weighty ; if a mediocre man submits to a worthy, it's because the worthy's position (位) is honored.

12. When the sage Yao was a peasant, he could not govern even his neighborhood; but when the villain Jie was Emperor, he could disorder the whole world.

13. From this we can see that worth (賢) is not enough to make the multitude obey, whereas a favorable situation (勢) and high position are enough to make even the worthies submit.

14. So if a nobody (無名) makes the decisions, it's because his authority (權) is weighty; if a weak crossbow shoots high, it's because the bolt is carried by the wind; and if a man is mediocre (不肖) but his orders bring results, it's because the multitude (眾) is helping (助) him.

15. Thus, if you carry heavy loads and climb high you are careful about the salve. If you love an infant you are careful about its nurse. If you cross mountain passes and travel far you are careful about your coach. With the help you need (助), you succeed; without it you fail.

16. The reason why the virtue of the Three Emperors and the Five Hegemons matched that of Heaven and Earth, reached the ghosts and the spirits, and embraced all living creatures was that their helpers (助) were many.

118.

燕鼎之重乎千鈞，乘于吳舟則可以濟；
所託者浮道也。

A tripod in Yan weighs thousands of pounds, but loaded on a Wu boat it can cross the water. What bears it up is “the floating road”.

119.

行海者坐而至越，有舟也；行陸者立而至秦，有車也。秦、越遠途也，安坐而至者，械也。

By sea you can travel to Yue sitting down, if you have a boat. On land you can travel to Qin standing, if you have a chariot. Qin and Yue are far away; what makes it possible to sit at ease and go there is a mechanical device.

SP3.

堯教於隸屬而民不聽，至於南面而王天下，令則行，禁則止。

Yao taught at Lishu and the people did not listen, but when he reached the throne and ruled the empire, his commands were followed and his prohibitions were respected.

SP4.

吾以此知勢位之足恃而賢智之不足慕也。

By this we know that a favorable situation and a high position are enough to rely upon, and that worth and wisdom are not.

7, 12: In early life the Emperor Yao developed a reputation for virtue while in difficult circumstances, when even his own family betrayed him. He only later became a great founding Emperor. For Confucians this is the story of the triumph of virtue over adversity, but Shen Dao turned this into an argument Yao's power came entirely from his position as Emperor, and not from his virtue; since the Emperor Jie had enormous power even though he was evil.

Shen Dao, like most Chinese philosophers, uses legendary examples to illustrate his points. These examples are usually strictly conventional; all you need to know about Mao Qiang and Xi Shi, for

example, is that they were legendary beautiful women. Most of those mentioned are legendary sage-kings and founders: in chronological order, Fu Xi, Yao, Shun, and Yü (founder of the Xia dynasty) -- the last three of these are the Three Emperors. (Jie was the final emperor of the dynasty founded by Yü, and is held responsible for the fall of the dynasty just as Yü is given credit for founding it). The Five Hegemons were latest of all, and were of lesser status, since they protected the weak Eastern Zhou dynasty without being able to restore it to power.

From the more recent Shang and Zhou dynasties (the latter of which was canonical for Confucians) only a late bad emperor and a ruler of a lesser state are named. Whether as a Daoist or a Legalist, Shen Dao wanted to separate himself from the Confucian tradition.

9: The fourth graph of Thompson's text includes a rare graph (足 on left + 龠 on right) not found in Karlgren or in the *Ciyuan*. Its phonetic, 龠, is in the 樂 rhyme class. Other graphs in this rhyme class with the 足 classifier are 躒 and 躒, both of which mean "jump" -- perhaps extendable to "jump over" or "cross over". I have inserted 躒 into the text.

13: "Favorable position" 勢 and "power" 權 are key terms in Chinese philosophy. The translations here are adequate for this passage but don't capture the full meaning of either term. See above.

14: "Nobody" = "nameless person". "Name" indicates fame or membership in an eminent family. In a well-ordered state, reputation and family connections will not get you a government job. See also section F below, and #87: *When Dao*

is supreme, names do not dazzle. Worthies 賢 *xian*
aspired to fame and high position and were
famous almost by definition.

I C

#17-#23

17.

古者，工不兼事；士不兼官。工不兼事則事省，事省則易勝；士不兼官則職寡，職寡則易守。故士位可世，工事可常。

18.

百工之子不學而能者，非生而巧也，言有常事也。

19.

今也，國無常道官無常法；是以國家日繆。

20.

教雖成，官不足。官不足則道理匱，道理匱則慕賢智，慕賢智則國家之政要在一人之心矣。

21.

古者，立天子而貴之者，非以利一人也；曰：天下無一貴，則理無由通，通理以為天下也。

22.

故立天子以為天下也，非立天下以為天子也。立國君以為國也，非立國以為君也。立官長以為官，非立官以為長也。

23.

法雖不善，猶愈於無法。

Responsibilities

17. In ancient times, craftsmen had only one trade and officials (士) held only one position. With craftsmen practicing only one trade, the specific tasks are few, and if tasks are few, the trade is easy to master. If officials hold only one office, the specific responsibilities (職) are few, and if the responsibilities are few, the position's demands are easy to satisfy. Thus official positions could be passed down in the family, and crafts could be made standard (常).

18. The sons of the craftsmen do not become competent without schooling because they are born skilful; it is because their crafts had been made standard (常).

19. But today, the state has no standard Dao, and the officials have no standard rule (法); thus the state steadily falls into confusion.

20. Even if their training is good, the officials cannot fulfill their responsibilities; if the officials cannot fulfill their responsibilities, the principles (理) of government are lost; when the principles of government are lost, the people look to the worthies (賢) and the wise (智) for rescue; if the people look to the worthies and the wise, the state's major decisions are left to the discretion of single individuals.

21. Of old, emperors were not enthroned and honored in order to reward a single man. It is said:

If the world does not have one man who is the most honored,

then there will be no way for the basic principles (理) to be proclaimed. The basic principles are proclaimed for the sake of the world.

22. So the emperor is enthroned for sake of the empire; the empire is not established for the sake of the emperor. A prince is enthroned for the sake of a state; a state is not established for the sake of the prince. Officials are established for the sake of their offices; offices are not established for the sake of the officials.

23. Even bad rules are preferable to no rules at all.

17: Confucius, *Analects*, VIII-14: *Do not concern yourself with matters of government unless they are a responsibility of your office.* (See also XIV:26). Shen Buhai #22: *The governmental responsibilities of an official do not extend past the office to which he has been appointed. Even though he may know about matters outside his sphere, he should not talk about them.* (Creel p. 383).

