

SELECTIONS FROM
THE UPANISHADS
AND
THE TAO TE KING
THE CUNNINGHAM PRESS
ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA
FIRST EDITION
1951

C O N T E N T S

FOREWORD	5
DRAMA OF THE MYSTERIES	
Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad	9
IN THE HOUSE OF DEATH	
Katha Upanishad	32
A VEDIC MASTER	
Prashna Upanishad	55
THAT THOU ART	
Chhandogya Upanishad	70
TAO TE KING	89

FOREWORD

The Upanishads share with the Bhagavad-Gita the distinction of corresponding, in Indian Scriptures, to the New Testament of the Christians. They present the intimate yet profoundly impersonal instructions of master to disciple, breathing the atmosphere of wisdom, trust, and faith that is characteristic of such relationships.

The translations of these selections are by Charles Johnston, a Sanscrit scholar of the nineteenth century. While numerous English versions of the Upanishads are available, none that we know of compares either in depth or beauty of utterance with the work of Mr. Johnston.

The first selection, "Drama of the Mysteries," is from the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad (IV, 3-4). The title is the translator's. "In the House of Death" is from the Katha Upanishad, "A Vedic Master" is from the Prashna Upanishad, and "That Thou Art" is from the Chhandogya Upanishad (VI).

Little is known of Lao Tzu save that he lived some fifty years before Confucius, that he passed most of his life in the Chinese province of Chou, and that, at great age, he set out for the Western frontier and was never heard from again. The Tao Te King, sometimes rendered, "Treatise of the Way and of Virtue," is a book which relies upon intimation and paradox to convey what Lionel Giles has called a "well-defined though rudimentary outline of a great system of transcendental and ethical philosophy."

Mr. Giles translation, or rendition, presented here, seems to embody more of the intangible genius of the Chinese sage than other versions.

THE PUBLISHERS

DRAMA OF THE MYSTERIES

PROLOGUE

To Janaka king of the Videhas came Yajnavalkya, determined not to speak openly with the king. But when Janaka king of the Videhas and Yajnavalkya debated together at the offering of the holy fire, Yajnavalkya offered the king a wish. The king chose: to ask questions according to his desire. Yajnavalkya assented, and the king first asked:

Yajnavalkya, what is the light of the Spirit of man?

The sun is his light, O king; he answered.

With the sun as his light he rests, goes forth, does his work, and returns.

This is so in truth, Yajnavalkya. But when the sun is set, Yajnavalkya, what is then the light of the Spirit of man?

The moon then becomes his light; he answered. With the moon as his light he rests, goes forth, does his work, and returns.

[9]

This is so in truth, Yajnavalkya. But when the sun is set, Yajnavalkya, and the moon is also set, what is then the light of the Spirit of man?

Fire then becomes his light; he answered. With fire as his light he rests, goes forth, does his work, and returns.

This is so in truth, Yajnavalkya. But when the sun is set, Yajnavalkya, and the moon is also set, and the fire sinks down, what is then the light of the Spirit of man?

Voice then becomes his light; he answered. With voice as his light he rests, goes forth, does his work, and returns. Therefore in truth, o king, when a man cannot distinguish even his own hand, where a voice sounds, thither he approaches.

This is so in truth, Yajnavalkya. But when the sun is set, Yajnavalkya, and the moon is also set, and the fire sinks down, and the voice is stilled, what is then the light of the Spirit of man?

[10]

BRIHAD ARANYAKA UPANISHAD

The Soul then becomes his light; he answered. With the Soul as his light he rests, goes forth, does his work, and returns.

WAKING AND DREAM

What is the Soul?

It is the Consciousness in the life-powers. It is the Light within the heart. This Spirit of man wanders through both worlds, yet remains unchanged. He seems only to be wrapped in imaginings. He seems only to revel in delights.

When he enters into rest, the Spirit of man rises above this world and all things subject to death. For when the Spirit of man comes to birth and enters a body, he goes forth entangled in evils. But rising up at death, he puts all evils away.

The Spirit of man has two dwelling-places: both this world, and the other world. The borderland between them is the third, the land of dreams. While he lingers in the borderland, the Spirit of man holds both his dwellings:

[11]

DRAMA OF THE MYSTERIES

both this world and the other world. And according as his advance is in the other world, gaining that advance the Spirit of man sees evils or delights.

When the Spirit of man enters into rest, drawing his material from this all-containing world, felling the wood himself and himself building the dwelling, the Spirit of man enters into dream, through his own shining, through his own light. Thus does the Spirit of man become his own light.

There are no chariots there, nor steeds for chariots, nor roadways. The Spirit of man makes himself chariots, steeds for chariots and roadways. Nor are any delights there, nor joys and rejoicings. The Spirit of man makes for himself delights and joys and rejoicings. There are no lotus ponds there, nor lakes and rivers. The Spirit of man makes for himself lotus ponds, lakes and rivers. For the Spirit of man is Creator.

[12]

BRIHAD ARANYAKA UPANISHAD

And there are these verses: Leaving the bodily world through the door of dream, the sleepless Spirit views the sleeping powers. Then clothed in radiance, returns to his own home, the gold-gleaming Genius, swan of everlasting.

Guarding the nest beneath through the life-breath, the Spirit of man rises immortal above the nest. He soars immortal according to his desire, the gold-gleaming Genius, swan of everlasting.

Soaring upward and downward in dream land, the god makes manifold forms; now laughing and rejoicing with fair beauties, now beholding terrible things.

They see his pleasure-ground, but him sees no one. Thus goes the saying: Let none awake him that sleeps; for he is hard to heal, if the soul returns not to him.

They also say that dream is a province of waking. For whatever he sees while awake,

[13]

DRAMA OF THE MYSTERIES

the same he sees in dream. Thus the Spirit of man becomes his own light.

And when he has taken his ease in the resting-place of dream, moving to and fro and be holding good and evil, the Spirit of man returns again by the same path, hurrying back to his former dwelling-place in the world of waking. But whatever the Spirit of man may be hold there, returns not after him, for the Spirit of man is free, and nought adheres to the Spirit.

This is so in truth, Yajnavalkya. I give a thousand cattle to the teacher. But tell me the higher wisdom that makes for liberation.

DREAMLESSNESS

And when he has taken his pleasure in the waking world, moving to and fro and beholding good and evil, the Spirit of man returns again by the same path, hurrying back to dreamland.

[14]

BRIHAD ARANYAKA UPANISHAD

As a great fish swims along one bank of the river, and then along the other bank, first the eastern bank, and then the western, so the Spirit of man moves through both worlds, the waking world and the dream world.

Then as a falcon or an eagle, flying to and fro in the open sky and growing weary, folds his wings and sinks to rest, so of a truth the Spirit of man hastens to that world where, finding rest, he desires no desire and dreams no dream.

And whatever he has dreamed, as that he was slain or oppressed, crushed by an elephant or fallen into an abyss, or whatever fear he be held in the waking world, he knows now that it was from unwisdom. Like a god, like a king, he knows he is the All. This is his highest world.

This is his highest joy. He has passed beyond all evil. This is his fearless form. And as one who is wrapped in the arms of the be-

[15]

DRAMA OF THE MYSTERIES

loved, knows nought of what is without or within, so the Spirit of man wrapped round by the Soul of Inspiration, knows nought of what is without or within. This is his perfect being. He has won his desire. The Soul is his desire. He is beyond desire. He has left sorrow behind.

Here the father is father no more; nor the mother a mother; nor the worlds, worlds; here the scriptures are no longer scriptures; the thief is a thief no more; nor the murderer a murderer; nor the outcast an outcast; nor the base born, baseborn; the pilgrim is a pilgrim no longer, nor the saint a saint. For the Spirit of man is not followed by good, he is not followed by evil. For he has crossed over all the sorrows rows of the heart.

The Spirit sees not; yet seeing not, he sees. For the energy that dwelt in sight cannot cease, because it is everlasting. But there is no other besides the Spirit, or separate from him, for him to see.

[16]

BRIHAD ARANYAKA UPANISHAD

The Spirit smells not; yet smelling not, he smells. For the energy that dwelt in the power of smell cannot cease, because it is everlasting. But there is nothing else besides the Spirit, or separate from him, for him to smell.

The Spirit tastes not; yet tasting not, he tastes. For the energy that dwelt in taste can not cease, because it is everlasting. But there is nothing else besides the Spirit, or separate from him, for him to taste.

The Spirit speaks not; yet speaking not, he speaks. For the energy that dwelt in speech cannot cease, because it is everlasting. But there is nothing else besides the Spirit, or separate from him, for him to speak to.

The Spirit hears not; yet hearing not, he hears. For the energy that dwelt in hearing cannot cease, because it is everlasting. But there is nothing else besides the Spirit, or separate from him, for him to hear.

[17]

DRAMA OF THE MYSTERIES

The Spirit thinks not; yet thinking not, he thinks. For the energy that dwelt in thinking cannot cease, because it is everlasting. But there is nothing else besides the Spirit, or separate from him, for him to think of.

The Spirit touches not; yet touching not, he touches. For the energy that dwelt in touch cannot cease, because it is everlasting. But there is nothing else besides the Spirit, or separate from him, for him to touch.

The Spirit knows not; yet knowing not, he knows. For the energy that dwelt in knowing cannot cease, because it is everlasting. But there is nothing else besides the Spirit, or separate from him, for him to know.

THE MEASURE OF JOY

For only where there is separation may one see another, may one taste another, may one speak to another may one hear another, may one think of another, may one touch another, may one know another. But the one Seer is un-

[18]

BRIHAD ARANYAKA UPANISHAD

divided, like pure water. This, O king, is the world of the Eternal. This is the highest path. This is the highest treasure. This is the highest world. This is the highest bliss. All beings live on the fragments of this bliss.

He who amongst men is rich and happy, a lord well endowed with all wealth, this is the highest bliss of mankind. But a hundredfold greater than the bliss of man is the bliss of the departed who have won paradise. A hundred fold greater than the bliss of the departed who have won paradise is the bliss of the world of seraphs. A hundredfold greater than the bliss of the world of seraphs is the bliss of the gods grown divine through righteousness. A hundredfold greater than the bliss of the gods grown divine through righteousness is the bliss of the gods divine by birth, and of him who has heard, who has risen from darkness, who is not stricken by desire. A hundredfold greater than the bliss of the gods divine by birth is the bliss of the world of the creators, and of him

[19]

DRAMA OF THE MYSTERIES

who has heard, who has risen from darkness, who is not stricken by desire. A hundredfold greater than the bliss of the world of the creators is the bliss of the world of the Eternal, and of him who has heard, who has risen from darkness, who is not stricken by desire. This is the highest bliss. This, O king, is the world of the Eternal.

Thus spoke Yajnavalkya.

And he replied: I give the teacher a thousand cattle. But tell me the higher wisdom that makes for liberation.

And Yajnavalkya feared, thinking: the wise king has cut me off from all retreat.

DEATH

And when he has taken his pleasure in dreamland, moving to and fro and beholding good and evil, the Spirit of man returns again by the same path, hurrying back to his former dwelling-place in the world of waking.

[20]

BRIHAD ARANYAKA UPANISHAD

Then as a wagon heavy-laden might go halt ing and creaking, so the embodied soul goes halting, overburdened by the Soul of Inspiration when it has gone so far that a man is giving up the ghost.

When he falls into weakness, whether it be through old-age or sickness he falls into weakness, then like as a mango or the fruit of the wave-leafed fig or of the holy fig-tree is loosened from its stem, so the Spirit of man is loosed from these bodily members, and returns again by the same pathway to its former dwelling-place in the Life.

Then like as when the king is coming forth, the nobles, officers, charioteers and magistrates make ready to serve him with food and drink and shelter, saying: the king is coming forth, the king is at hand; so all the powers make ready to wait on the soul, saying: the soul is coming forth, the soul is at hand.

And like as when the king will go forth, the nobles, officers, charioteers and magistrates

[21]

DRAMA OF THE MYSTERIES

gather about him; so verily at the time of the end all the life-powers gather round the soul, when it has gone so far that a man is giving up the ghost.

