

8. INTRODUCTION

ALL THE NECESSARY PRELIMINARIES having now been completed, we are free to consider the part which Chinese philosophy played in relation to the development of scientific thought. It is a commonplace that in China even the word 'philosophy' did not mean quite what it came to mean in Europe, being much more ethical and social than metaphysical. Nevertheless, the Taoists and Mohists worked out a naturalistic world-view of great importance, and the Logicians began the study of a logic which unfortunately did not develop. We shall examine first the various schools of thought in the classical period of Chinese philosophy, namely, the Warring States time (–4th and –3rd centuries).^a

We shall begin with the *Ju Chia*¹ (Confucians^b), giving them pride of place on account of their dominance over all later Chinese thought, although their contribution to science was almost wholly negative. From them the transition is easy to their mortal enemies the *Tao Chia*² (Taoists), whose speculations about, and insight into, Nature, fully equalled pre-Aristotelian Greek thought, and lie at the basis of all Chinese science. It will be necessary to emphasise an aspect of this antagonism usually overlooked, namely, the political, for while Confucianism accepted feudal society Taoism was strongly opposed to it. A third element was the *Fa Chia*³ (Legalists), devoted to codification of law and largely responsible for the replacement of feudalism by the feudal-bureaucratic State. Proponents of an authoritarianism almost fascist, they came to grief, as we have seen (Sect. 6*b*), when the dynasty of Chhin overreached itself and was replaced by that of the Han. The ultimate bureaucratic ideology and social structure was a synthesis of Legalist and Confucian principles.^c Then there were the *Mo Chia*⁴ (Mohists), chivalrous military pacifists with an interest in scientific method and even experimentation arising out of war techniques; and the *Ming Chia*⁵ (Logicians), who have often been compared to the Greek Sophists, with their paradoxes and definitions; together with a number of lesser schools. Last, but not least, came the

^a Certain contemporary and almost contemporary accounts of the schools have come down to us, and these will be found well worth reading. The earliest are (a) the chapter 'against the twelve philosophers' (ch. 6) of *Hsün Tzu* (tr. Dubs (8), p. 77) which would be of about –250; and (b) the spurious ch. 33 of *Chuang Tzu* (tr. Legge (5), vol. 2, p. 214 and Chhen Tai-O, 1), not likely to be much later. But the best (c) is the essay of Ssuma Than⁶ (d. –110), father of the historian Ssuma Chhien, preserved in ch. 130, pp. 3*a* ff. of the latter's *Shih Chi* of –90 (tr. Chavannes (1), vol. 1, pp. ix ff.; Porter (1), p. 51). We also have (d) the *catalogue raisonné* of books completed by Liu Hsin⁷ around –6, which gives an account of the philosophical schools; this was incorporated in abridged form in the *Chhien Han Shu* of c. +100 as its bibliographical chapter (*I wên chih*,⁸ tr. Porter (1), p. 57).

^b The terms Confucians and Confucianism are Westernisms; *ju* simply means scholars. The followers of Confucius were considered the scholars *par excellence*.

^c Cf. pp. 29, 212, 215 below, and Dubs (10).

¹ 儒家

² 道家

³ 法家

⁴ 墨家

⁵ 名家

⁶ 司馬談

⁷ 劉歆

⁸ 藝文志

School of the Naturalists (*Yin-Yang Chia*¹), which developed a philosophy of organic naturalism and gave to Chinese proto-scientific thinking its characteristic fundamental theories.

Later sections take up the tradition of sceptical rationalism whose greatest exponent was Wang Chhung of the Han; the philosophy of Buddhism, favourable to science by its belief in causation, but inimical to it by its doctrine of illusion; and the Neo-Confucianism of the Sung. This was the school which brought the *philosophia perennis* of China to its highest expression, and in many ways anticipated the organic naturalism of our own time. The discussion, and the volume, ends with the anti-scientific idealism of Wang Yang-Ming, the historical materialism of Wang Chhuan-Shan in the + 17th century, the coming then of the new, or experimental, philosophy, and a general survey of the development of the concept of Laws of Nature in Europe and in China.^a

^a The most complete exposition of the history of Chinese philosophy available in English is that of Fêng Yu-Lan (1), but for a shorter survey the brilliant essay of Hu Shih (3) is to be recommended. Outlines and bibliographies by Porter (1) and Chhen Jung-Chieh (3).