19, 23: *Fa* 法 is normally translated “law”, and the Legalist school, *Fajia* 法家, is the school of *fa*. However, *fa* can mean “rule” or “method” in addition to law, and I have translated “rule” or “law” according to context. “law”. Law, rule, and method are all preexisting standard procedures known in advance and used by everyone; the contrast is with the use of individual judgment on a case by case basis.

I D

#24-#27

24.

夫投鉤分財，投策分馬，非以鉤策為均也；使得美者不知所以德，使得惡者不知所以怨。此所以塞怨望也。

25.

明君動事分職，必由慧；定罪分財，必由法；行德制中必由禮。

26.

故欲不得干時，愛不得犯法； 貴不得踰規，祿不得踰位；
士不得兼官，工不得兼事。

27.

以能受事，以事受利；若是者，上無羨賞，下無羨財。

Standards

24. Lots are drawn to divide up property, and dice are thrown to distribute horses, not because the lots and the dice are fair, but so that those who get the better shares have no one to thank (德), and those who got the worse shares have no one to blame. That way resentment and presumption (望 = “hope”) do not arise.

25. The discerning ruler must initiate projects and assign responsibilities only according to aptitude; he must judge crimes and distribute property only according to law (法); and he must show generosity (德) and exert control only according to protocol (禮).

26. Thus personal desires will not cause violations of the state calendar, and favoritism will not violate the rule; honors will not exceed the limits, and rewards will not surpass those due the position; the officers will not hold multiple offices, and the craftsman will not practice two trades.

27. If tasks are assigned according to ability, and rewards given according to the tasks completed, the elite will not dream of preference and the commoners will not dream of largesse.

27: My interpretation is different than Thompson's and is based on my overall interpretation of Shen Dao's thought. 羨 *xian* can mean either “hope for” or, as Thompson translated it, “excessive.”

70.

折券契，屬符節，賢不教由之。
物以此得而不託於信也。

The division of deeds and the joining of contract tallies are followed both by the worthy and the mediocre. If you have these objects, you do not need good faith (信).

70: See also J 63. In ancient China each party of a contract held one half of a tally stating the mutual obligations, and the two tallies fit together like lock and key, or like pieces of a puzzle.

102.

有權衡者，不可欺以輕重；有尺寸者，不可差以長短；有法度者，不可巧以詐偽。

If you have a scale you cannot be cheated about heavy and light; if you have a yardstick, you cannot be mistaken about long and short; and if you have rules and standards, you cannot be tricked by sophistry and fakery. A state has protocols to distinguish the noble (貴) from the commoner (賤), but not to distinguish the worthy from the mediocre; there are protocols distinguishing young from the old, but none distinguishing the brave from the cowardly; there are protocols distinguishing near from distant kin, but none distinguishing the loved from the hated.

113.

國有貴賤之禮，無賢不肖之禮；有長幼之禮，無勇怯之禮；有親疏之禮，無愛惡之禮也。

A state has protocols to distinguish the noble (貴) from the commoner (賤), but not to distinguish the worthy from the mediocre; there are protocols distinguishing young from the old, but none distinguishing the brave from the cowardly; there are protocols distinguishing near from distant kin, but none distinguishing the loved from the hated.

113: Noble / commoner, young / old, and near/distant are all objective, verifiable, permanent statuses formally recognized by the state. Worthy/mediocre, brave/cowardly, and loved/hated are all subjective judgments of character, which is transient, and such personal qualities should not be taken into consideration when hiring officials and granting rewards. Officials should be appointed on the basis of what they are able to do and rewarded based on their success in fulfilling their assignments.

120.

措鈞石，使禹察錙銖之重，則不識也。懸於權衡，則釐髮之不可差；則不待禹之智；中人之知，莫不足以識之矣。

When calibrating heavy weights, if the great Yu were asked to correct them to a fraction of an ounce, he could not be sure that they were accurate; but if they were put on a balance, no one would go wrong by as much as a hair. There is no need to wait for an intelligence as great as Yu's; the intelligence of the most ordinary man is sufficient for this.

120: Shen Buhai 3: *The ruler must have discriminating methods and correct and definite principles, just as one*

suspends a weight on a balance in order to weigh lightness and heaviness; by this means you unify the assembly of ministers. (Creel p. 352-3.)

Section II

Accommodation

因循

E

#28-#32

28.

天道, 因則大, 化則細; 因也者, 因人之情也。

29.

人莫不自為也; 化而使之為我, 則莫可得而用矣。

30.

是故先王不受祿者不臣, 祿不厚者不與入難。

31.

人不得其所以自為也, 則上不取用焉。

32.

故用人之自為, 不用人之為我, 則莫不可得而用矣。此之謂因。

Self interest

28. The Way of Heaven: accommodation (因) leads to great results, reformation (化) leads to paltry results. “Accommodation” means accommodating human reality (人情).

29. All men act for their own interests (自為). If you try to reform them (化) to instead act for your interest, there will be no one you can successfully employ..

30. Thus the ancient kings did not appoint anyone who would not accept pay, and when in adversity did not rely on anyone whom they did not pay well.

31. If men do not get what they themselves want, their superiors will not be able to employ them successfully.

32. If I rely on men’s working for themselves, and not on their working for me, I can employ any man. This is what is called “accommodation”.

28: Shen Buhai 1-9: *“The ruler’s method is complete acquiescence (“accommodation” 因). He merges his own concerns with the public good, so that as an individual he does not act (無事: Creel, p. 352).*

The translation 人情“human reality” is used here instead of “human nature”, because “human nature” 人性 is a major topic both in Chinese philosophy and in Western philosophy, and Shen Dao uses a different term and what he says is only distantly part of that discussion. In his “Background of the Mencian theory of human nature” A.C. Graham argues that 情, now

“passions and emotions”, originally meant something like “fundamental reality”. The translation “human feelings” would probably be OK too; human feelings are a key human reality.

29: *All men act for their own interests (自為). If you try to reform them (化) to instead act for your interest, there will be no one you can successfully employ.*

Acting for your own interest, rather than self-sacrificingly, was Yang Zhu’s teaching. Mencius thought that Yangist egoism would lead to anarchy and chaos, whereas Shen Dao developed forms of administration and government appropriate to a more individualistic age.