When he falls into a swoon, as though he had lost his senses, the life-powers are gather ing in round the soul; and the soul, taking them up together in their radiant substance, enters with them into the inner heart.

When the power that dwells in sight is sent forwards and outwards, he beholds the visible world; but now the powers are merged into one, and they say: he no longer sees. His powers are merged into one, and they say: he no longer smells. His powers are merged into one, and they say: he no longer tastes. His powers are merged into one, and they say: he no longer speaks. His powers are merged into one, and they say: he no longer hears. His powers are merged into one, and they say: he no longer thinks. His powers are merged into one, and they say: he no longer touches. His

[22]

BRIHAD ARANYAKA UPANISHAD

powers are merged into one, and they say: he no longer knows.

PARADISE

Then the point of the heart grows luminous, and when it has grown luminous, it lights the soul upon its way: from the head or from the eye or from other parts of the body. And as the soul rises upwards the life-breath rises upwards with it; and as the life-breath rises upwards with it, the powers rise up with the life-breath. The soul becomes conscious and enters into Consciousness.

Then his wisdom and works take him by the hand, and the knowledge gained of old. Then as a caterpillar when it comes to the end of a leaf, reaching forth to another foothold, draws itself over to it, so the soul, leaving the body, and putting off unwisdom, reaching another foothold there, draws itself over to it.

As a worker in gold, taking an ornament, moulds it to another form newer and fairer;

[23]

DRAMA OF THE MYSTERIES

so in truth the soul, leaving the body here, and putting off unwisdom, makes for itself another form newer and fairer: a form like the forms of departed souls, or of the seraphs, or of the gods, or of the creators, or of the Eternal, or of other beings.

The soul of man is the Eternal. It is made of consciousness, it is made of feeling, it is made of life, it is made of vision, it is made of hearing; it is made of the earth, it is made of the waters, it is made of the air, it is made of the ether, it is made of the radiance and what is beyond the radiance; it is made of desire and what is beyond desire, it is made of wrath and what is beyond wrath, it is made of the law and what is beyond the law; it is made of the All. The soul is made of this world and of the other world.

REBIRTH

According as were his works and walk in life, so he becomes. He that does righteously

[24]

BRIHAD ARANYAKA UPANISHAD

becomes righteous. He that does evil becomes evil. He becomes holy through holy works and evil through evil.

As they said of old: Man verily is formed of desire; as his desire is, so is his will; as his will is, so he works; and whatever work he does, in the likeness of it he grows.

There is this verse:

Through his past works he shall return once more to birth, entering whatever form his heart is set on. When he has received full measure of reward in paradise for the works he did, from that world he returns again to this, the world of works.

LIBERATION

Thus far of him who is under desire. Now as to him who is free from desire, who is beyond desire, who has gained his desire, for whom the Soul is his desire. From him the life powers do not depart. Growing one with the Eternal, he enters into the Eternal.

[25]

DRAMA OF THE MYSTERIES

There is this verse:

When all desires that were hid in the heart are let go, the mortal becomes immortal, and reaches the Eternal.

And like as the slough of a snake lies life less, cast forth upon an ant-hill, so lies his body, when the Spirit of man rises up bodiless and immortal, as the Life, as the Eternal, as the Radiance.

I give a thousand cattle to the teacher: thus spoke Janaka king of the Videhas.

There are these verses:

The small old path that stretches far away, has been found and followed by me. By it go the Seers who know the Eternal, rising up from this world to the heavenly world.

It is adorned with white and blue, orange and gold and red. This is the path of the Eternal, the path of the saints, the sages, the seers in their radiance.

[26]

BRIHAD ARANYAKA UPANISHAD

Blind darkness they enter who worship unwisdom. They go, as it were, to greater darkness who exult in wisdom.

Joyless verily are those worlds, by blind darkness hid—thither at death go those who have not found wisdom, whose souls have not awakened to the light.

Who knows the Soul, and sees himself as it—what should he long for, or desiring what should he fret for the fever of life?

By whom the awakened Soul is known while he dwells in the wilderness of the world, he is creator of all and maker of all; his is the world, for he is the world.

Even here in the world have we reached wisdom; without wisdom, great were thy loss. They who are illumined, become immortal. Others enter into sorrow.

When a man gains the vision of the god like Soul, the lord of what has been and what shall be, he fears no more.

[27]

DRAMA OF THE MYSTERIES

At whose feet rolls the circling year with all its days, him the gods worship as the one, the light of lights, the immortal life.

In whom the five hierarchies of being and the ether are set firm, him I know to be the Soul. And knowing that deathless Eternal, I too am immortal.

They who know the life of life, eye of the eye, the ear's ear, heart of the heart, have found that eternal Ancient, the Most High.

This is to be understood by the heart: there is no separateness at all. He goes from death to death who beholds separateness.

This immeasurable and unchanging Being is to be beheld as the One. The stainless Soul is higher than the heavens, mighty and sure.

Let the sage, the follower of the Eternal, knowing this, strive to behold it in vision. Let him not meditate on many words, for words are weariness.

[28]

This is the mighty Soul unborn, who is Consciousness among the life-powers. This is the heaven in the heart within, where rests the ruler of all, master of all, lord of all. He grows not greater through good works, nor less through evil. He is lord of all, overlord of beings, shepherd of all beings. He is the bridge that holds the worlds apart, lest they should flow together. This is he whom the followers of the Eternal seek to know through their scriptures, sacrifices, gifts and penances, through ceasing from evil towards others. He who knows this becomes a sage. This is the goal in search of which pilgrims go forth on pilgrimages.

Knowing Him, the men of old desired not offspring. What should we do with offspring, they said, since ours is the Soul, the All? They became saints, ceasing from the desire of offspring, the desire of the world, the desire of wealth. For the desire of offspring is a desire for wealth, and the desire of wealth is a de-

[29]

DRAMA OF THE MYSTERIES

sire for the world. For these are both desires. But the Soul is not that, not that. It is incomprehensible, for it cannot be comprehended; it is imperishable, for it passes not away; nought adheres to it, for it is free; the Soul is not bound, fears not, suffers not.

For to him who knows, neither crosses over—the evil he does nor the good. He passes both; things done or undone afflict him not.

This is declared in the holy verse:

This is the lasting might of him who knows the Eternal, that he grows not greater nor less through deeds. Let him find the pathway of the Soul. Finding it, he is not stained by evil.

He who knows is therefore full of peace, lord of himself; he has ceased from false gods, he is full of endurance, he intends his will.

In his soul he beholds the Soul. He beholds all things in the Soul. Nor does evil reach him; he passes all evil. He is free from evil,

[30]

BRIHAD ARANYAKA UPANISHAD

free from stain, free from doubt, a knower of the Eternal.

EPILOGUE

This is the world of the Eternal, O king. Thus spoke Yajnavalkya.

I give the Master my Videhas and myself also as thy servant; said the king.

This mighty Soul unborn is the eater of the food of all life. The Soul is the giver of treasure. He finds the treasure, who knows this.

This mighty Soul unborn grows not old, nor dies, for the Soul is immortal and fearless. The Soul is the fearless Eternal. He grows one with the Eternal, the fearless Eternal, who knows this.

THE END

[31]

IN THE HOUSE OF DEATH

THE FIRST PART

VAJASHRAVASA, verily seeking favour, made a sacrifice of all he possessed. He had a son, also, by name Nachiketas. Him, though still a child, faith entered, while the gifts were being led up.

He meditated:

They have drunk water, eaten grass, given up their milk, and lost their strength. Joyless worlds, in truth, he gains, who offers these.

He addressed his father:

To whom, then, wilt thou give me? said he.

Twice and thrice he asked him.

To Death I give thee, said he.

Nachiketas ponders:

I go the first of many; I go in the midst of many. What is Death's work that he will work on me to-day?

Look, as those that have gone before, behold so are those that shall come after. As corn a mortal ripens, as corn he is born again.

[32]

KATHA UPANISHAD

Nachiketas comes to the House of Death; he speaks:

Like the Lord of Fire, a pure guest comes to the house. They offer him this greeting. Bring water, O Death, Son of the Sun!

Hope and expectation, friendship, kind words, just and holy deeds, sons and cattle, this destroys, for the foolish man in whose house a pure guest dwells without food.

After three days Death comes. Death speaks:

As thou hast dwelt three nights in my house, without food, thou, a pure guest and honour-able—honour to thee, pure one, welfare to me—against this choose thou three wishes.

Nachiketas speaks:

That the descendant of Gotama may be at peace, well-minded, and with sorrow gone, towards me, O Death; that he may speak kindly to me when sent forth by thee; this, of the three, as my first wish I choose.

[33]

Death speaks:

As before will the son of Aruna, Uddâlaka's son, be kind to thee, sent forth by me; by night will he sleep well, with sorrow gone, seeing thee freed from the mouth of Death.

Nachiketas speaks:

In the heaven-world there is no fear at all; nor art thou there, nor does he fear from old age. Crossing over both hunger and thirst, and going beyond sorrow, he exults in the heaven-world.

The heavenly fire thou knowest, Death, tell it to me, for I am faithful. The heaven-worlds enjoy deathlessness; this, as my second wish, I choose.

Death speaks:

To thee I tell it; learn then from me, Nachiketas, finding the heavenly fire. Know thou also the obtaining of unending worlds, the resting-place, for this is hidden in secret.

He told him then that fire, the beginning of the worlds, and the bricks of the altar, and how

[34]

KATHA UPANISHAD

many and how they are. And he again spoke it back to him as it was told; and Death, well-pleased, again addressed him.

This is thy heavenly fire, O Nachiketas, which thou hast chosen as thy second wish. This fire of thine shall they proclaim. Choose now, Nachiketas, thy third wish.

Nachiketas speaks:

This doubt that there is of a man that has gone forth: "He exists," say some; and "He exists not," others say: a knowledge of this, taught by thee, this of my wishes is the third wish.

Death speaks:

Even by the gods of old it was doubted about this; not easily knowable, and subtle is this law. Choose, Nachiketas, another wish; hold me not to it, but spare me this.

Nachiketas speaks..

Even by the gods, thou sayest, it was doubted about this; and not easily knowable is it,
O

[35]

IN THE HOUSE OF DEATH

Death. Another teacher of it cannot be found like thee. No other wish is equal to this.

Death speaks:

Choose sons and grandsons of a hundred years, and much cattle, and elephants and gold and horses. Choose the great abode of the earth, and for thyself live as many Autumns as thou wilt.

If thou thinkest this an equal wish, choose wealth and length of days. Be thou mighty in the world, 0 Nachiketas; I make thee an enjoyer of thy desires.

Whatsoever desires are difficult in the mortal world, ask all desires according to thy will.

These beauties, with their chariots and lutes—not such as these are to be won by men—be waited on by them, my gifts. Ask me not of death, Nachiketas.

Nachiketas speaks:

To-morrow these fleeting things wear out the vigour of a mortal's powers. Even the

[36]

KATHA UPANISHAD

whole of life is short; thine are chariots and dance and song.

Not by wealth can a man be satisfied. Shall we choose wealth if we have seen thee? Shall we desire life while thou art master? But the wish I choose is truly that.

Coming near to the unfading immortals, a fading mortal here below, and understanding, thinking on the sweets of beauty and pleasure, who would rejoice in length of days?

This that they doubt about, 0 Death, what is in the great Beyond, tell me of that. This wish that draws near to the mystery, Nachiketas chooses no other wish than that.

Death speaks;

The better is one thing, the dearer is an other thing; these two bind a man in opposite ways. Of these two, it is well for him who takes the better; he fails of his object, who chooses the dearer.

The better and the dearer approach a man; going round them, the sage discerns between

[37]

IN THE HOUSE OF DEATH

them. The sage chooses the better rather than the dearer; the fool chooses the dearer, through lust of possession.

Thou indeed, pondering on dear and dearly-loved desires, 0 Nachiketas, hast passed them by. Not this way of wealth hast thou chosen, in which many men sink.

Far apart are these two ways, unwisdom and what is known as wisdom. I esteem Nachiketas as one seeking wisdom, nor do manifold desires allure thee.