¹ 陰陽家

9. THE *JU CHIA* (CONFUCIANS) AND CONFUCIANISM

(a) INTRODUCTION

AS ALREADY MENTIONED (Sect. 5c) the early iron age in China (–6th century) was a time at which bronze-age proto-feudalism was beginning to decay. Wars and diplomatic *tours-de-force* took place among the various feudal States, each of which had the ambition to conquer all the others, as Chhin ultimately succeeded in doing. The breaking-up and re-formation of feudal courts led to turmoil among that small middle class of specialists which had previously occupied for generations reasonably secure posts at State capitals.^a These were the scribes and secretaries, experts in rites, sacrifices, music and military training, even metal- and wood-workers. Some of them may have been descendants of the old families of the Shang, debarred from feudal rank and social importance under the Chou. By the –3rd century, however, the term ‘Ju’, which was widely applied to them, and which had originally in all probability connoted in some sense ‘weakling’, had become an appellation proudly accepted.^b For this floating population of wandering specialists succeeded, as time went on, in dominating the hereditary aristocracy by the superiority of its own ideas and interests. It provides all the names which have come down to us from the ‘period of the philosophers’. Apart from the proto-Taoists, who lived a solitary life in mountain hermitages, all these men sought for employment at the courts of the feudal princes. Among them there may have been some before Confucius who taught doctrines similar to his, but none who, by force of character and originality of mind, succeeded as he did in impressing their conceptions and personality upon all following generations.

We are rather well provided with traditions concerning the life of Confucius; the only difficulty is to know which of them should be accepted. But many things are not in doubt. Khung¹ was his family name; his given name was Chhiu² and his style Chung-Ni,³ but he is always referred to by his title of honour, Khung Fu Tzu,⁴ i.e. Master Khung, whence the Latinised form Confucius. Born in –552^c in the small State of Lu in modern Shantung, of a family which traced its descent from the imperial house of Shang through the Sung State, he spent his life in developing and propagating a philosophy of just and harmonious social relationships. He was constantly seeking for opportunities (without much success) of putting it into practice from the vantage point of an official position.^d Certain it is that from about –495 he spent a number of

^a A clear echo of this in *Lun Yü*, xviii, ix, has been pointed out by Fêng Yu-Lan (3).

^b Cf. Hu Shih (8, 8).

^c Or the following year.

^d An account of his life on the lines generally accepted until recently will be found in R. Wilhelm (5).

¹ 孔 ² 丘 ³ 仲尼 ⁴ 孔夫子

years in enforced exile from his native place, wandering from State to State with a group of disciples, conversing with feudal princes and hoping for a chance to employ his great talents. The last three years of his life, however, were spent in Lu on literary work and the instruction of his students; he died in –479. Although his life might have seemed at the time somewhat of a failure, his subsequent influence was so far-reaching as to justify the title often attributed to him of the 'uncrowned emperor' of China.^a

Opinions differ greatly on the question whether Confucius ever held any official position. Some accept the tradition that he was at first a minor administrator in charge of granaries and then of public lands, while later, after an absence in Chhi State, he became Minister of Justice and Chancellor in Lu for a short while about –501.^b Others reject these statements, admitting only that he may have held a nominal advisory post at the turn of the century.^c If some traditions are to be believed, there were two focal points in the life of Confucius. The first was when he successfully saved his prince by clever diplomacy from an ambush of ritual Pyrrhic dancers at an interview with the Duke of Chhi.^d The second, which led to his exile, was when he tried to arrange for the dismantling of certain fortifications in Lu, so as to restore authority to the prince and reduce the power of the three great aristocratic families, who were maintaining a kind of 'shogunate'.^e Their enmity pursued him long afterwards. It may be significant that on two occasions Confucius was tendered a position of authority by commanders who were in rebellion against their feudal superiors, and though he declined he did so with reluctance.^f Apparently they also were fighting for the idea of bureaucratic monarchy, against feudalism.