Shen Dao, like Laozi, proposed to govern people as they are, without improving or transforming them. By contrast, transformation 化 *hua* was a key part of the Confucian program. Without the benign influence of the sages, people are uncultivated and crude:

Only he who is entirely true to himself can transform the world (Doctrine of the Mean, # 23, my translation)

Wherever the superior man passes through, transformation follows; wherever he abides, his influence is of a spiritual nature. From day to day they make progress toward what is good, without knowing what makes them do so. (Mencius VII A 13 3)

81.

為毳者患塗之泥也

The maker of mud-boards maintains that muddy roads are calamitous.

81: The point seem to be the same as in the case of the coffinmaker in #103 below, though it may be that a “not” has been dropped, since the makers of mudboards make more money when the roads are muddy.

99.

家富則疏族聚，家貧則兄弟離；
非不相愛，利不足相容也。

If a family is rich distant relatives arrive; if a family is poor brothers live apart. It's not that they don't love one another, but that their wealth is not enough to include them all.

101.

海與山爭水，海必得之

When the sea and the mountain fight for water, the sea always wins.

101: The downward tendency of water is a central theme of the *Daodejing* and is frequently seen elsewhere in Chinese philosophy. Mozi: *Therefore the big rivers do not despise the little brooks as tributaries.* (Ch. I, “Qin Shi”). Shang Yang: *For people's attitude toward profit is just like the tendency of water to flow downwards, without preference for any of the four sides* (Book V: 23, Duyvendak tr. P. 316). Confucius and Mencius thought quite differently about low-lying

areas, which is where filth gathers: "*The superior man hates to dwell in a low-lying position*" (*Analects XIX-20*) – see also #55 below.

103.

匠人成棺，不憎人死，利之所在，忘其醜也。

A coffinmaker is not bothered by death; where there's profit, uncleanness is forgotten.

110.

河下龍門，其流駛如竹箭，駟馬追之不能及。

Where the river comes down through the Dragon Gate, its current is as fast as a bamboo arrow; even four horses in hot pursuit cannot over take it.

110: The Dragon Gate is near the great bend in NW China where the south-flowing Yellow River turns east. Perhaps this is just a metaphor for the power of *shi* (勢), "situation", which in *Sunzi* is compared to potential energy which is irresistible once unleashed. In the context of this section the irresistible force of *shi* would be human reality or human feelings (人情) which will do your work for you if you accommodate (因) them.

Section III

The people are various

民雜

F

#33-#37

33.

民雜處而各有所能; 所能者不同. 此民之情也。

34.

大君者大上也，兼畜下者也; 下之所能不同而皆上之用也。

35.

是以大君因民之能為資，盡苞而畜之，無去取焉。

36.

是故不設一方以求於人; 故所求者無不足也。

37.

大君不擇其下，故足也; 不擇其下則易為下矣。
易為下則下莫不容，莫不容故多下; 多下之謂大上。

Skills

33. The people (民) in their various circumstances all have their own abilities, and these abilities are not the same. This is the reality of the people.
34. The greatest of rulers take care of (畜) all their subjects; the subjects' capacities are various, and all of them are useful to the sovereign.
35. So the great ruler accepts (因) the people's capacities as his material (資), and treasures (苞 = 葆) and cares for (畜) all of them without favoring or rejecting any.
36. He does not have just a single criterion for what he looks for in men, so everything he finds is good enough.
37. The great ruler is not particular, and his subjects are all good enough; because he is not particular, becoming his subject is easy; since becoming his subject is easy, none will be excluded; if none is excluded, the subjects will be many. A ruler with many subjects is called a high sovereign.

37: Thompson (p. 527) recognizes the relationship between Shen Tao F 35 and chapters 27 and 61 of *Laozi*. Ch. 27: *Hence the sage is always good at saving people, and so abandons no one.... the bad man is the material 資 for the good man.* Ch. 61: *Thus all the great state wants is to care for 畜 men'* (my tr.). See also Chs. 49 and 62. Ch. 49: *Those who are good I treat as good. Those who are not good I also treat as good.* Ch. 63: *[Tao] is the treasure 葆 bao of the good man and that by which the bad man is protected 保 bao.... Even if a man is not good, should he be abandoned?* It seems likely to me that *Laozi* draws on Shen Dao here.

68.

治水者，茨防決塞，雖在夷貊；相似如一；學之於水，不學之於禹也。

In channeling water you raise the embankments and remove the blockages — even among the barbarians it is the same. You learn this from water, not from the Great Yü.

68: The Great Yü was one of the Three Emperors and the founder of the Xia dynasty and is credited with the first flood control projects. In some legends he's a superhuman figure, but most Chinese philosophers treat these legendary figures as purely human, though almost unimaginably great and good.

71.

離朱之明，察毫末於百步之外；下於水，尺而不能見淺深；非目不明也，其勢難覩也。

Li Zhu's eyesight was so sharp that he could distinguish the tip of a hair at more than a hundred paces; but beyond one foot he couldn't tell if water was shallow or deep. This was not because his eyes were not sharp, but because the situation made it hard to see.

71: Li Zhu was the stock example of sharp eyesight.

79.

以力役法者，百姓也；以死守法者，有司也；以道變法者，君長也。

Those who use their strength in the service of the law are the common people (百姓); those who defend the law to the death are the officeholders (有司); the one who adapts the law according to Dao is the ruler and leader.

86.

夫道所以使賢，無奈不肖何也，所以使智，無奈愚何也。若此則謂之道勝矣。

The Dao of employing the worthy does not leave out the mediocrity out; the Dao of employing the intelligent does not leave out the dull. When this is the case then Dao may be said to be supreme.

87. 道勝則名不彰。

When Dao is supreme, names (名) do not dazzle.

87: See also B 14. “Names” refers to fame and family status, which ideally do not influence appointments and rewards.

89. 臣下閉口，左右結舌。

Servants and inferiors keep their mouths shut, attendants bite their tongues.

96. 小人食於力，君子食於道。

An ordinary man supports himself with his strength, a superior man supports himself with Dao.

106. 勁而害能則亂也; 云能而害無能則亂也。

If the strong harm the capable, there will be chaos; if those thought capable harm those who are less capable, there will be chaos.

114. 公輸子巧用材也，不能以檀為瑟。

Gongshu Zi was a skilled woodworker, but even he could not make a lute out of spindlewood.

114: Gongshu Zi was the stock example of a great craftsman. This fragment is presumably a warning against overdoing it. While Shen Dao advises that a prince's agents need not be men of great excellence, he reminds us here that some men are worthless for any purpose.

III G

#38 -#45

38.