Others, turning about in unwisdom, self-wise and thinking they are learned, fools, stagger, lagging in the way, like the blind led by the blind.

The great Beyond gleams not for the child, led away by the delusion of possessions. “This is the world, there is no other,” he thinks, and so falls again and again under my dominion.

That is not to be gained even for a hearing by many, and hearing it many understand it not. Wonderful is the speaker of it, blessed

[38]

KATHA UPANISHAD

the receiver; wonderful is the knower of it, taught by the blessed.

Not by the lower man is this, when declared, to be known even by much meditation. There is no way to it unless told by the other, very subtle is it, nor can it be debated by formal logic.

The understanding of this cannot be gained by debate; but it is declared by the other, dearest, for a right understanding. Thou hast obtained it, for thou art steadfast in the truth; may a questioner like thee, Nachiketas, come to us.

“I know that what they call treasure is unenduring; and by unlasting things what is lasting cannot be obtained. Therefore the Nachiketas fire was kindled by me, and for these unenduring things I have gained that which endures.”

Thus saying, and having beheld the obtaining of longings, the resting-place of the world, the endlessness of desire, the shore where there

[39]

IN THE HOUSE OF DEATH

is no fear, greatly praised, and the wide-sung resting-place, thou, Nachiketas, wise in thy firmness, hast passed them by.

But that which is hard to see, which has entered the secret place, and is hidden in secret, the mystery, the ancient; understanding that bright one by the path of union with the inner self, the wise man leaves exultation and sorrow behind.

A mortal, hearing this and understanding it, drawing forth that subtle righteous one from all things else, and obtaining it, rejoices, having gained good cause for rejoicing; and the door to it is wide open, I think, Nachiketas.

Nachiketas speaks:

What thou seest to be neither the law nor lawlessness, neither what is commanded nor what is forbidden; neither what has been nor what shall be, tell me that.

Death speaks:

That resting-place which all the Vedas proclaim, and all austerities declare; seeking for

[40]

KATHA UPANISHAD

which they enter the service of the Eternal, that resting-place I briefly tell to thee.

It is the unchanging Eternal, it is the unchanging supreme; having understood that unchanging one, whatsoever a man wishes, that he gains. It is the excellent foundation, the supreme foundation; knowing that foundation, a man is mighty in the eternal world.

The knower is never born nor dies, nor is it from anywhere, nor did it become anything. Unborn, eternal, immemorial, this ancient is not slain when the body is slain.

If the slayer thinks to slay it, if the slain thinks it is slain, neither of them understand; this slays not nor is slain.

Smaller than small, greater than great, this Self is hidden in the heart of man. He who has ceased from desire, and passed sorrow by, through the favour of that ordainer beholds the greatness of the Self.

Though seated, it travels far; though at rest, it goes everywhere; who but me is worthy to

[41]

IN THE HOUSE OF DEATH

know this bright one who is joy without rejoicing?

Understanding this great lord the Self, bodiless in bodies, stable among unstable, the wise man cannot grieve. This Self is not to be gained by speaking of it, nor by ingenuity, nor by much hearing. Whom this chooses, by him it is gained, and the Self chooses his form as its own.

He who has ceased not from evil, who is not at peace, who stands not firm, whose emotions are not at rest, cannot obtain it by knowledge.

Priest and Warrior are its food, its anointing is death; who knows truly where it is?

Death speaks:

The knowers of the Eternal, those of the five fires, and of the triple fire of Nachiketas, tell of the shadow and the fire—the soul and the spirit—entering into the cave and drinking their reward in the world of good works, on the higher path.

[42]

KATHA UPANISHAD

This is the bridge of the sacrificers, the undying Eternal, the supreme, the fearless, the harbour of those who would cross over—may we master the fire of Nachiketas.

Know that the Self is the lord of the chariot, the body verily is the chariot; know that the soul is the charioteer, and emotion the reins. They say that the bodily powers are the horses, and that the external world is their field. When the Self, the bodily powers and emotion are joined together, this is the right enjoyer; thus say the wise.

But for the unwise, with emotion ever unrestrained, his bodily powers run away with him, like the unruly horses of the charioteer.

For him who is wise, with emotion ever restrained, his bodily powers do not run away with him, like the well-ruled horses of the charioteer.

But he who is unwise, restrains not emotion, and is ever impure, gains not that resting-place, but returns to the world of birth and death.

[43]

IN THE HOUSE OF DEATH

He who is wise, restrains emotion, and is ever pure, gains that resting-place from which he is not born again.

He whose charioteer is wisdom, who grasps the reins—emotion—firmly, he indeed gains the end of the path, the supreme resting-place of the emanating Power.

The impulses are higher than the bodily powers; emotion is higher than the impulses; soul is higher than emotion; higher than soul is the Self, the great one.

Higher than this great one is the unmanifest; higher than the unmanifest is spirit. Than spirit nothing is higher, for it is the goal, and the supreme way.

This is the hidden Self; in all beings it shines not forth; but is perceived by the piercing subtle soul of the subtle-sighted.

Let the wise hold formative voice and emotion; let him hold them in the Self which is wisdom; let him hold this wisdom in the Self

[44]

KATHA UPANISHAD

which is great; and this let him hold in the Self which is peace.

Rise up! awake! and, having obtained your wishes, understand them.

The sages say this path is hard, difficult to tread as the keen edge of a razor.

He is released from the mouth of Death, having gained the lasting thing which is above the great, which has neither sound nor touch nor form nor change nor taste nor smell, but is eternal, beginningless, endless.

This is the immemorial teaching of Nachiketas, declared by Death. Speaking it and hearing it the sage is mighty in the eternal world. Whosoever, being pure, shall cause this supreme secret to be heard, in the assembly of those who seek the Eternal, or at the time of the union with those who have gone forth, he indeed builds for endlessness, he builds for endlessness.

[45]

IN THE HOUSE OF DEATH

THE SECOND PART

THE Self-Being pierced the opening outwards; hence one looks outward, not within himself. A wise man looked towards the Self with reverted sight, seeking deathlessness.

Children seek after outward desires; they come to the net of widespread death. But the wise, beholding deathlessness, seek not for the enduring among unenduring things.

By that which perceives form, taste, smell, sounds, and embraces; by this verily he discerns, for what else is there? This is that.

The wise man, thinking that that by which he perceives both waking and dreaming life, is the great, the lord, the Self, grieves not.

He who perceives the living Self, the honey-eater, close at hand, the lord of what has been and what shall be, he is no longer seeking for refuge. This is that.

[46]

KATHA UPANISHAD

He who knows the first-born of radiance, born of old of the waters, standing hid in secret, who looked forth through creatures. This is that.

And the great mother, full of divinity, who comes forth through life, standing hid in secret, who was born through creatures. This is that.

The fire hidden in the fire-sticks—like a germ, well concealed by the mothers—that fire is day by day to be praised by men who wake, with the oblation. This is that.

Whence the sun rises, and whither he goes to setting; that all the bright ones rest on; nor does any go beyond it. This is that.

What is here, that is there; what is there, that also is here. He goes from death to death who sees a difference between them.

This is to be received by the mind, that there is no difference here. From death to death he goes, who sees a difference.

The spirit of the measure of a finger stands

[47]

IN THE HOUSE OF DEATH

in the midst, in the Self; lord of what has been, and what shall be. Thereafter one is no longer seeking for refuge. This is that.

The spirit of the measure of a finger is like a light without smoke; lord of what has been and what shall be, the same to-day and tomorrow.
This is that.

As water rained on broken ground runs away among the mountains; so he who beholds separate natures runs hither and thither after them.

As pure water poured in pure remains the same, so is the Self of the discerning sage, O descendant of Gotama.

Understanding the eleven-doored dwelling of the unborn seer of truth, he grieves not; and, freed, he is set free. This is that.

This is the Swan in the pure world, the radiant in the middle world, the fire here on the altar; as a guest in a dwelling.

This is the essence of man, the essence of the best, the essence of the deep and the ether;

[48]

those born of the water, of earth, of the deep, of the mountains, are that true great one.

He leads upward the forward-life, and casts back the downward-life. All the bright powers bow to the dwarf seated in their midst.

When this lord of the body, standing within the body, departs; when he goes forth free from the body, what is left? This is that.

No mortal lives by the forward-life, nor by the downward-life. But by another they live, in whom these two rest.

This secret immemorial Eternal, I shall declare to thee; and how the Self is, on attaining death, O descendant of Gotama.

Some come to the womb, for the embodying of that lord of the body. Others reach the resting-place, according to deeds, according to what they have understood.

The spirit that wakes in those that dream, moulding desire after desire, is that bright one, that Eternal; that they call the immortal one.

[49]

IN THE HOUSE OF DEATH

In this all the worlds rest, nor does any go beyond it. This is that.

As fire, being one, on entering the world, is assimilated to form after form; so the inner Self of all being is assimilated to form after form, and yet remains outside them.

As the air, being one, on entering the world, is assimilated to form after form; so the inner Self of all being is assimilated to form after form, and yet remains outside them.

As the sun, the eye of all the world, is not smeared by visible outer stains; so the inner Self of all being is not smirched by sorrow of the world, but remains outside it.

The one ruler, the inner Self of all being, who makes one form manifold; the wise who behold him within themselves, theirs is happiness, and not others'.

The durable among undurables; the soul of souls, who though one, disposes the desires of many; the wise who behold him within them-

[50]

KATHA UPANISHAD

selves, theirs is peace everlasting, and not others'.

This is that, they think, the ineffable supreme joy. How then may I know, whether this shines or borrows its light? No sun shines there, nor the moon and stars; nor lightnings, nor fire like this. All verily shines after that shining. From the shining of that, all this borrows light.

Rooted above, with branches below, is this immemorial Tree. It is that bright one, that Eternal; it is called the immortal. In it all the worlds rest; nor does any go beyond it. This is that.

All that the universe is, moves in life, emanated from it. It is the great fear, the upraised thunderbolt. They who have seen it, become immortal.

Through fear of this, Fire glows; through fear of this, the Sun glows; through fear of it, the King and Breath; and Death runs, as fifth.

If one has been able to understand it here,

[51]

IN THE HOUSE OF DEATH

before the body's falling away, he builds for embodiment in the creative worlds.

As in a mirror, this is seen in the Self; as in a dream, it is seen in the world; as in the waters around, it is seen in the world of sylphs; as in the fire and the shadow, it is seen in the world of the Evolver.

Considering the life of the powers as apart, and their rising and setting as they grow up apart, the wise man grieves not.

Mind is higher than the powers, the real is higher than mind; than this real, the great Self is higher; and than the great, the unmanifest is higher.

Than the unmanifest, spirit is higher, the universal and formless; knowing which a being is released, and goes to immortality.

The form of this does not stand visible, nor does anyone behold it with the eye. By the heart, the soul, the mind, it is grasped; and those who know it become immortal.

[52]

KATHA UPANISHAD

When the five perceptions and mind are steadied; and when the soul struggles not, this, they say, is the highest way.

This they think to be union, the firm holding of the powers. Unperturbed is this union, though there be ebb and flow.

Nor by speech, nor by mind can it be gained; nor by sight. It is gained by him who can affirm "It is"; how else could it be gained?

It is to be gained by affirming "It is"; and as the real in what is and is not. In him who obtains it by affirming "It is" its reality is perfected.

When all desires that dwell in his heart are let go, the mortal becomes immortal, and reaches the Eternal.

When all the knots of his heart are untied here, the mortal becomes immortal. So far is the teaching.

A hundred and one are the heart's channels; of these one passes to the crown. Going up by

[53]

IN THE HOUSE OF DEATH

this, he comes to the immortal. The others lead hither and thither.

The spirit of the measure of a finger, the inner Self, ever dwells in the hearts of men. Let him draw forth this spirit from his body, firmly, like the pith from a reed.

Let him know that this is the bright one, the immortal. Let him know it is the bright one, the immortal.

Nachiketas thus having received the knowledge declared by Death, and the whole law of union, became a passionless dweller in the Eternal, and deathless; and so may another who thus knows the union with the Self.