Modern scholarship no longer insists that Confucius edited the *Shih Ching* (Book of Odes)^g or the *Shu Ching* (Historical Classic). Nor did he write any part of the *I Ching* (Book of Changes),^h the *Li Chi* (Record of Rites) or the *Chhun Chhiu* (Spring and Autumn Annals),ⁱ still less the *Yo Ching*^j (Music Classic, long lost).^j No doubt he used in his teaching such parts of these books or their prototypes as were already

^a The idea that he received (in principle) an imperial mandate was developed by Tung Chung-Shu; see Fêng Yu-Lan (1), vol. 2, pp. 65, 71, 129.

^b For a detailed exposition of this view, see Dubs (9).

^c For a detailed exposition of this view, see Creel (4).

^d *Tso Chuan*, Duke Ting, 10th year (Couvreur (1), vol. 3, p. 558). See Granet (1), pp. 171 ff., who brings out the ancient ritual magic background of these dancers and the sacrifice which was made of them.

^e *Tso Chuan*, Duke Ting, 8th to 12th years; description in Dubs (9).

^f The first of these was Kungshan Fu-Jao, who was holding a city for the prince against the 'shogun' Chisun family (*Lun Yü*, xvii, v) about –500. The second, some ten years later, was Pi Hsi (*Lun Yü*, xvii, vii). See Creel (4), pp. 41, 56.

^g He may have rearranged the order of the pieces in it (cf. *Lun Yü*, ix, xiv).

^h *Lun Yü*, vii, xvi, may be a late interpolation (Dubs, 17), and in any case the reading is uncertain.

ⁱ Mencius says (*Mêng Tzu*, III (2), ix, 11) that Confucius wrote a *Chhun Chhiu*, but no one knew of this at the time of the Analects. His role in connection with the text of the classics is still much debated.

^j Cf. particularly Fêng Yu-Lan (1), p. 46, (4), (2).

9. THE 'JU CHIA' AND CONFUCIANISM

5

extant in his time.^a The *Lun Yü* (Conversations and Discourses, generally known as the Analects), however, was certainly put together in written form soon after his death, and preserves the most reliable information about him, hence the frequency of quotation from it in the following pages.^b The long chapter devoted to Confucius by Ssuma Chhien and his father in the *Shih Chi* is, on the contrary, suspect, since some find ground for thinking that parts of it may have been intended satirically. Both great historians were Taoist in sympathy, and as they had to include a chapter of biography, they used it to damn with faint praise the hypocritical Confucianism of their own time.^c Less reliable still is the *Khung Tzu Chia Yü*¹ (Table-Talk of Confucius), edited by Wang Su² about the beginning of the +3rd century. This contains much obviously Taoist material, and ideas characteristic of that Han Confucianism which had fused with the School of Naturalists (see on, Sect. 13c). What, then, was the essence of the Confucianism of Confucius himself and his immediate disciples?

(b) GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

It was a doctrine of this-worldly social-mindedness. In so far as social justice could be conceived of within the framework of the feudal, or feudal-bureaucratic, social order, Confucius strove for it. He probably did not believe that the faults of his age could be cured by any system other than feudalism,^d but rather that there should be a return to what he conceived it to have been in its purest form, the ancient 'way of the Sage Kings'.^e Of course it was natural in his time to clothe ethical insights with legendary historical authority. Confucius called himself a transmitter, not an originator.