君臣之道，臣事事而君無事；君逸樂而臣任勞；臣盡智力以善其事而君無與焉，仰成而已；故事無不治。治之正道然也。

39.

人君自任而務為善以先下，則是代下負任蒙勞也；臣反逸矣。

40.

故曰：君人者好為善以先下，則下不敢與君爭為善以先君矣。

41.

....皆私其所知以自覆掩；有過，則臣反責君；逆亂之道也。

42.

君之智未必最賢於眾也。

以未最賢而欲以善盡被下，則不贍矣。

43.

若使君之智最賢，以一君而盡贍下則勞；勞則有倦，倦則衰，衰則復反於不贍之道也。

44.

是以人君自任而躬事，則臣不事事矣。是君臣易位也，謂之倒逆，倒逆則亂矣。

45.

人君任臣而勿自躬，則臣皆事事矣。是君臣之順，治亂之分，不可不察也。

The Role of the Prince

38. The Dao of the prince and the minister: the minister performs his task and the prince has no task; the prince is relaxed and happy and the minister takes on the labor; the minister uses all his knowledge and strength to perform his job satisfactorily, and the prince does not share in the labor, but merely waits for the job to be finished. As a result, every task is taken care of. The correct way of government is thus.

39. When a ruler of men takes tasks onto himself and competes in benevolence (善) with his subordinate officials, he encroaches on the officials' responsibilities, and the officials become lax.

40. Thus it is said:

If the ruler of men contests with his subordinates in benevolence, then the subordinates will not dare to compete with the prince's efforts.

41. [In such a case every subordinate] will try to avoid attention by hiding things he knows, and if there is an error the minister shifts the blame to the prince. This is the way of disobedience and chaos.

42. The prince's understanding need not be the most excellent. If his understanding is not the most excellent but he still tries himself to do everything for his subjects, he will be insufficient to the task.

43. But even supposing that the prince's understanding were the best of all, for a prince singlehandedly to take on all the subordinate responsibilities would be toilsome; toil leads to fatigue, fatigue leads to exhaustion, which then brings him again to insufficiency.

44. Thus if a ruler of men takes tasks on himself and does the job in person, the ministers will not do their jobs. Ruler and minister have switched places; this is called "topsy-turvy". When things are topsy-turvy, chaos follows.

45. The ruler of men assigns tasks to his ministers and does not himself work; the ministers do the work. This is the normal pattern of prince-minister relations and marks the difference between order and chaos. We cannot fail to attend to this principle.

41: Thompson marks this passage as incomplete.

45: Shen Buhai 1-4, 1-7, and 17-1 (Creel pp. 346-8, 350, and 367-70) are too long to cite here but make many of the same points.

107.

棄道術，舍度量，以求一人之識識天下，誰子之識能足焉？

To reject Tao and rules (法) and ignore standards and measures, and seek through a single man's knowledge to understand the world – what man would be capable of doing this?

111.

昔者，天子手能衣而宰夫設服，足能行而相者導進，口能言而行人稱辭，故無失言失禮也。

In ancient times the Emperor was able to dress himself, but his chamberlains would put on his robes; he was able to walk, but his master of protocol would lead the guests in; he was able to speak, but his diplomatic representatives would proclaim his words. As a consequence, his actions and court speech were never in error.

121.

君臣之間，猶權衡也。權左輕則右重，右輕則左重。輕重迭相櫛。天地之理也。

The relationship between a ruler and his minister is like a balance. If the left arm is light the right is heavy, if right arm is light the left is heavy. The light and the heavy are mutually defining; this is a principle of Heaven and Earth.

Section IV

Understanding loyalty

知忠

H (p.1)

#46-#56

46.

亂世之中，亡國之臣，非獨無忠臣也；治國之中，顯君之臣，非獨能盡忠也。

47.

治國之人，忠不偏於其君；亂世之人，諂不偏於其臣；然而治亂之世，同世有忠諂之人。

48.

臣之欲忠者不絕世，而君未得寧其上也；無遇比干、子胥之忠，而毀瘁於閹墨之中，遂染溺滅名而死。

49.

由是觀之，忠未足以救亂世，而適足以重非。何以識其然也？曰：有良子而舜放瞽叟；桀有忠臣而過盈天下。

50.

然則孝子不生慈父之家，而忠臣不生聖君之下。

Loyalty

46. The ministers of a doomed state in a disordered age are not all disloyal ministers; the ministers of a well-ordered state who bring renown to their prince are not necessarily all devotedly loyal (忠).

47. The men of a well-ordered state are not exclusively loyal to their prince; the men of a disordered era are not exclusively deceivers. Either in a well-ordered or in a disordered era, both loyal and treacherous men are to be found.

48. In every age there have been ministers who intended to serve loyally, but whose princes could not rest easy on their thrones. Even princes with ministers as courageously loyal as Pi Kan or Wu Tzu-hsu could go to their deaths amid darkness, infamy and evil.

49. This shows us that loyalty is not enough to save a chaotic age, but instead can be something that multiplies its evils. How do we know that this is so? It is said:

*A father had a worthy son, but Shun banished Gusou;
Jie had loyal ministers, but crime filled the empire.*

50. Thus:

*An obedient son is not born to an indulgent father;
loyal ministers do not arise under a sage prince.*

IV H (p. 2)

51.故明主之使其臣也，忠不得過職，而職不得過官;是以過修於身而下不敢以善驕矜。

52.

守職之吏，人務其治而莫敢淫偷其事,公正以敬其業，和順以事其上;如此則至治已。

53.

亡國之君，非一人之罪也；治國之君，非一人之力也。

54.

將治亂在乎賢使任職，而不在於忠也。故：智盈天下，澤及其君；忠盈天下，害及其國。

55.

故桀之所以亡，堯不能以為存;然而堯有不勝之善，而桀有運非之名;則得人與失人也。。

56.

故廊廟之材，蓋非一木之枝也；狐白之裘，蓋非一狐之皮也。治亂安危存亡榮辱之施,非一人之力也。

51. When an enlightened prince employs his officials, their diligence (忠) is not allowed to go beyond their assigned tasks, and their assigned tasks do not go beyond those of their office. In this way their errors can be individually remedied, and subordinates do not dare to aggrandize themselves by their benevolence (善).

52. When the officers assigned to their positions maintain order, none of them daring to exceed their assigned tasks, and when they with impartial and correct diligence obediently and harmoniously serve their superiors, perfect order has been attained.

53. If a prince brings his state to ruin, it's not just the error of a single man; if a prince brings his state to order, it's not just the effort of a single man.