[54]

A VEDIC MASTER

THESE men, Sukeshan Bhâradvâja, and Shâivya Satyakâma, and Sâuryâyanin Gârgya, and Kâushalya Ashvalâyana, and Bhârgava Vâidarbhi, and Kabandhin Kâtyâyana, full of the Eternal, firm in the Eternal, were seeking after the supreme Eternal.

They came to the Master Pippalada with fuel in their hands, saying: He verily will declare it all.

And the Sage said to them: Remain yet a year in fervour, service of the Eternal, and faith. Ask whatever questions you will, if we know them, we shall declare all to you.

So Kabandhin Kâtyâyana, approaching, asked: Master, where are all these beings brought forth from?

He answered him: The Lord of beings desired beings. He brooded with fervour; and, brooding with fervour, he forms a Pair. They

[55]

A VEDIC MASTER

are the Substance and the Life. These two will make beings manifold for me, said he. The sun verily is the Life, and Substance is the moon. For Substance is all that is formed, and the formless is the Life. Therefore the form is the Substance.

So the sun, rising, enters the eastern space; and thus he gathers all the eastern lives among his rays. As the southern, the western, the northern, the nether, and the upper space, and the spaces between, as he illumines all, so he gathers all lives among his rays. Thus the Life rises as universal, all-formed fire.

And this is declared by the Vedic verse:

The all-formed, golden Illuminer, the supreme way, the light, the fervent one. Thousand-rayed, turning in a hundred ways, the Life of beings, this sun rises.

The year is a Lord of beings. His two paths are the southern and the northern. Therefore they who worship, thinking that it is fulfilled

[56]

PRASHNA UPANISHAD

by sacrifice and gifts, win the lunar world. They verily return again. Therefore these sages who desire beings, turn to the south. For this is the path of Substance, the path of the fathers.

But they who by the northern way seek the Self by fervour, service of the Eternal, faith and knowledge, they verily win the sun. This is the home of lives; this is the immortal, fearless, supreme way. From it they do not return again; for this is the end.

And there is this verse:

They call the sun the father in the upper half of heaven, with five steps and twelve forms—months—the giver of increase.

But others call him the Seer who rests in the seven-wheeled chariot, of six spokes.

The month is a Lord of beings. The dark half is the Substance; the bright half is the Life. Therefore these Sages offer sacrifice in the bright half; but the others in the other half.

[57]

A VEDIC MASTER

Day-and-night is a Lord of beings. Day verily is the Life, and night is the Substance. They waste their life who find love in the outward; but service of the Eternal finds love in the hidden.

Food also is a Lord of beings. Thence comes this seed, and thence these beings are brought forth. And all that follow this vow of the Lord of beings, produce a pair.

Theirs verily is that world of the Eternal, who have fervour and service of the Eternal, and in whom truth is set firm. Theirs is that quiet world of the Eternal; but not theirs, in whom are crookedness, untruth, illusion.

And so Bhângava Vâidarbhi asked him:

Master, how many are the bright ones that up-hold being? Which illumine this? Which of them again is chiefest?

He answered him: Shining ether is that bright one, air, and fire, and water, and earth; voice, mind, sight, hearing. They illumining, declare: We uphold this ray, establishing it.

[58]

PRASHNA UPANISHAD

And Life, the chiefest among them, said:

Cherish not this delusion: for I, verily, dividing myself fivefold, uphold this ray, establishing it.

They were incredulous. Life proudly made as if to go out above. And as Life goes out, all the others go out, and as Life returns, all the others return. As the bees all go out after the honey-makers' king when he goes out, and return when he returns, thus did voice, mind, sight, and hearing. Joyful, they sing the praise of Life.

He warms as fire; as sun, and the rain-god; the thunderer, wind, and the earth, substance, the bright one; what is, what is not, and what is immortal.

Like spokes in a wheel's nave, all this rests in Life. Songs, and liturgies, and chants;
sacrifice and warrior and priest.

Thou, Life, as Lord of beings, movest in the germ; and thou thyself art born from it. And
to thee, Life, these beings bring the

[59]

A VEDIC MASTER

offering; thou who art set firm through the lives.

Thou art the tongued flame of the bright ones; the first oblation of the fathers. Thou art
the law of the sages; the truth of sacrificial priests.

Thou art the thunderer, Life, with his brightness; thou art the storm-god, the preserver.
Thou movest in the mid space as the sun; thou art master of the stars.

When thou descendest as rain, these thy children, Life, stand rejoicing; we shall have
food, they say, according to our desire.

Thou art the exile, Life, the lonely seer; the eater, the good master of all. We are givers of
the first offering. Thou art father to us, the great Breath.

Thy form that is manifested in voice, and in hearing, and in sight, and the form that
expands in mind, make it auspicious! Go not out!

All this is in Life's sway, all that is set

[60]

PRASHNA UPANISHAD

firm in the triple heaven. Guard us as a mother her sons; and as Fortune, give us wisdom!

And so Kâushalya Ashvalâyana asked him:

Master, where is this Life born from? How does it enter this body? How does it come
forth, dividing itself? Through what does it go out? How does it envelop the outer? and
how as to union with the Self?

He answered him: Many questions thou askest! Thou art full of the Eternal, and
therefore I tell it to thee.

From the Self is this Life born. And as the shadow beside a man, this is expanded in
that. By mind's action it enters this body. And as a sovereign commands his lords: These
villages and these villages shall ye rule over! Thus also Life disposes the lesser lives. For
the lower powers, the downward-life; in sight and hearing, in mouth and nose, the
forward-life; and in the midst, the binding-life; this binds

[61]

A VEDIC MASTER

together the food that is offered; and thence the seven flames arise.

In the heart is the Self. Here are a hundred and one channels. From them a hundred
each, and in each of these, two and seventy thousand branch-channels: In these the
distributing-life moves.

And by one, the upward, rises the upward-life. It leads by holiness to a holy world, by sin to a sinful world, by both, to the world of men.

The outward-life rises as the sun. It is linked with this life that dwells in seeing. And the potency that is in earth, entering the down ward-life of man, establishes it. And the shining ether is for the binding-life, and air for the distributing-life.

And radiance for the upward-life. Therefore he whose radiance has become quiescent is reborn through the impulses dwelling in mind. According to his thoughts, he enters life. And

[62]

PRASHNA UPANISHAD

Life joined by the radiance with the Self leads him to a world according to his will.

He who, thus knowing, knows Life, his being fails not, and he becomes immortal.

And there is this verse:

Knowing the source, the range, the abode, the lordship of Life fivefold, and its union with the Self, he reaches immortality, he reaches immortality.

And so Sâuryâyanin Gârgya asked him: Master, how many powers sleep in the man? How many wake in him? Who is the bright one that sees dreams? Whose is that bliss? and in whom are all these set firm?

He answered him: As, Gârgya, the rays of the sun, at setting, all become one in his shining orb; and when he rises, they all come forth again; so all becomes one in the higher bright one, mind.

Therefore the man hears not, nor sees, nor smells, nor tastes, nor touches, nor speaks, nor

[63]

A VEDIC MASTER

takes, nor enjoys, nor puts forth, nor moves. He sleeps, they say.

The life-fires verily wake in this dwelling. The household fire is the downward-life. The fire of oblations is the distributing-life. And as the fire of offerings is brought forward from the household fire, it is the forward-life.

And the binding-life is what binds together the offerings, the outbreathing and inbreathing. Mind is the sacrificer, and the upward-life is the fruit of the sacrifice. For it brings the sacrificer day by day to the Eternal.

So this bright one in dream enjoys greatness. The seen, as seen he beholds again. What was heard, as heard he hears again. And what was enjoyed by the other powers, he enjoys again by the other powers. The seen and the unseen, heard and unheard, enjoyed and unenjoyed, real and unreal, he sees it all; as All he sees it.

And when he is wrapt by the radiance, the bright one no longer sees dreams. Then with-

[64]

in him that bliss arises. And, dear, as the birds come to the tree to rest, so all this comes to rest in the higher Self.

Earth and earth-forms; water and water-forms; light and light-forms; air and air-forms; ether and ether-forms; seeing and seen; hearing and heard; smelling and smelled; taste and tasted; touch and touched; voice and spoken; hands and handled; feet and moving; mind and minding; knowledge and knowing; personality and personal; imagination and imagining; radiance and enlightening; life and living. For this Self is the seer, toucher, hearer, smeller, taster, thinker, knower, doer, the perceiving spirit. And this is set firm in the supreme, unchanging Self.

He reaches the supreme unchanging who knows that shadowless, bodiless, colourless, bright unchanging one. He, dear, becomes all knowing, becomes the All.

And there is this verse:

[65]

A VEDIC MASTER

He who knows the unchanging one where are set firm the perceiving self, with all the powers, all lives and beings; he, verily, all-knowing, has entered the All.

And so Shâivya Satyakâma asked him: And he amongst men, Master, who to the end of his life meditates on the mystic Om; what world will he gain by it?

And he answered him: This mystic Om, Satyakâma, is for the higher and lower Eternal. Therefore the wise man, by dwelling on this, reaches one of these: if he meditates on the first measure, enlightened by it he is quickly reborn in the world. The songs bring him to the world of men; there, full of fervour, service of the Eternal, and faith, he enjoys great-ness.

And if he dwells on it in his mind with two measures, he is led to the middle world by the liturgies. He wins the lunar world, and after enjoying brightness in the lunar world, he returns again.

[66]

PRASHNA UPANISHAD

And he who with three measures meditates on the mystic Om, and thereby meditates on the supreme spirit, is endowed with radiance, with the sun; as a serpent is freed from its slough, he is, verily, freed from sin. He is led by the chants to the world of the Eternal. He beholds the indwelling spirit above the highest assemblage of lives.

And there are these two verses:

The three measures are subject to death when divided; they are joined to each other, but not inseparable. When the outer, the middle, and the mid-most forms are joined together, the knower is not shaken.

By the songs to this world; by the liturgies to the middle world; by the chants to the world the seers tell of; by meditating on the mystic Om, the wise man reaches that peace, unfading, immortal, fearless, supreme.

[67]

A VEDIC MASTER

And so Sukeshan Bhâradvâja asked him: Master, the Râjaputra, Hiranyanâbha Kâusalya, coming to me, asked this question: Bhâradvâja, knowest thou the spirit with sixteen parts? I answered the youth: I know him not; if I knew him, how should I not tell thee? He withers, root and all, who speaks untruth; therefore I deign not to speak untruth. He, silently, entering his chariot, departed. I ask thee where this spirit is.

He answered him: Here, verily, within the body, dear, is that spirit in which the sixteen parts come forth.

He said: In whose going out shall I go out? In whose resting shall I rest firm? He put forth Life; and, from Life, faith, the shining ether, air, light, the waters, and the power of earth. Then mind and food, and from food, force and fervour, the hymns, the words of action, and name in the worlds.

And as these rivers, rolling ocean wards, go to their setting on reaching the ocean, and

[68]

PRASHNA UPANISHAD

their name and form are lost in the ocean, they say. So the sixteen parts of this seer, moving spiritwards, on reaching spirit, go to their setting; their name and form are lost in spirit, they say. He becomes one, without parts, and immortal.

And there is this verse:

In whom the parts are fixed like the spokes in the nave of a wheel; knowing that knowable spirit, let not death disturb you.

He said to them: So far I know that supreme Eternal. There is nothing beyond.

Thou art our father, inasmuch as thou hast made us cross over to the further shore of un wisdom, said they, honouring him.

[69]

THAT THOU ART

THERE lived once Shvetaketu, Aruna's grandson; his father addressed him, saying:

Shvetaketu, go, learn the service of the Eternal; for no one, dear, of our family is an unlearned nominal worshipper.

So going when he was twelve years old, he returned when he was twenty-four; he had learned all the teachings, but was conceited, vain of his learning, and proud.

His father addressed him:

Shvetaketu, you are conceited, vain of your learning, and proud, dear; but have you asked for that teaching through which the unheard is heard, the unthought is thought, the unknown is known?