In order to understand Confucius it is indispensable to visualise what the world of his time was like.^f His interest in the orderly administration of affairs may seem dry

^a The Confucian school later systematically read into the old Book of Odes (essentially a collection of ancient Chou folk-songs) moralising symbolism, in a way quite analogous to the treatment of the Song of Songs by Christian theologians (see Ku Chieh-Kang, 4; Hu Shih, 2). Confucius started this himself (*Lun Yü*, I, xv; III, viii).

^b It is generally agreed that chs. 16, 17, 18 and 20 are later than the rest of the book, and contain Taoist material. Many references to discussions of the authenticity of passages throughout the book, by both Chinese and Western scholars, will be found in Creel (4).

^c So Creel (4), pp. 9, 266 ff. The biography is in ch. 47 of the *Shih Chi* (tr. Chavannes (1), vol. 5, pp. 283 ff.).

^d It must, however, be admitted that some of the passages (e.g. *Lun Yü*, xvi, ii) on which this attachment to feudalism is based occur in parts of the book which are of disputed authenticity (see Creel (4), pp. 159, 239). This particular passage seems to be Legalist (see below, Sect. 12).

^e This implied subordination of the feudal princes to the Chou emperor, branches of whose family or supporters their houses had originally been, according to the *tsung fa*³ system whereby the eldest son inherited and the younger sons were given separate fiefs.

^f *Lun Yü*, VII, i.

^g Confucianism often seems unnecessarily bewildering to Europeans who approach it by way of some of the older translations of classical texts. Good guides are the relevant chapters in Fêng Yu-Lan (1) and the extracts and explanations given in Hughes (1). I must say that I myself received much help from the books of Liang Chhi-Chhao (1) and Hsü Shih-Lien (1), though the latter particularly contains many mistakes. The articles by Wu Tsé-Ling (1) are worth looking at. Recently, Creel (4) has given us an elaborate study, which, however, is devoted to proving a particular case.

¹ 孔子家語

² 王肅

³ 宗法

and unromantic, but he lived in an environment where generally chaos reigned. Between the feudal States there was constant war, the smaller ones serving as battle-fields for the larger. There was little law and order save what each man could enforce by personal strength, armed followers, or intrigue. Aristocratic pastimes, hunting, war and extravagant living, laid crushing burdens on the common people, while at all levels human life was cheap. For the world of his time, Confucius' ideas were revolutionary. Read today, many of his speeches in the *Lun Yü* sound like 'pedantic little homilies' addressed to various nobles and rulers. Yet when the background is understood, it is clear that some of these remarks were 'pointed denunciations of weaknesses, not to say crimes, made directly to men who would have felt as much compunction about having Confucius tortured to death as about crushing a fly'.^a

Confucius was certainly greatest as an educator. Before his time there is mention only of schools of archery. As has often been pointed out,^b he was the first who stated clearly that in teaching there should be no class-distinctions.^c No qualifications of birth were necessary in acceptance for the administrative and diplomatic training which Confucius gave. In this we see one of the germs of the bureaucratic system, according to which whoever was teachable and ambitious for letters could become a scholar and serve his prince (later, the imperial State) as an official, no matter what the social position of his family might have been. Confucius had much to say of the honour of such officials. The quality of his general teaching may be felt from the following remark of one of his chief students, Tsêng Shen:^d

A *chün-tzu*,^e in following the Tao, values three things above all others. From every attitude and every gesture he removes all trace of violence or arrogance; every expression of his face betokens sincerity; and from every word he utters, he eliminates all uncouthness or vulgarity.^f

^a We owe the thought of the above paragraph, and some of its wording, to the admirable pages of Creel (4), pp. 3, 14, 17 ff.

^b E.g. by Fêng Yu-Lan (1), p. 49.

^c *Lun Yü*, xv, xxxviii: 'Tzu yüeh: *yu chiao wu lei*.'¹

^d See below, pp. 11, 268.