54. The ordering of disorder lies in worthy (賢) officers accepting their assignments, and not in their loyalty (忠). Thus:

*If knowledge fills the world, prosperity comes to the prince;
if loyalty fills the world, harm comes to the state.*

55. So Yao could not have survived what destroyed Jie, but is credited with unsurpassed goodness while Jie's name is notorious for all-pervading evil. One was served well by his men, and the other was not.

56. Thus the timber in the Great Hall of State is not cut from a single tree; a white fox-fur coat is not made of the fur of a single fox; and order and disorder, security and peril, glory and disgrace do not come from the efforts of one man.

88. 趨事之有司，賤也。

Overeager officeholders are unworthy.

47. Pi Kan and Wu Tzu-hsu were ministers famous for their rectitude; both served evil emperors and were executed when they tried to remonstrate these emperors about their failings.

Thompson has difficulty with this passage, and my translation is somewhat conjectural. Originally *tao* 譎 here was written *dao* 道, and I have accepted Kuo Jingfan's suggestion (cited but rejected by Thompson) that the latter was just a phonetic substitution for the former, which I inserted into the text. I get about the same interpretation of the passage as Thompson, but without his far-fetched reading of the word *dao* 道 (dissertation, p. 531).

Shen Dao's overall argument is that when a state cannot fall into chaos or be saved from chaos merely by the corruption or dedication of single individuals, whether princes or ministers. A well-ordered state does not rely on single individuals but has disciplinary structures in place which maintain its order. Heroic individuals cannot save a poorly-ordered state, and corrupt individuals cannot destroy a well-ordered state. In the process of making this point he exaggerates somewhat, since an all-powerful sovereign can destroy these disciplinary structures. But he's arguing that the fall of Xia cannot be assumed to have been simply the consequence of Jie's evil, and that Jie might have inherited and already-disordered state.

49: Jie was the evil final emperor of the Xia dynasty.

*This shows us that loyalty is not enough to save a chaotic age, but instead can be something that multiplies its problems.... If loyalty fills the world, harm comes to the state. 忠 is usually translated “loyalty” and I have followed the custom. That is often but not always its meaning (see Goldin, 2008). In many contexts it means something like “conscientiousness” or “diligence” or “attentiveness”. In my opinion the best single translation might be “dedication / dedicated”, which overlaps with conscientiousness and loyalty. The general point being made is not dependent on the translation: The problem with loyalty / diligence is that it cannot save a badly-ordered state, so that if such a state relies on loyal or heroically diligent ministers to save it, it will fail. (Laozi 18: *When the state has fallen into confusion and disorder, then there are loyal ministers.*)*

A well-run state does not need to rely on exceptional efforts: if ordinary men correctly do their assigned tasks, that will be enough. And if a state does rely on heroic effort, that is a sign that it is in trouble.

49, 50: Shun, the second of the Three Great Emperors, was the son of a worthless father, Gusou, whom he banished. The message is that rulers cannot rely even on their kin to be virtuous.

51: My interpretation here is significantly different than Thompson's. “Errors can be individually remedied” is a guess.

54: *If knowledge fills the world, prosperity comes to the prince.* usually knowledge and are paired and both evaluated negatively, rather than contrasted as here. Perhaps this should read *If knowledge fills the world, crime (賊) reaches the prince.*

The ordering of disorder lies in worthy (賢) officers accepting their assignments. Shen Dao is generally not friendly to the worthies. Perhaps his point is that when worthies quietly accept their assignments rather than contending for honor and position, disorder will cease. But would worthies who quietly accepted their assignments really be worthies?

55: Yao was the first of the three great founding emperors, whereas Jie was the evil final emperor of the Xia dynasty. The point is that without help neither could have done what they did, for good or evil. A similar case: *Tzu-kung said "Chou [the evil last emperor of the Shang dynasty] was not as wicked as all that. That is why the gentleman bates to dwell downstream, for it is there that all that is sordid in the Empire finds its way.* (*Analects XIX-20, Lau tr.*)

56: *Mozi, "Qin Shi": The fur coat that is worth a thousand yi is not composed of the white fur of a single fox.* (This early chapter of Mozi is eclectic and probably late.)

Section V

Virtue Established

德立

I

#57-#60

57.

立天子者,不使諸侯疑焉;立諸侯者,不使大夫疑焉;立正妻者,不使嬖妾疑焉;立嫡子者,不使庶孽疑焉.疑則動,兩則爭,雜則相傷;害在有與,不在獨也。

58.

故臣有兩位者,國必亂.臣兩位而國不亂者,君猶在也.恃君而不亂矣,失君必亂.

59.

子有兩位者,家必亂.子兩位而家不亂者,親猶在也.恃親而不亂矣,失親必亂。

60.

臣疑其君,無不危之國;孽疑其宗,無不危之家。

Ownership

57. An Emperor is crowned so that the Great Lords will not question (疑) his status; a great lord is crowned so that the lesser nobles will not question his status; the primary wife is established so that the concubines will not question her status; the crown prince is established so that the sons of concubines will not question his status. Where there is questioning there will be instability; where there are two contenders there will be trouble; where there are many contenders there will be harm. Trouble comes from sharing, but not from sole possession.

58. Thus, if two ministers share an appointment, the state must fall into chaos. If two ministers share an appointment without throwing the state into chaos it will be because the prince is still alive. Order depends on the prince; without him there would be chaos.

59. If two sons are of the highest status, the house must fall into chaos. If two sons are of the highest status and the house does not fall into chaos it will be because the parents are still alive. Order depends on the parents; without them there would be chaos.

60. If a minister questions (疑) his lord's position, the state will necessarily be endangered. If a concubine's son questions the succession, the house must necessarily be endangered.

82. 一兔走街，百人逐之；非一兔足為百人分也，由未定分也。分未定，堯且屈力而況眾人乎？積兔滿市，過者不顧；非不欲兔也，分已定矣。分已定，人雖鄙不爭。故治天下及國，在乎定分而已矣。

If a rabbit runs down the street, a hundred men will chase it: while one rabbit is not enough for a hundred men, ownership (分, lit. “division, portion”) has not yet been assigned. If ownership is unknown, even the sage king Yao would run after it, and how much more so the multitude? But if rabbits are heaped in the market, passersby don’t even look: it’s not that they don’t like rabbit, it’s that ownership has been established. If ownership has been assigned, even a beggar won’t grab one. From ruling the empire down to a state, the establishment of ownership is all you need.