What sort of teaching is that, Master? said he.

Just as, dear, by a single piece of clay any thing made of clay may be known, for the difference is only one of words and names, and the real thing is that it is of clay; or just as, dear, by one jewel of gold, anything made of gold may be known, for the difference is only one of words and names, and the real is that it is gold; or just as, dear, by a single knife-blade, anything made of iron may be known, for the difference is only one of words and names, and the real is that it is iron; just like this is the teaching that makes the unknown known.

[70]

CHHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

But I am sure that those teachers did not know this themselves; for if they had known it, how would they not have taught it to me? said he; but now let my Master tell it to me.

Let it be so, dear; said he.

In the beginning, dear, there was Being, alone and secondless. But there are some who say that there was non-Being in the beginning, alone and secondless; so that Being would be born from non-Being; but how could this be so, dear? said he; how could Being be born

[71]

THAT THOU ART

from non-Being? So there was Being, dear, in the beginning, alone and secondless.

Then Being beholding said: Let me become great; let me give birth.

Then it put forth Radiance.

Then Radiance beholding said: Let me become great; let me give birth.

Then it put forth the Waters. Just as a man is hot and sweats, so from radiance the waters are born.

Then the Waters beholding said: Let us become great; let us give birth.

They put forth the world-food. Just as when it rains much food is produced, so from the Waters the world-food—Earth—is born. Of all these, of beings, there are three germs: what is born of the Egg, what is born of Life, what is born of Division.

That power—Being—beholding said: Let me enter these three powers—Radiance, Waters, Earth—by this life, by my Self, let me give them manifold forms and names. Let

[72]

CHHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

me make each one of them threefold, three fold.

So that power—Being—entered those three powers—Radiance, Waters, Earth—by this life, by the Self, and gave them manifold forms and names; and so made each one of

them three fold, threefold. And now learn, dear, how these three powers are, how each one of them becomes threefold, threefold.

In fire, the radiant form is from Radiance; the clear form, from the Waters; the dark form, from Earth. But the separate nature of fire is a thing of names and words only, while the real thing is the three forms.

So of the sun, the radiant form is from Radiance; the clear form, from the Waters; the dark form, from Earth. But the separate nature of the sun is a thing of names and words only, while the real thing is the three forms.

So of the moon, the radiant form is from Radiance; the clear form, from the Waters; the dark form from Earth. But the separate nature

[73]

THAT THOU ART

of the moon is a thing of names and words only, while the real thing is the three forms.

So of lightning, the radiant form is from Radiance; the clear form, from the Waters; the dark form, from Earth. But the separate nature of lightning is a thing of names and words only, the real thing is the three forms.

Therefore of old time those who knew this, the great sages and teachers of old, spoke thus:

None of us may now speak of anything as unheard, unthought, unknown.

For by these three forms they knew every-thing. For whatever was like radiant, its form was from Radiance, they said, and thus knew it. And whatever was like clear, its form was from the Waters, they said, and so knew it. And whatever was like dark, its form was from Earth, they said, and so knew it. Thus whatever was known they took to be a union of these three powers, and thus they knew it.

But how these three powers are, dear, when they come to man, how each of them becomes

[74]

CHHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

threefold, this learn from me now.

Food that is eaten is divided threefold. Its grossest part becomes waste; its middle part becomes flesh; its lightest part becomes Mind.

Waters that are drunk are divided three fold. The grossest part becomes waste; the middle part becomes blood; the lightest part becomes vital Breath.

Things that produce radiant heat, when absorbed, are divided threefold. The grossest part becomes bone; the middle part becomes nerve; the lightest part becomes formative Voice.

For Mind, dear, is formed of the world-food—Earth; vital Breath is formed of the Waters; formative Voice is formed of Radiance.

Let my Master teach me further; said he. Be it so, dear; said he.

Of churned milk, dear, the lightest part rises to the top and becomes butter. Just so of eaten food, dear, the lightest part rises to the top and

[75]

THAT THOU ART

becomes Mind. And so of waters that are drunk, the lightest part rises to the top, and becomes vital Breath. And so when heat-giving things are eaten, the lightest part rises to the top, and becomes formative Voice.

For Mind, dear, is formed of Food; vital Breath is formed of the Waters; formative Voice is formed of Radiance.

Let my Master teach me further; said he.

Be it so, dear; said he.

Man, dear, is made of sixteen parts. Eat nothing for fifteen days, but drink as much as you wish; for vital Breath, being formed of the Waters, is cut off if you do not drink.

He ate nothing for fifteen days, and then returned to the Master, saying: What shall I repeat, Master?

Repeat the songs and liturgies and chants, dear; said he.

None of them come back into my mind, Master; said he.

[76]

CHHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

He said to him: As, dear, after a big fire, if a single spark remain, as big as a fire-fly, it will not burn much; just so, dear, of your sixteen parts one remains, and by this one part you cannot remember the teachings.

Go, eat; and then you will understand me.

He ate, and then returned to the Master; and whatever the Master asked, all came back to his mind.

The Master said to him: As, dear, after a big fire, if even a single spark remain, as big as a fire-fly, and if it be fed with straw, it will blaze up and will then burn much; just so, dear, of your sixteen parts, one part was left; and this, being fed with food, blazed up, and through it you remembered the teachings.

For Mind is formed of Food; vital Breath is formed of the Waters; formative Voice is formed of Radiance.

Thus he learned; thus, verily, he learned.

ARUNA'S Son Uddâlaka addressed his son

[77]

THAT THOU ART

Shvetaketu, saying: Learn from me, dear, the reality about sleep. When a man sinks to sleep, as they say, then, dear, he is wrapped by the Real; he has slipped back to his own. And so they say he sleeps, because he has slipped back to his own. And just as an eagle

tied by a cord, flying hither and thither, and finding no other resting-place, comes to rest where he is tied, so indeed, dear, the man's Mind, flying hither and thither, and finding no other resting place, comes to rest in vital Breath; for Mind, dear, is bound by vital Breath.

Learn from me, dear, the meaning of hunger and thirst. When a man hungers, as they say, the Waters guide what he eats. And as there are guides of cows, guides of horses, guides of men, so they call the Waters the guides of what is eaten. Thus you must know, dear, that what he eats grows and sprouts forth; and it cannot grow without a root.

And where can the root of what he eats be? Where, but in the world-food—Earth?

[78]

CHHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

And through the world-food—*Earth*—that has sprouted forth, you must seek the root, the Waters. And through the Waters that have sprouted forth, you must seek the root, Radiance. And through Radiance that has sprouted forth, you must seek the root, the Real. For all these beings, dear, are rooted in the Real, resting in the Real, abiding in the Real.

And so when the man thirsts, as they say, the Radiance guides what he drinks. And as there are guides of cows, guides of horses, guides of men, so, they say, the Radiance guides the Waters. Thus you must know, dear, that what he drinks grows and sprouts forth; and it cannot grow without a root.

And where can the root of what he drinks be? Where, but in the Waters? And through the Waters that sprout forth, you must seek their root, the Radiance. And through the Radiance, dear, that sprouts forth, you must seek its root, the Real. For all these beings, dear, are rooted in the Real, resting in the Real,

[79]

THAT THOU ART

abiding in the Real. And how these three: the world-food—Earth—the Waters, Radiance, coming to a man, become each threefold, three fold, this has been taught already.

And of a man who goes forth, formative Voice sinks back into Mind; Mind sinks back into vital Breath, vital Breath to Radiance, and Radiance to the higher Divinity. This is the soul, the Self of all that is, this is the Real, this the Self. THAT THOU ART, O Shvetaketu.

Let the Master teach me more; said he.

Let it be so, dear; said he.

As the honey-makers, dear, gather the honey from many a tree, and weld the nectars together in a single nectar; and as they find no separateness there, nor say: Of that tree I am the nectar, of that tree I am the nectar. Thus, indeed, dear, all these beings, when they reach the Real, know not, nor say: We have reached the Real. But whatever they are here, whether tiger or lion or wolf or boar or worm or moth

[80]

CHHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

or gnat or fly, that they become again. And this soul is the Self of all that is, this is the Real, this the Self. THAT THOU ART, O Shvetaketu.

Let the Master teach me more; said he.

Let it be so, dear; said he.

These eastern rivers, dear, roll eastward; and the western, westward. From the ocean to the ocean they go, and in the ocean they are united. And there they know no separateness, nor say: This am I, this am I. Thus indeed, dear, all these beings coming forth from the Real, know not, nor say: We have come from the Real. And whatever they are here, whether tiger or lion or wolf or boar or worm or moth or gnat or fly or whatever they are, that they become again. And that soul is the Self of all that is, this is the Real, this the Self. THAT THOU ART, O Shvetaketu.

Let the Master teach me more; said he.

Let it be so, dear; said he.

[81]

THAT THOU ART

If any one strike the root of this great tree, dear, it will flow and live; if any one strike the middle of it, it will flow and live; if any one strike the top of it, it will flow and live. So filled with Life, with the Self, drinking in and rejoicing, it stands firm. But if the life of it leaves one branch, that branch dries up; it leaves a second, that dries up; it leaves a third, that dries up; it leaves the whole, the whole dries up. Thus indeed, dear, you must understand; said he. When abandoned by Life, verily, this dies; but Life itself does not die. For that soul is the Self of all that is, this is the Real, this the Self. THAT THOU ART, O Shvetaketu.

Let the Master teach me more; said he.

Let it be so, dear, said he.

Bring me a fruit of that fig-tree.

Here is the fruit, Master.

Divide it into two; said he.

I have divided it, Master.

[82]

CHHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

What do you see in it? said he.

Atom-like seeds, Master.

Divide one of them in two; said he.

I have divided it, Master.

What do you see in it? said he.

I see nothing at all, Master.

So he said to him:

That soul that you perceive not at all, dear,—from that very soul the great fig-tree comes forth. Believe then, dear, that this soul is the Self of all that is, this is the Real, this the Self. THAT THOU ART, 0 Shvetaketu.

Let the Master teach me more; said he.

Let it be so, dear; said he.

Put this salt in water, and come to me early in the morning.

And he did so, and the Master said to him:

That salt you put in the water last night—bring it to me! And looking for its appearance, he could not see it, as it was melted in the water.

[83]

THAT THOU ART

Taste the top of it; said he. How is it?

It is salt; said he.

Taste the middle of it; said he. How is it?

It is salt; said he.

Taste the bottom of it; said he. How is it?

It is salt; said he.

Take it away, then, and return to me.

And he did so; but that exists for ever. And the Master said to him:

Just so, dear, you do not see the Real in the world. Yet it is here all the same. And this soul is the Self of all that is, this is the Real, this the Self. THAT THOU ART, 0 Shvetaketu.

Let the Master teach me more; said he.

Let it be so, dear; said he.

Just as if they were to blindfold a man, and lead him far away from Gandhâra, and leave him in the wilderness; and as he cried to the east and the north and the west: I am led away blindfolded; I am deserted blindfolded. And just as if one came, and loosing the bandage

[84]

CHHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

from his eyes, told him: In that direction is Gandhâra; in that direction you must go. And he asking from village to village like a wise man and learned, should come safe to Gandhâra. Thus, verily, a man who has found a true Teacher, knows. He must wait only till he is free, then he reaches the resting-place. And that soul is the Self of all that is, this is the Real, this the Self. THAT THOU ART, 0 Shvetaketu.

Let the Master teach me more; said he.

Let it be so, dear; said he.

When a man is near his end, his friends gather round him: Do you know me, do you know me? they say. And until formative Voice sinks back into Mind, and Mind into Breath, and Breath into the Radiance, and the Radiance into the higher Divinity, he still knows them. But when formative Voice sinks back into Mind, and Mind into Breath, and Breath into the Radiance, and the Radiance into the

[85]

THAT THOU ART

higher Divinity, he knows them not. And that soul is the Self of all that is, this is the Real, this the Self. THAT THOU ART, 0 Shvetaketu.

Let the Master teach me more; said he. Let it be so, dear; said he.