^e Like Tao, 'the Way', *chün-tzu*² is one of those words which I have come to the conclusion are better not translated. Originally the prince or ruler, and rendered most unsatisfactorily by Legge and others as 'the superior man' or by Waley as 'the gentleman', it has meant throughout Chinese history the man of sympathetic character, high attainments and moral greatness who may be (though no one of these attributes is essential to the meaning) well born, a scholar, an official, a soldier, a martyr. One can only point to certain European individuals, for example, Sir Thomas More, in order to show what is implied. The opposite of *chün-tzu* is *hsiao-jen*,³ but it connotes not only the man of low social station, but also meanness, boorishness, etc. (cf. 'villein', 'villain', etc.). The great difficulty of translating these phrases is brought out in the book of Chêng Thien-Hsi. Cf. Boodberg (3).

^f *Lun Yü*, VIII, iv; tr. auct. adjuv. Legge (2), Creel (4). But the passage continues, 'As for the details of the sacrifices, that can be left to the clerks'. Here is our first indication of Confucian indifference to techniques.

子曰有教無類

² 君子

³ 小人

9. THE 'JU CHIA' AND CONFUCIANISM

7

And in another place,^a the Master defined perfect love (of our neighbour) as:

When you go forth, to behave to every one as if you were receiving a great guest; to employ the people as if you were assisting at a great sacrifice, not to do to others what you would not wish done to yourself, and to give no cause for resentment either at home or abroad.^b

The earlier groups of Confucius' students mostly became high officials of the feudal States; those of the later groups generally became teachers and social philosophers. The names of many of them have been preserved.^c

The freeing of education from all barriers of privilege and social class was undoubtedly revolutionary doctrine, and if it paved the way for the mandarinism of feudal bureaucratism, it embodied also some of the essential elements of modern democratic thought. Opinions have differed greatly as to the extent to which consciously 'democratic' ideas can be attributed to Confucius, and the matter is not unimportant for us because there are close sociological connections between democracy and the natural sciences.^d Ku Chieh-Kang (7) thought that the support of Master Khung for feudalism was fundamental; Mei Ssu-Phing (1) considered him a great counter-revolutionary. The question in China has of course been intimately bound up with current political questions of modern times, and the support of backward-looking groups for traditional Confucianism. But other scholars, such as Kuo Mo-Jo,^e have emphasised the revolutionary ideas in Master Khung's life and teaching, pointing out, for example, his sympathy for those officials who had taken up arms against the feudal nobles. Certainly his followers were accused (in the *Mo Tzu* and the *Chuang Tzu*) of being fomenters of disorder, and no one knew more about rebellion under insufferable conditions than the Mohists and the Taoists. Certain it is that when Chhen Shêng (Chhen Shê¹) led the first rebellion against the Chhin dynasty, taking the title of Chang Chhu Wang,^f he had the direct descendant of Confucius in the eighth generation as his adviser, and this scholar (Khung Fu²) died with him when he was defeated in -208. Confucians and Mohists had flocked to his standard.^g

Confucius seems to have believed that the true aim of government ought to be the welfare and happiness of the whole people, and that this would be brought about not by rigid adherence to enacted arbitrary law, but by subtle administration of

^a *Lun Yü*, XII, ii.

^b Tr. auct. adjuv. Legge (2).

^c Such as Jan Chhiu, who rose to high office in Lu State; or, as an example of the second type, Yu Jo, who may have succeeded Confucius as the leader of the school, and passed on its traditions to the 'apostle' Mencius (Mêng Kho). See below, p. 16.

^d This will be discussed more fully below (pp. 103, 130 ff.) in connection with the Taoists.

^e (1), pp. 63 ff.

^f Prince entrusted with the Expansion of Chhu; also called Chhen Wang. Cf. Vol. 1, p. 102 above, in Sect. 6a.

^g The whole story of the unsuccessful predecessor of the successful Han is told in *Shih Chi*, ch. 48 (tr. Haenisch, 1). Khung Fu is mentioned in ch. 47, p. 30a (Chavannes (1), vol. 5, p. 432).