98. 兩貴不相事；兩賤不相使。

If two are equally honored, neither will serve the other; if two are equally lowly, neither will work for the other.

109. 多賢，不可以多君；無賢，不可以無君。

There can be many worthies, but there cannot be many rulers; there can be no worthies, but there cannot be no ruler.

57: Thompson translates an emended version of #57, but I think that the original “doubt”, in the verbal sense of “question, cast doubt upon” is good enough. “Covet” is really the idea. *Hanfeizi* XVII: 44 develops these ideas at length (tr. Liao,

“On Assumers”, pp. 216- 229).

58: Shen Buhai 1-1 seems to make the opposite point: *When one wife gains excessive influence with the husband, all the wives are thrown into disorder.* (Creel, p.343). But Shen Dao is talking about the unique certainty of succession and unique responsibility for specific tasks, whereas Shen Buhai is talking about one wife’s or one minister’s monopoly of influence over the ruler, which might allow the wife or minister to supplant the ruler entirely (as the Japanese Shogun did the Mikado, and as the Persian Sultan did the Caliph) . (On the other hand, in 17-5, p. 377 Shen Buhai seems to speak favorably of Guanzi’s total control of Duke Huan’s government, apparently contradicting his statement in 1-1).

98: Shen Buhai 10: *Those whose intelligence is equal cannot command each other; those whose strength is equal cannot overcome each other.* (Creel, p. 360).

Section VI

Prince and Subject

君人

J

#61-#65

61.

君人者，舍法而以身治，則誅賞奪與從君心出矣。然則受賞者雖當，望多無窮；受罰者雖當，望輕無已。

62.

君舍法而以心裁輕重，則是同功殊賞，同罪殊罰也；怨之所由生也。

63.

是以分馬者之用策，分田者之用鉤也，非以鉤策為過人智也；所以去私塞怨也。

64.

故曰：大君任法而弗躬為，則事斷於法矣。

65.

法之所加，各以其分蒙其賞罰，而無望於君也。是以怨不生而上下和矣。

Favoritism

61. If the ruler of men ignores the rules and governs in person, then punishment and reward, exactions and grants are decided according to the ruler's moods. Thus, someone who has been properly rewarded will still hope (望) for more, and someone who has been justly punished will always hope (望) for remission.

62. If the prince ignores the rules (法) and personally assigns merit and demerit according to his mood, then identical services will receive differing rewards, and identical offenses will receive differing punishments. This breeds grievances.

63. So when lots are used when dividing up horses, and dice are used when apportioning land, it's not because the lots and the dice are wiser than men, but because this is a way to exclude favoritism and preclude grievances.

64. Thus it is said:

The great prince relies on rules (法) and does not act on his own; cases are decided by rule.

65. When the rules are applied, with each receiving his allotted reward or punishment, no one hopes for anything (望) the prince. Therefore grievances do not arise and the ruler and his subjects are in harmony.

63: On dividing by lot, see D 24 and D70. On 望, see B 24.

Section VII

Prince and Minister

君臣

K

#66-#67

66.

為人君者不多聽; 據法倚數以觀得失。

67.

無法之言, 不聽於耳; 無法之勞, 不圖於功; 無勞之親, 不任於官。官不私親, 法不遺愛; 上下無事, 唯法所在。

Counsel

66. The ruler of men does not listen to many voices; he relies on rules and methods to survey the advantages and disadvantages.

67. Do not listen to unlawful advice; do not plan unlawful exploits. Do not appoint lazy relatives to office, and do not let officials favor their own relatives: the law should not recognize affection and attachments. The avoidance of problems between high and low comes only from law.

100.

諺云：不聽不明，不能為王；不瞽不聾，不能為公

。

A proverb says:

Without sharp eyesight and acute hearing, you cannot be Emperor; without deafness and blindness, you cannot rule justly.

100: Mencius V B-1: *Po Yi would neither look at improper sights with his eyes nor listen to improper sounds with his ears.*

Shen Buhai 17-2: *By what can I know that he is deaf? By the keenness of his ears. By what can I know that he is blind? By the clarity of his sight* (Creel, pp. 383-4).

Shen Buhai 1-5: *Therefore the skillful ruler avails himself of an appearance of stupidity.... He hides his motives and covers his tracks* (Creel, p. 348-349).

Shen Buhai 16: *If the ruler's intelligence is displayed, men will prepare against it; if his lack of intelligence is displayed, they will delude him* (Creel, p. 364-6). See also Shen Buhai 23-24 (Creel pp. 283-5).

Both Shens advise the ruler to be aloof. Shen Dao is warning the ruler not only against paying attention to inappropriate requests, but also not to get lost in the weeds of detail. Shen Buhai's first passage warns against micromanagement, but the second and third passages recommend that the ruler be secretive in order to prevent presumption and scheming (Shen Dao makes these points in K61, K67 and D24.)

XI: L.

73-78

73

故蓍龜，所以立公識也；權衡，所以立公正也；書契，所以立公信也；度量，所以立公審也；法制禮籍，所以立公義也。凡立公，所以棄私也。

74

禮從俗，政從上，使從君。

75

法之功，莫大於使私不行；君之功，莫大於使民不爭。

76

今立法而行私，是私與法爭；其亂甚於無法。立君而尊賢，是賢與君爭；其亂甚於無君。

77

故有道之國，法立則私善不行，君立則賢者不尊；民一於君，事斷於法，國之大道也。

78

故治國， 無其法則亂； 守法而不變則衰；
有法而行私，謂之不法。

Fragments #73-#78 (from the I Wen Lei Chü, Thompson's Group XI) were not part of Shen Maoshang's Shenzi but can be read consecutively as a coherent group, so I have translated them as group L.

Private interests

73 Thus divination is the means by which a public (公) understanding is established; scales are the means by which a public measure is established; written documents are the means by which public good faith is established; units of length and volume are the means by which public criteria are established; legal procedures and books of protocol are the means by which public justice is established. In every case a public (公) form is established, and private (私) codes rejected.

74 Ceremonial protocols follow custom, administration follows the sovereign, state agents follow the prince.

75 The greatest accomplishment of the law is to prevent the advancement of private interests (私); the greatest accomplishment of the prince is to prevent conflict among the people.

76 Yet today those who establish the law also advance private interest. This means that private interests contend with the law, which is a greater disorder than having no law. Those who establish the prince also honor the worthies. This means that the worthies contend with the prince, which is worse than having no prince.