They bind a man and bring him: He has stolen, they say; he has committed theft. Heat the axe for the ordeal: and if he is the doer of it, and makes himself untrue; maintaining untruth, and wrapping himself in untruth, he grasps the heated axe; he burns, and so dies. But if he be not the doer of it, he makes him self true; maintaining truth, and wrapping himself in truth, he grasps the heated axe; he burns not, and so goes free. And the truth that saves him from burning is the Self of all that is, this is the Real, this the Self. THAT THOU ART, 0 Shvetaketu.

Thus he learned the truth; thus he learned it.

[86]

TAO IN ITS TRANSCENDENTAL ASPECT, AND IN ITS PHYSICAL MANIFESTATION

THE Tao which can be expressed in words is not the eternal Tao; the name which can be uttered is not its eternal name. Without a name, it is the Beginning of Heaven and Earth; with a name, it is the Mother of all things. Only one who is eternally free from earthly passions can apprehend its spiritual essence; he who is ever clogged by passions can see no more than its outer form. These two things, the spiritual and the material, though we call them by different names, in their origin are one and the same. This sameness is a mystery,—the mystery of mysteries. It is the gate of all spirituality.

How unfathomable is Tao! It seems to be the ancestral progenitor of all things. How pure and clear is Tao! It would seem to be

[89]

TAO TE KING

everlasting. I know not of whom it is the off spring. It appears to have been anterior to any Sovereign Power.

Tao eludes the sense of sight, and is therefore called colourless. It eludes the sense of hearing, and is therefore called soundless. It eludes the sense of touch, and is therefore called incorporeal. These three qualities can not be apprehended, and hence they may be blended into unity.

Its upper part is not bright, and its lower part is not obscure. Ceaseless in action, it can not be named, but returns again to nothingness. We may call it the form of the formless, the image of the imageless, the fleeting and the indeterminable. Would you go before it, you cannot see its face; would you go behind it, you cannot see its back.

The mightiest manifestations of active force flow solely from Tao.

Tao in itself is vague, impalpable,—how impalpable, how vague! Yet within it there is

[90]

TRANSCENDENTAL ASPECT

Form. How vague, how impalpable! Yet with in it there is Substance. How profound, how obscure! Yet within it there is a Vital Principle. This principle is the Quintessence of Reality, and out of it comes Truth.

From of old until now, its name has never passed away. It watches over the beginning of all things. How do I know this about the beginning of things? Through Tao.

There is something, chaotic yet complete, which existed before Heaven and Earth. Oh how still it is, and formless, standing alone without changing, reaching everywhere without suffering harm! It must be regarded as the Mother of the Universe, Its name I know not. To designate it, I call it Tao. Endeavouring to describe it, I call it Great. Being great, it passes on; passing on, it becomes remote; having become remote, it returns.

Therefore Tao is great; Heaven is great; Earth is great; and the Sovereign also is great. In the Universe there are four powers, of

[91]

TAO TE KING

which the Sovereign is one. Man takes his law from the Earth; the Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from Tao; but the law of Tao is its own spontaneity.

Tao in its unchanging aspect has no name. Small though it be in its primordial simplicity, mankind dare not claim its service. Could princes and kings hold and keep it, all creation would spontaneously pay homage. Heaven and Earth would unite in sending down sweet dew, and the people would be righteous unbidden and of their own accord.

As soon as Tao creates order, it becomes nameable. When it once has a name, men will know how to rest in it. Knowing how to rest in it, they will run no risk of harm.

Tao as it exists in the world is like the great rivers and seas which receive the streams from the valleys.

All-pervading is the Great Tao. It can be at once on the right hand and on the left. All

[92]

TRANSCENDENTAL ASPECT

things depend on it for life, and it rejects them not. Its task accomplished, it takes no credit. It loves and nourishes all things, but does not act as master. It is ever free from desire. We may call it small. All things return to it, yet it does not act as master. We may call it great. The whole world will flock to him who holds the mighty form of Tao. They will come and receive no hurt, but find rest, peace, and tranquillity.

With music and dainties we may detain the passing guest. But if we open our mouths to speak of Tao, he finds it tasteless and insipid.

Not visible to the sight, not audible to the ear, in its use it is inexhaustible.

Retrogression is the movement of Tao. Weakness is the character of Tao.

All things under Heaven derive their being from Tao in the form of Existence; Tao in the form of Existence sprang from Tao in the form of Non-Existence.

[93]

TAO TE KING

Tao is a great square with no angles, a great vessel which takes long to complete, a great sound which cannot be heard, a great image with no form.

Tao lies hid and cannot be named, yet it has the power of transmuting and perfecting all things.

Tao produced Unity; Unity produced Duality; Duality produced Trinity; and Trinity produced all existing objects. These myriad objects leave darkness behind them and embrace the light, being harmonised by the breath of Vacancy.

Tao produces all things; its Virtue nourishes them; its Nature gives them form; its Force perfects them.

Hence there is not a single thing but pays homage to Tao and extols its Virtue. This homage paid to Tao, this extolling of its Virtue, is due to no command, but is always spontaneous.

[94]

TRANSCENDENTAL ASPECT

Thus it is that Tao, engendering all things, nourishes them, develops them, and fosters them; perfects them, ripens them, tends them, and protects them.

Production without possession, action with out self-assertion, development without domination: this is its mysterious operation.

The World has a First Cause, which may be regarded as the Mother of the World. When one has the Mother, one can know the Child. He who knows the Child and still keeps the Mother, though his body perish, shall run no risk of harm.

It is the Way of Heaven not to strive, and yet it knows how to overcome; not to speak, and yet it knows how to obtain a response; it calls not, and things come of themselves; it is slow to move, but excellent in its designs.

Heaven's net is vast; though its meshes are wide, it lets nothing slip through.

[95]

The Way of Heaven is like the drawing of a bow: it brings down what is high and raises what is low.

It is the Way of Heaven to take from those who have too much, and give to those who have too little. But the way of man is not so. He takes away from those who have too little, to add to his own superabundance. What man is there that can take of his own superabundance and give it to mankind? Only he who possesses Tao.

The Tao of Heaven has no favourites. It gives to all good men without distinction.

Things wax strong and then decay. This is the contrary of Tao. What is contrary to Tao soon perishes.

[96]

TAO AS A MORAL PRINCIPLE, OR VIRTUE”

THE highest goodness is like water, for water is excellent in benefiting all things, and it does not strive. It occupies the lowest place, which men abhor. And therefore it is near akin to Tao.

When your work is done and fame has been achieved, then retire into the background; for this is the Way of Heaven.

Those who follow the Way desire not excess; and thus without excess they are for ever exempt from change.

All things alike do their work, and then we see them subside. When they have reached their bloom, each returns to its origin. Returning to their origin means rest or fulfilment of destiny. This reversion is an eternal law. To know that law is to be enlightened. Not to know it, is misery and calamity. He who

[97]

knows the eternal law is liberal-minded. Being liberal-minded, he is just. Being just, he is kingly. Being kingly, he is akin to Heaven. Being akin to Heaven, he possesses Tao. Possessed of Tao, he endures for ever. Though his body perish, yet he suffers no harm.

He who acts in accordance with Tao, becomes one with Tao. He who treads the path of Virtue becomes one with Virtue. He who pursues a course of Vice becomes one with Vice. The man who is one with Tao, Tao is also glad to receive. The man who is one with Virtue, Virtue is also glad to receive. The man who is one with Vice, Vice is also glad to receive.

He who is self-approving does not shine. He who boasts has no merit. He who exalts himself does not rise high. Judged according to Tao, he is like remnants of food or a tumour on the body—an object of universal disgust. Therefore one who has Tao will not consort with such.

[98]

TAO AS A MORAL PRINCIPLE

Perfect Virtue acquires nothing; therefore it obtains everything. Perfect Virtue does nothing, yet there is nothing which it does not effect. Perfect Charity operates without the need of anything to evoke it. Perfect Duty to one's neighbour operates, but always needs to be evoked. Perfect Ceremony operates, and calls for no outward response; nevertheless it induces respect.

Ceremonies are the outward expression of inward feelings.

If Tao perishes, then Virtue will perish; if Virtue perishes, then Charity will perish; if Charity perishes, then Duty to one's neighbour will perish; if Duty to one's neighbour perishes, then Ceremonies will perish.

Ceremonies are but the veneer of loyalty and good faith, while oft-times the source of disorder. Knowledge of externals is but a showy ornament of Tao, while oft-times the beginning of imbecility.

[99]

TAO TE KING

Therefore the truly great man takes his stand upon what is solid, and not upon what is superficial; upon what is real, and not upon what is ornamental. He rejects the latter in favour of the former.

When the superior scholar hears of Tao, he diligently practices it. When the average scholar hears of Tao, he sometimes retains it, some times loses it. When the inferior scholar hears of Tao, he loudly laughs at it. Were it not thus ridiculed, it would not be worthy of the name of Tao.

He who is enlightened by Tao seems wrapped in darkness. He who is advanced in Tao seems to be going back. He who walks smoothly in Tao seems to be on a rugged path.

The man of highest virtue appears lowly. He who is truly pure behaves as though he were sullied. He who has virtue in abundance behaves as though it were not enough. He who is firm in virtue seems like a skulking pretend-

[100]

TAO AS A MORAL PRINCIPLE

er. He who is simple and true appears unstable as water.

If Tao prevails on earth, horses will be used for purposes of agriculture. If Tao does not prevail, war-horses will be bred on the common.

If we had sufficient knowledge to walk in the Great Way, what we should most fear would be boastful display.

The Great Way is very smooth, but the people love the by-paths.

Where the palaces are very splendid, there the fields will be very waste, and the granaries very empty.

The wearing of gay embroidered robes, the carrying of sharp swords, fastidiousness in food and drink, superabundance of property and wealth:—this I call flaunting robbery; most assuredly it is not Tao.

He who trusts to his abundance of natural virtue is like an infant newly born, whom

[101]

TAO TE KING

venomous reptiles will not sting, wild beasts will not seize, birds of prey will not strike. The infant's bones are weak, its sinews are soft, yet its grasp is firm. All day long it will cry without its voice becoming hoarse. This is because the harmony of its bodily system is perfect.

Temper your sharpness, disentangle your ideas, moderate your brilliancy, live in harmony with your age. This is being in conformity with the principle of Tao. Such a man is impervious alike to favour and disgrace, to benefits and injuries, to honour and contempt. And therefore he is esteemed above all man kind.

In governing men and in serving Heaven, there is nothing like moderation. For only by moderation can there be an early return to man's normal state. This early return is the same as a great storage of Virtue. With a great storage of Virtue there is naught which may not be achieved. If there is naught which may not be achieved, then no one will know

[102]

TAO AS A MORAL PRINCIPLE

to what extent this power reaches. And if no one knows to what extent a man's power reaches, that man is fit to be the ruler of a State. Having the secret of rule, his rule shall endure. Setting the tap-root deep, and making the spreading roots firm: this is the way to ensure long life to the tree.

Tao is the sanctuary where all things find refuge, the good man's priceless treasure, the guardian and saviour of him who is not good.

Hence at the enthronement of an Emperor and the appointment of his three ducal ministers, though there be some who bear presents of costly jade and drive chariots with teams of four horses, that is not so good as sitting still and offering the gift of this Tao.

Why was it that the men of old esteemed this Tao so highly? Is it not because it may be daily sought and found, and can remit the sins of the guilty? Hence it is the most precious thing under Heaven.

[103]

TAO TE KING

All the world says that my Tao is great, but unlike other teaching. It is just because it is great that it appears unlike other teaching. If it had this likeness, long ago would its smallness have been known.

The skilful philosophers of the olden time were subtle, spiritual, profound, and penetrating. They were so deep as to be incomprehensible. Because they are hard to comprehend, I will endeavour to describe them.

Shrinking were they like one fording a stream in winter. Cautious were they, like one who fears an attack from any quarter. Circumspect were they, like a stranger guest; self-effacing, like ice about to melt; simple, like unpolished wood; vacant, like a valley; opaque, like muddy water.

When terms are made after a great quarrel, a certain ill-feeling is bound to be left behind. How can this be made good? Therefore, having entered into an agreement, the Sage adheres

[104]

TAO AS A MORAL PRINCIPLE

to his obligations, but does not exact fulfilment from others. The man who has Virtue attends to the spirit of the compact; the man without Virtue attends only to his claims. He who tries to govern a kingdom by his sagacity is of that kingdom the despoiler; but he who does not govern by sagacity is the kingdom's blessing. He who understands these two sayings may be regarded as a pattern and a model. To keep this principle constantly before one's eyes is called Profound Virtue. Profound Virtue is unfathomable, far-reaching, paradoxical at first, but afterwards exhibiting thorough conformity with Nature.

[105]

THE DOCTRINE OF INACTION

THE Sage occupies himself with inaction, and conveys instruction without words.

Is it not by neglecting self-interest that one will be able to achieve it?

Purge yourself of your profound intelligence, and you can still be free from blemish. Cherish the people and order the kingdom, and you can still do without meddlesome action.

Who is there that can make muddy water clear? But if allowed to remain still, it will gradually become clear of itself. Who is there that can secure a state of absolute repose? But let time go on, and the state of repose will gradually arise.

Be sparing of speech, and things will come right of themselves.

A violent wind does not outlast the morning; a squall of rain does not outlast the day.

[106]

THE DOCTRINE OF INACTION

Such is the course of Nature. And if Nature herself cannot sustain her efforts long, how much less can man!

Attain complete vacuity, and sedulously preserve a state of repose.

Tao is eternally inactive, and yet it leaves nothing undone. If kings and princes could but hold fast to this principle, all things would work out their own reformation. If, having reformed, they still desired to act, I would have them restrained by the simplicity of the

Nameless Tao. The simplicity of the Nameless Tao brings about an absence of desire. The absence of desire gives tranquillity. And thus the Empire will rectify itself.

The softest things in the world override the hardest. That which has no substance enters where there is no crevice. Hence I know the advantage of inaction.

Conveying lessons without words, reaping profit without action,—there are few in the world who can attain to this!

[107]

TAO TE KING

Activity conquers cold, but stillness conquers heat. Purity and stillness are the correct principles for mankind.

Without going out of doors one may know the whole world; without looking out of the window, one may see the Way of Heaven. The further one travels, the less one may know. Thus it is that without moving you shall know; without looking you shall see; without doing you shall achieve.

The pursuit of book-learning brings about daily increase. The practice of Tao brings about daily loss. Repeat this loss again and again, and you arrive at inaction. Practise inaction, and there is nothing which cannot be done.

The Empire has ever been won by letting things take their course. He who must always be doing is unfit to obtain the Empire.

Keep the mouth shut, close the gateways of sense, and as long as you live you will have no trouble. Open your lips and push your affairs,

[108]

THE DOCTRINE OF INACTION

and you will not be safe to the end of your days.

Practise inaction, occupy yourself with doing nothing.

Desire not to desire, and you will not value things difficult to obtain. Learn not to learn, and you will revert to a condition which man kind in general has lost.

Leave all things to take their natural course, and do not interfere.

{ 109]

LOWLINESS AND HUMILITY

ALL things in Nature work silently. They come into being and possess nothing. They fulfil their functions and make no claim.

When merit has been achieved, do not take it to yourself; for if you do not take it to your self, it shall never be taken from you.

Follow diligently the Way in your own heart, but make no display of it to the world.

Keep behind, and you shall be put in front; keep out, and you shall be kept in.

Goodness strives not, and therefore it is not rebuked.

He that humbles himself shall be preserved entire. He that bends shall be made straight. He that is empty shall be filled. He that is worn out shall be renewed. He who has little shall succeed. He who has much shall go astray.

Therefore the Sage embraces Unity, and is a model for all under Heaven. He is free from

[110]

LOWLINESS AND HUMILITY

self-display, therefore he shines forth; from self-assertion, therefore he is distinguished; from self-glorification, therefore he has merit; from self-exaltation, therefore he rises superior to all. Inasmuch as he does not strive, there is no one in the world who can strive with him.

He who, conscious of being strong, is content to be weak,—he shall be the paragon of mankind. Being the paragon of mankind, Virtue will never desert him. He returns to the state of a little child.

He who, conscious of his own light, is content to be obscure,—he shall be the whole world's model. Being the whole world's model, his Virtue will never fail. He reverts to the Absolute.

He who, conscious of desert, is content to suffer disgrace,—he shall be the cynosure of mankind. Being the cynosure of mankind, his Virtue then is full. He returns to perfect simplicity.

[111]

TAO TE KING

He who is great must make humility his base. He who is high must make lowliness his foundation. Thus, princes and kings in speaking of themselves use the terms “lonely,” “friendless,” “of small account.” Is not this making humility their base?

Thus it is that “Some things are increased by being diminished, others are diminished by being increased.” What others have taught, I also teach; verily, I will make it the root of my teaching.

What makes a kingdom great is its being like a down-flowing river,—the central point towards which all the smaller streams under Heaven converge; or like the female throughout the world, who by quiescence always over comes the male. And quiescence is a form of humility.

Therefore, if a great kingdom humbles it self before a small kingdom, it shall make that small kingdom its prize. And if a small king-

[112]

LOWLINESS AND HUMILITY

dom humbles itself before a great kingdom, it shall win over that great kingdom. Thus the one humbles itself in order to attain, the other attains because it is humble. If the great kingdom has no further desire than to bring men together and to nourish them, the small

kingdom will have no further desire than to enter the service of the other. But in order that both may have their desire, the great one must learn humility.

The reason why rivers and seas are able to be lords over a hundred mountain streams, is that they know how to keep below them. That is why they are able to reign over all the mountain streams.

Therefore the Sage, wishing to be above the people, must by his words put himself below them; wishing to be before the people, he must put himself behind them. In this way, though he has his place above them, the people do not feel his weight; though he has his place before

[113]

TAO TE KING

them, they do not feel it as an injury. There fore all mankind delight to exalt him, and weary of him not.

The Sage expects no recognition for what he does; he achieves merit but does not take it to himself; he does not wish to display his worth.

I have three precious things, which I hold fast and prize. The first is gentleness; the second is frugality; the third is humility, which keeps me from putting myself before others. Be gentle, and you can be bold; be frugal, and you can be liberal; avoid putting yourself before others, and you can become a leader among men.

But in the present day men cast off gentleness, and are all for being bold; they spurn frugality, and retain only extravagance; they discard humility, and aim only at being first. Therefore they shall surely perish.

Gentleness brings victory to him who attacks, and safety to him who defends. Those whom

[114]

LOWLINESS AND HUMILITY

Heaven would save, it fences round with gentleness.

The best soldiers are not warlike; the best fighters do not lose their temper. The greatest conquerors are those who overcome their enemies without strife. The greatest directors of men are those who yield place to others. This is called the Virtue of not striving, the capacity for directing mankind; this is being the compeer of Heaven. It was the highest goal of the ancients.

[115]

GOVERNMENT

NOT exalting worth keeps the people from rivalry. Not prizing what is hard to procure keeps the people from theft. Not to show them what they may covet is the way to keep their minds from disorder.

Therefore the Sage, when he governs, empties their minds and fills their bellies, weakens their inclinations and strengthens their bones. His constant object is to keep the people without knowledge and without desire, or to prevent those who have knowledge from daring to act. He practises inaction, and nothing remains ungoverned.

He who respects the State as his own person is fit to govern it. He who loves the State as his own body is fit to be entrusted with it. In the highest antiquity, the people did not know that they had rulers. In the next age they

[116]

GOVERNMENT

loved and praised them. In the next, they feared them. In the next they despised them.

How cautious is the Sage, how sparing of his words! When his task is accomplished and affairs are prosperous, the people all say: "We have come to be as we are, naturally and of ourselves."

If any one desires to take the Empire in hand and govern it, I see that he will not succeed. The Empire is a divine utensil which may not be roughly handled. He who meddles, mars. He who holds it by force, loses it.

Fishes must not be taken from the water: the methods of government must not be exhibited to the people.

Use uprightness in ruling a State; employ stratagems in waging war; practise non-interference in order to win the Empire. Now this is how I know what I lay down:—

As restrictions and prohibitions are multiplied in the Empire, the people grow poorer

[117]

TAO TE KING

and poorer. When the people are subjected to overmuch government, the land is thrown into confusion. When the people are skilled in many cunning arts, strange are the objects of luxury that appear.

The greater the number of laws and enactments, the more thieves and robbers there will be. Therefore the Sage says: 'So long as I do nothing, the people will work out their own reformation. So long as I love calm, the people will right themselves. If only I keep from meddling, the people will grow rich. If only I am free from desire, the people will come naturally back to simplicity.'

If the government is sluggish and tolerant, the people will be honest and free from guile. If the government is prying and meddling, there will be constant infraction of the law. Is the government corrupt? Then uprightness becomes rare, and goodness becomes strange. Verily, mankind have been under delusion for many a day!

[118]

GOVERNMENT

Govern a great nation as you would cook a small fish.

If the Empire is governed according to Tao, disembodied spirits will not manifest super-natural powers. It is not that they lack super natural-power, but they will not use it

to hurt mankind. Again, it is not that they are unable to hurt mankind, but they see that the Sage also does not hurt mankind. If then neither Sage nor spirits work harm, their virtue converges to one beneficent end.

In ancient times those who knew how to practise Tao did not use it to enlighten the people, but rather to keep them ignorant. The difficulty of governing the people arises from their having too much knowledge.

If the people do not fear the majesty of government, a reign of terror will ensue.

Do not confine them within too narrow bounds; do not make their lives too weary. For if you do not weary them of life, then they will not grow weary of you.

[119]

TAO TE KING

If the people do not fear death, what good is there in using death as a deterrent? But if the people are brought up in fear of death, and we can take and execute any man who has committed a monstrous crime, who will dare to follow his example?

Now, there is always one who presides over the infliction of death. He who would take the place of the magistrate and himself inflict death, is like one who should try to do the work of a master-carpenter. And of those who try the work of a master-carpenter there are few who do not cut their own hands.

The people starve because those in authority over them devour too many taxes; that is why they starve. The people are difficult to govern because those placed over them are meddle some; that is why they are difficult to govern. The people despise death because of their excessive labour in seeking the means of life; that is why they despise death.

[120]

GOVERNMENT

A Sage has said: "He who can take upon himself the nation's shame is fit to be lord of the land. He who can take upon himself the nation's calamities is fit to be ruler over the Empire."

Were I ruler of a little State with a small population, and only ten or a hundred men available as soldiers, I would not use them. I would have the people look on death as a grievous thing, and they should not travel to distant countries. Though they might possess boats and carriages, they should have no occasion to ride in them. Though they might own weapons and armour, they should have no need to use them. I would make the people return to the use of knotted cords. They should find their plain food sweet, their rough garments fine. They should be content with their homes, and happy in their simple ways. If a neighboring State was within sight of mine—nay, if we were close enough to hear the crowing of each other's cocks and the barking of each other's

[121]

TAO TE KING

dogs—the two peoples should grow old and die without there ever having been any mutual intercourse.

WAR

HE who serves a ruler of men in harmony with Tao will not subdue the Empire by force of arms. Such a course is wont to bring retribution in its train.

Where troops have been quartered, brambles and thorns spring up. In the track of great armies there must follow lean years.

The good man wins a victory and then stops; he will not go on to acts of violence. Winning, he boasteth not; he will not triumph; he shows no arrogance. He wins because he cannot choose; after his victory he will not be over bearing.

Weapons, however beautiful, are instruments of ill omen, hateful to all creatures. Therefore he who has Tao will have nothing to do with them.

Where the princely man abides, the weak left hand is in honour. But he who uses weapons honours the stronger right. Weapons are

[123]

TAO TE KING

instruments of ill omen; they are not the instruments of the princely man, who uses them only when he needs must. Peace and tranquillity are what he prizes. When he conquers, he is not elate. To be elate were to rejoice in the slaughter of human beings. And he who rejoices in the slaughter of human beings is not fit to work his will in the Empire.