77

In a state following Dao, the law is established so that private benevolence (私善) does not develop; the prince is established so that the worthies are not honored; the people are united with the prince, and cases are decided according to law. This is the great way of states.

78 Thus a state governed without law falls into chaos; law maintained unadapted (不變) leads to decline; the pursuit of private interests within the law is called lawlessness.

73: “Private” (私) can also mean “secret” or even “indecent” and has an implication of selfishness.

76: *Those who establish the prince also honor the worthies. This means that the prince contends with the worthies, which is worse than having no prince.* This is one of the key points made by the Legalists against the Confucians. In public service, too much is as bad as not enough — as Confucius also said. “Worthies” are ambitious and competitive, devoted to the pursuit of honor and reputation and reluctant to limit themselves to a specific assigned task. A worthy in government service might use government funds to benefit the people, thus depriving the government of revenue while gaining himself a reputation for benevolence. (This is the private benevolence 私善 spoken of). When this happens, the ruler has lost control of the government (lost his situational advantage, 勢), and in the worst case the worthy relies on his popularity to usurp the throne. (The Zhou dynasty was founded exactly this way.)

Shang Yang II:7: *The benevolent always take concern for others as their aim, but the worthy make it their way to excel each other....When they established a ruler, elevating worth was abandoned for honoring rank.* (Duyvendak tr. P. 226; Graham, *Disputers of the Dao*, p. 272; my adapted translation). *Daodejing* 3: *Do not honor men of worth, so that the people do not contend.* 19: *Make the selfish interests 私 few.* In Chapters 75 and 77 the

worthy is also seen as competitive; this competition is renounced in 77.

Scattered Fragments (M-Q)

Groups M-Q consist of 23 fragments in #68-123 and SP1-SP5 which I was not able to fit into groups A-L somewhere. These fragments are isolated and often very brief and can be hard to interpret (or even translate) with any assurance (though I have speculated about several of them). I originally intended simply to leave them out, but decided to include them for the sake of completeness. I have divided them thematically into groups M through Q.

M. War

92

眾之勝寡，必也

That the many will overcome the few is a certainty.

104

藏甲之國必有兵遁。

A state which keeps armed men will inevitably have desertions from the battlefield.

104: A rather doubtful translation. I have replaced 道 with 遁, following Thompson.

105

市人可驅而戰; 安國之兵不由忿起。

“We can round men up in the marketplace and fight” – this means that arms which make the state secure are not raised up in rancor.

112

有勇不以怒，反與怯均也。

If one possesses courage one does not act in anger but behaves as though one were cowardly.

112: Without more context it's hard to be sure what these passages are getting at. #112 seems to reject bellicosity, making Shen Dao seem more anti- than pro-war -- though he was equally likely just to be advocating a disciplined military and a cool-headed foreign policy.

N. Punishments

108

有虞之誅，以畫詭當黥，以草纓當劓，以履菲當刖，以艾鞶當宮，布衣無領當大辟，此有虞之誅也。

In the penal code of the Yu dynasty, the drawing of strange designs on the face represented the staining of facial incisions; the wearing of a hatstring made of washed mourning cloth represented the cutting off of the nose; the wearing of grass sandals represented the amputation of the feet; the cutting off of a piece of the front-skirt represented castration; a hemp-cloth jacket without a collar represented capital punishment. Such was the penal code of the Yu dynasty.

孔子云：有虞氏不賞不罰；夏后氏賞而不罰；殷人罰而不賞，周人賞且罰。罰，禁也；賞，使也。

Confucius said: The great Yu neither rewarded nor punished; the Xia Dynasty rewarded but did not punish; the Shang dynasty punished and did not reward; the Zhou dynasty both rewarded and punished. Punishments prevent action, and rewards encourage action.

斬人肢體，鑿其肌膚，謂之刑；畫衣冠，異章服，謂之戮。上世用戮而民不犯也，當世用刑而民不從。

Among punishments, to cut off men's limbs or pierce their flesh is mutilation; to mark their caps or alter their robes is called shaming. In previous ages shame was used and the people did not rebel; in the present age punishments are used and the people do not obey.

117: This may be an indication that Shen Dao, like the Confucians and the authors of *Daodejing* (but unlike Shang Yang, Hanfeizi, and Xunzi) opposed excessively severe punishments. In poorly managed states which rely on the heroic loyalty of their servants rather than on a disciplined body of well-trained officers fulfilling their assigned tasks, failure is often interpreted as disloyalty or lack of diligence and brutally punished, and it is in states of this description that usurpation is most to be feared. In well-ordered states such severity is not required.

O. Mysticism

(Some of these passages may be mystical just because I don't understand them).

83

獸伏就穢。

When beasts hide they go into the weeds.

84

夫德精微而不見，聰明而不發。是故外物不累其內。

The virtue essence (德精) is subtle and invisible, acute and inexhaustible. Thus external things do not clog its interior.

84: Daoist in feeling, and perhaps also Yangist.

122

飲過度者生水；食過度者生食。

Water is produced by one who drinks beyond measure.
Gluttony is produced in one who eats beyond measure.

123

晝無事者，夜不夢。

No tasks in the daytime, no dreams at night.

SP1

知不知，將薄知而後鄰傷之

To know is not to know: despise knowledge and work to destroy it and get rid of it.

SP1: Ascribed to Shen Dao in Zhuangzi's "Tianxia" chapter.

Analects II-17: To say that you know when you know, and to say that you do not know when you do not know, that is knowledge.

Laozi, 71 (Lau tr.): *To know yet to think that one does not know is best; not to know yet to think that one knows will put one in difficulty.*

SP2

至於若無知之物而已，無用賢聖，夫塊不失道。

Just attain the mindlessness of a thing, and avoid sageliness and eminence; a clod does not depart from the Dao.

SP2: Also from Zhuangzi.

SP5

匠人知為門，能以門，所以不知門也。故必杜然後能門。

A carpenter might know how to make a door, but if he made one that opened but wouldn't shut, he wouldn't know doors.

SP5: Not translated by Thompson; my translation is highly conjectural.

P. Sages

69

田駢名廣。

Tian Pian's personal name was named Guang.

69: Tian Pian was an associate of Shen Dao's. Almost nothing else is known about him.

80

蒼頡在庖犧之前。

Cang Jie lived earlier than Fu Xi.

80: Fu Xi was one of the earliest of the Chinese cultural heroes, before Yao and Shun; Cang Jie, of whom this may be the earliest surviving reference, was the man who invented writing and presumably the god or culture hero of scribes and bureaucrats. Most of the other sages and culture heroes referred to in Shen Dao are stock examples, but Cang Jie is seldom mentioned by anyone, so the priority given Cang Jie in this fragment tells us something about Shen Dao.

85

世高節士。

The world exalts gentlemen of strict virtue.

90

久處無過之地，則世俗聽矣。

If a ruler remains free of error for a long while, the general public will finally obey him.

115

孔子曰：丘少而好學，晚而聞道；以此博矣。

Confucius said: When I, Qiu, was young I loved study, and when old heard the Dao; it is for this reason that his knowledge was comprehensive.

115: Shen Buhai, #14: *The Master said, "I, Qiu, when young was fond of study, and later on heard the way; it is for this reason that I became learned.*

Q. History

72

堯讓許由，舜讓善卷；皆辭為天子而退為匹夫。

Yao offered to abdicate to Xu You, and Shun offered to abdicate to Shan Zhuan, but both declined to become Emperor and retreated to live as peasants.

72: This story is most of what we know about Xu You and Shan Zhuan.

91

昔周室之衰也，厲王擾亂天下，諸侯力政，人欲獨行以相兼

。

Of old during the decline of the Zhou dynasty Emperor Li led the empire into chaos, and the Great Lords governed by force, each wanting to act independently and appropriate the other's land.

91: The Zhou Dynasty was regarded by the Confucians as the golden age; it's probably significant that Shen Dao mentions their worst ruler.

95

魯莊公鑄大鐘，曹翮入見曰：今國褊小而鐘大，君何不圖之？

Duke Zhuang of Lu was casting a great bell, and Cao Gui went before him and said “Your state is small but your bell is large; why did you not consider this?”

95: Lu was Confucius’ state, which by Shen Dao’s time it had been absorbed by a larger state. It’s probably significant that the Lu ruler does not look good here.

97

詩，往志也；書，往誥也；春秋，往事也。

The Book of Poetry is past aspirations; the Book of History is past exhortations; the Chunqiu Annals are past events.

About the translation

In 1979 P. M. Thompson published *The Shen Tzu Fragments* (Oxford, 1979), a careful attempt to separate the actual words of Shen Dao from the legendary and pseudoepigraphical accretions. For reasons of his own, however, when Thompson published his textual reconstruction he chose not to publish the translation which was part of the PhD dissertation from which his book was taken (*A Translation of the Shen Tzu Fragments*, vol. 3 of unpublished dissertation, U. Washington, Seattle). As a result, the recovered Shen Dao text has so far been available only to those who can read classical Chinese.

In this translation I have used Thompson's edited text (inserting some of his suggested emendations) and have generally followed Thompson's interpretations, noting the cases where I have disagreed with Thompson. The greater part of the Shen Dao corpus is unproblematic and can be straightforwardly translated. There are also a number of passages which are difficult only because of a single obscure word or phrase, but Thompson has satisfactorily decided most of these cases. (In cases where I was uncertain I sometimes followed Thompson's version *faute de mieux*, which is not quite fair since he chose not to publish his translation. But his guesses were probably better than mine would have been).

The genuinely problematic passages are of two kinds. First, there are a number of fragments which are so brief and so lacking in context that it's hard to tell what they are trying to say, or in some cases, even to construe them at all. I originally intended simply to omit these fragments, but in the end I decided to include them for the sake of readers for whom the complete Chinese text will be useful. Second, there are a number of important passages whose Chinese text is hard to construe, though the meaning seems clear enough. In these cases I have slid past the subtleties and rough spots and have written what I think that Shen Dao was trying to say. This is a risky method, but sometimes it the only way to make sense of a passage, and our understanding of the most ancient Chinese philosophy relies on this kind of reading more than we would wish.

This translation is more readerly than scholarly. Its primary purpose is to make the thought of Shen Dao available to readers of English. However, I have included Thompson's Chinese text for those who can read Classical Chinese, and they will be able to see where my translations are conjectural. I have translated out some of the specifics of Chinese culture — catties become pounds, kings are enthroned rather than elevated, gambling is done with dice rather than with belt buckles, and so on.

The translation below is marked three ways. Each fragment is preceded by the number Thompson gave it (#1 - #123 and SP1-SP5) Fragments #1-#67 comprise sections I-VII of Shen Maoshang's 16th century *Shenzhi*, and I have marked these sections including their Chinese titles. Finally, there are my own thematic groups A-Q; groups A-K equal sections I-VII, except that I have subdivided some of Shen Maoshang's sections.

The first 67 fragments are given in order, but I have appended to my own groups A-K all later fragments (from #68-123, SP1-SP5) which seem appropriate. Of the rest, #73-#78 form a coherent group and they comprise group L. The remaining 23 fragments have been roughly grouped by theme into groups M-Q.

Every passage can be located both in my translation and in Thompson's text by two letters, e.g. "B7" or "G107." (After the translation I discuss the text in more detail and give finding lists).

Contents

Sections I-VII / My groups	Thompson fragment numbers
I 威德 A, B, C, D	#1-27 B: + #118, 119, SP3, SP4; D: + #70, 73, 102, 113, 120
II 因循 E	#28 -32 + #81, 99, 101, 103, 110
III 民雜 F, G	#33-45 F: + #68, 71, 74, 79, 86, 87, 89, 96, 106, 114 G: + #107, 111, 121
IV 知忠 H	#46-56 + #88
V 德立 I	#57-60 + #98, 109, 82
VI 君人 J	#61-65
VII 君臣 K	#66-7 + #100
L	#75-8: public and private
M	#108, 116, 117: punishments
N	#92, 104, 105, 112: war
O	#83, 84, 122, 123, SP1, SP2, SP5 : mysticism
P	#69, 80, 85, 90, 115: sages
Q	#72, 91, 95, 97: history

Finding list: #68-123 and #SP1-SP5

#	Group	#	Group
68	F	99	E
69	P	100	K
70	D	101	E
71	F	102	D
72	Q	103	E
73	D	104	N
74	F	105	N
75	L	106	F
76	L	107	G
77	L	108	M
78	L	109	I
79	F	110	E
80	P	111	G
81	E	112	N
82	I	113	D
83	O	114	F
84	O	115	P
85	P	116	M
86	F	117	M
87	F	118	B
88	H	119	B
89	F	120	D
90	P	121	G
91	Q	122	O
92	N	123	O
93	Deleted	SP1	O
94	Deleted	SP2	O
95	Q	SP3	B
96	F	SP4	B
97	Q	SP5	O
98	I		