On happy occasions, the left is favoured; on sad occasions, the right. The second in command has his place on the left, the general in chief on the right. That is to say, they are placed in the order observed at funeral rites. And, indeed, he who has exterminated a great multitude of men should bewail them with tears and lamentation. It is well that those who are victorious in battle should be placed in the order of funeral rites.

A certain military commander used to say:

“I dare not act the host; I prefer to play the guest. I dare not advance an inch; I prefer to retreat a foot.”

[124]

WAR

There is no greater calamity than lightly engaging in war. Lightly to engage in war is to risk the loss of our treasure.

When opposing warriors join in battle, he who has pity conquers.

[125]

PARADOXES

AMONG mankind, the recognition of beauty as such implies the idea of ugliness, and the recognition of good implies the idea of evil.

There is the same mutual relation between existence and non-existence in the matter of creation; between difficulty and ease in the matter of accomplishing; between long and

short in the matter of form; between high and low in the matter of elevation; between treble and bass in the matter of musical pitch; between before and after in the matter of priority.

Nature is not benevolent; with ruthless indifference she makes all things serve their purposes, like the straw dogs we use at sacrifices. The Sage is not benevolent: he utilises the people with the like inexorability.

The space between Heaven and Earth,—is it not like a bellows? It is empty, yet inexhaustible; when it is put in motion, more and more comes out.

[126]

PARADOXES

Heaven and Earth are long-lasting. The reason why Heaven and Earth can last long is that they live not for themselves, and thus they are able to endure.

Thirty spokes unite in one nave; the utility of the cart depends on the hollow centre in which the axle turns. Clay is moulded into a vessel; the utility of the vessel depends on its hollow interior. Doors and windows are cut out in order to make a house; the utility of the house depends on the empty spaces.

Thus, while the existence of things may be good, it is the non-existent in them which makes them serviceable.

When the Great Tao falls into disuse, benevolence and righteousness come into vogue. When shrewdness and sagacity appear, great hypocrisy prevails. It is when the bonds of kinship are out of joint that filial piety and paternal affection begin. It is when the State is in a ferment of revolution that loyal patriots arise.

[127]

TAO TE KING

Cast off your holiness, rid yourself of sagacity, and the people will benefit an hundredfold. Discard benevolence and abolish righteousness, and the people will return to filial piety and paternal love. Renounce your scheming and abandon gain, and thieves and robbers will disappear. These three precepts mean that outward show is insufficient, and therefore they bid us be true to our proper nature;—to show simplicity, to embrace plain dealing, to reduce selfishness, to moderate desire.

A variety of colours makes man's eye blind; a diversity of sounds makes man's ear deaf; a mixture of flavours makes man's palate dull.

He who knows others is clever, but he who knows himself is enlightened. He who overcomes others is strong, but he who overcomes himself is mightier still. He is rich who knows when he has enough. He who acts with energy has strength of purpose. He who moves not from his proper place is long-lasting. He who dies, but perishes not, enjoys true longevity.

[128]

PARADOXES

If you would contract, you must first expand. If you would weaken, you must first strengthen. If you would overthrow, you must first raise up. If you would take, you must first give. This is called the dawn of intelligence.

He who is most perfect seems to be lacking; yet his resources are never outworn. He who is most full seems vacant; yet his uses are inexhaustible.

Extreme straightness is as bad as crookedness. Extreme cleverness is as bad as folly. Extreme fluency is as bad as stammering.

Those who know do not speak; those who speak do not know.

Abandon learning, and you will be free from trouble and distress.

Failure is the foundation of success, and the means by which it is achieved. Success is the lurking-place of failure; but who can tell when the turning-point will come?

He who acts, destroys; he who grasps, loses. Therefore the Sage does not act, and so does

[129]

TAO TE KING

not destroy; he does not grasp, and so he does not lose.

Only he who does nothing for his life's sake can truly be said to value his life.

Man at his birth is tender and weak; at his death he is rigid and strong. Plants and trees when they come forth are tender and crisp; when dead, they are dry and tough. Thus rigidity and strength are the concomitants of death; softness and weakness are the concomitants of life.

Hence the warrior that is strong does not conquer; the tree that is strong is cut down. Therefore the strong and the big take the lower place; the soft and the weak take the higher place.

There is nothing in the world more soft and weak than water, yet for attacking things that are hard and strong there is nothing that surpasses it, nothing that can take its place.

The soft overcomes the hard; the weak overcomes the strong. There is no one in the world but knows this truth, and no one who can put it into practice.

Those who are wise have no wide range of learning; those who range most widely are not wise.

The Sage does not care to hoard. The more he uses for the benefit of others, the more he possesses himself. The more he gives to his fellow-men, the more he has of his own.

The truest sayings are paradoxical.

[131]

MISCELLANEOUS SAYINGS AND PRECEPTS

By many words wit is exhausted; it is better to preserve a mean.

The excellence of a dwelling is its site; the excellence of a mind is its profundity; the excellence of giving is charitableness; the excellence of speech is truthfulness; the excellence of government is order; the excellence of action is ability; the excellence of movement is timeliness.

He who grasps more than he can hold, would be better without any. If a house is crammed with treasures of gold and jade, it will be impossible to guard them all.

He who prides himself upon wealth and honour hastens his own downfall. He who strikes with a sharp point will not himself be safe for long.

He who embraces unity of soul by subordinating animal instincts to reason will be able to

[132]

MISCELLANEOUS SAYINGS

escape dissolution. He who strives his utmost after tenderness can become even as a little child.

If a man is clear-headed and intelligent, can he be without knowledge?

The Sage attends to the inner and not to the outer; he puts away the objective and holds to the subjective.

Between yes and yea, how small the difference! Between good and evil, how great the difference!

What the world reverences may not be treated with disrespect.

He who has not faith in others shall find no faith in them.

To see oneself is to be clear of sight. Mighty is he who conquers himself.

He who raises himself on tiptoe cannot stand firm; he who stretches his legs wide apart can not walk.

Racing and hunting excite man's heart to madness.

[133]

TAO TE KING

The struggle for rare possessions drives a man to actions injurious to himself.

The heavy is the foundation of the light; repose is the ruler of unrest.

The wise prince in his daily course never departs from gravity and repose. Though he possess a gorgeous palace, he will dwell there in with calm indifference. How should the lord of a myriad chariots conduct himself with levity in the Empire? Levity loses men's hearts; unrest loses the throne.

The skilful traveller leaves no tracks; the skilful speaker makes no blunders; the skilful reckoner uses no tallies. He who knows how to shut uses no bolts—yet you cannot open. He who knows how to bind uses no cords—yet you cannot undo.

Among men, reject none; among things, reject nothing. This is called comprehensive intelligence.

The good man is the bad man's teacher; the bad man is the material upon which the good

[134]

MISCELLANEOUS SAYINGS

man works. If the one does not value his teacher, if the other does not love his material, then despite their sagacity they must go far astray. This is a mystery of great import.

As unwrought material is divided up and made into serviceable vessels, so the Sage turns his simplicity to account, and thereby becomes the ruler of rulers.

The course of things is such that what was in front is now behind; what was hot is now cold; what was strong is now weak; what was complete is now in ruin. Therefore the Sage avoids excess, extravagance, and grandeur.

Which is nearer to you, fame or life? Which is more to you, life or wealth? Which is the greater malady, gain or loss?

Excessive ambitions necessarily entail great sacrifice. Much hoarding must be followed by heavy loss. He who knows when he has enough will not be put to shame. He who knows when to stop will not come to harm. Such a man can look forward to long life.

[135]

TAO TE KING

There is no sin greater than ambition; no calamity greater than discontent; no vice more sickening than covetousness. He who is content always has enough.

Do not wish to be rare like jade, or common like stone.

The Sage has no hard and fast ideas, but he shares the ideas of the people and makes them his own. Living in the world, he is apprehensive lest his heart be sullied by contact with the world. The people all fix their eyes and ears upon him. The Sage looks upon all as his children.

I have heard that he who possesses the secret of life, when travelling abroad, will not flee from rhinoceros or tiger; when entering a hostile camp, he will not equip himself with sword or buckler. The rhinoceros finds in him no place to insert its horn; the tiger has no where to fasten its claw; the soldier has no where to thrust his blade. And why? Because he has no spot where death can enter.

[136]

MISCELLANEOUS SAYINGS

To see small beginnings is clearness of sight. To rest in weakness is strength.

He who knows how to plant, shall not have his plant uprooted; he who knows how to hold a thing, shall not have it taken away. Sons and grandsons will worship at his shrine, which shall endure from generation to generation.

Knowledge in harmony is called constant. Constant knowledge is called wisdom. Increase of life is called felicity. The mind directing the body is called strength.

Be square without being angular. Be honest without being mean. Be upright without being punctilious. Be brilliant without being showy.

Good words shall gain you honour in the market-place, but good deeds shall gain you friends among men.

To the good I would be good; to the not-good I would also be good, in order to make them good.

With the faithful I would keep faith; with the unfaithful I would also keep faith, in order

[137]

TAO TE KING

that they may become faithful.

Even if a man is bad, how can it be right to cast him off?

Requite injury with kindness.

The difficult things of this world must once have been easy; the great things of this world must once have been small. Set about difficult things while they are still easy; do great things while they are still small. The Sage never affects to do anything great, and therefore he is able to achieve his great results.

He who always thinks things easy is sure to find them difficult. Therefore the Sage ever anticipates difficulties, and thus it is he never encounters them.

While times are quiet, it is easy to take action; ere coming troubles have cast their shadows, it is easy to lay plans.

That which is brittle is easily broken; that which is minute is easily dissipated. Take precautions before the evil appears; regulate things before disorder has begun.

[138]

MISCELLANEOUS SAYINGS

The tree which needs two arms to span its girth sprang from the tiniest shoot. Yon tower, nine storeys high, rose from a little mound of earth. A journey of a thousand miles began with a single step.

A great principle cannot be divided; there fore it is that many containers cannot contain it.

The Sage knows what is in him, but makes no display; he respects himself, but seeks not honour for himself.

To know, but to be as though not knowing, is the height of wisdom. Not to know, and yet to affect knowledge, is a vice. If we regard this vice as such, we shall escape it. The Sage has not this vice. It is because he regards it as a vice that he escapes it.

Use the light that is in you to revert to your natural clearness of sight. Then the loss of the body is unattended by calamity. This is called doubly enduring.

[139]

TAO TE KING

In the management of affairs, people constantly break down just when they are nearing a successful issue. If they took as much care at the end as at the beginning, they would not fail in their enterprises.

He who lightly promises is sure to keep but little faith.

He whose boldness leads him to venture, will be slain; he who is brave enough not to venture, will live. Of these two, one has the benefit, the other has the hurt. But who is it that knows the real cause of Heaven's hatred? This is why the Sage hesitates and finds it difficult to act.

The violent and stiff-necked die not by a natural death.

True words are not fine; fine words are not true. The good are not contentious, the contentious are not good.

This is the Way of Heaven, which benefits, and injures not. This is the Way of the Sage, in whose actions there is no element of strife.

[140]

LAO TZU ON HIMSELF

ALAS! the barrenness of the age has not yet reached its limit.

All men are radiant with happiness, as if enjoying a great feast, as if mounted on a tower in spring. I alone am still, and give as yet no sign of joy. I am like an infant which has not yet smiled, forlorn as one who has no where to lay his head. Other men have plenty, while I alone seem to have lost all. I am a man foolish in heart, dull and confused. Other men are full of light; I alone seem to be in darkness. Other men are alert; I alone am listless. I am unsettled as the ocean, drifting as though I had no stopping-place. All men have their usefulness; I alone am stupid and clownish. Lonely though I am and unlike other men, yet I revere the Foster-Mother, Tao.

My words are very easy to understand, very easy to put into practice; yet the world can neither understand nor practise them.

[141]

TAO TE KING

My words have a clue, my actions have an underlying principle. It is because men do not know the clue that they understand me not.

Those who know me are but few, and on that account my honour is the greater.

Thus the Sage wears coarse garments, but carries a jewel in his bosom.

THE END

[141]