¹ 陳涉

² 孔鮒

customs generally accepted as good and having the sanction of natural law.^a Since men of real intelligence, sympathy and learning were necessary for such administration, they would have to be sought for far afield. Capacity to govern had no necessary connection with birth, wealth or position; it depended solely on character and knowledge, i.e. upon qualities generated only by right education. Education should therefore be universally available.^b

From this there followed a conclusion important for science. If every man was potentially educable, then every normal man was potentially as good a judge of truth as every other, the qualifications which added value to his judgement being only education, experience and demonstrated competence. He could be a member of the 'community of observers'. The group of Confucius understood this intellectual democracy. The Master himself, moreover, often counselled suspended judgement, saying that one should leave on one side what is doubtful,^c and that scribes should follow the good old practice of leaving a blank space in texts when copying, instead of faking a character of which they were not sure.^d

The Master said: '(Chung) Yu, shall I tell you what knowledge is? When you know a thing, to say that you know it; and when you do not know a thing, to admit that you do not know it—this is true knowledge.'^e

As good a device as could be found, surely, for any modern scientific academy. Yet traces of interest among the early Confucians in natural science as opposed to human affairs, are few. Confucius recommended the study of the Book of Odes, apart from other reasons, because it would widen one's acquaintance with the names of birds, beasts, plants and trees.^f He said he agreed with the southern proverb that a man without constancy would not make even a good wizard or a good physician.^g There are indications^h that one of his chief students, Tsêng Shen, had scientific interests approximating to those of the later School of Naturalists. But that is all.

While believing in a moral order of the universe (*Thien*;¹ Heaven),¹ the Confucians used the word *Tao*² (the 'Way') primarily if not exclusively as meaning the ideal way or order of human society. This comes out clearly in their attitude to the world of spirits, and to knowledge. While not separating man from social man, nor social man

^a On this, see Sect. 18 below.

^b Part of the thought of this paragraph is derived from the excellent discussion of Creel (4), pp. 177 ff. Cf. Creel (6).

^c *Lun Yü*, II, xviii. Cf. the famous remark of Mencius (VII (2), iii, 1) that it would be better to be without the Book of History altogether than to believe all there is in it.

^d *Lun Yü*, xv, xxv.

^e *Lun Yü*, II, xvii, tr. Legge (2), mod.

^f *Lun Yü*, xvii, ix.

^g *Lun Yü*, XIII, xxii.

^h See below, p. 268.

¹ Confucius thought of Heaven 'as an impersonal ethical force, a cosmic counterpart of the ethical sense in man, a guarantee that somehow there is sympathy with man's sense of right in the very nature of the universe'; Creel (4), p. 126. See also Creel (5).

¹ 天

² 道

9. THE 'JU CHIA' AND CONFUCIANISM

9

from the whole of Nature, they always considered that the only proper study of mankind was man. They were thus, throughout Chinese history, in opposition to those elements which groped for a scientific approach to Nature, and for a scientific interpretation and extension of technology.

Fan Hsü requested to be taught agriculture, but the Master said 'I am not so good for that as an old farmer'. He also requested to be taught horticulture, but the Master said 'I am not so good for that as an old gardener'.^a

This might have been modesty in regard to traditional technicians but unfortunately:

When Fan Hsü had gone out, the Master said 'What a small-minded man is Fan Hsü!' . . . 'If a ruler or an official loves good customs, righteousness and sincerity, people will flock to him from all quarters, bearing their children on their backs. So what does he need to know about agriculture?'

But two thousand years have shown that (like patriotism) good customs, righteousness and sincerity are not enough for the solution of all humanity's problems.

Still, it was magnificent as far as it went. A few further quotations will illustrate Confucian social-mindedness.

The Duke of Shê^b asked about government. The Master said 'Good government obtains when those who are near are made happy, and those who are far off are attracted.'^c

When the Master went to Wei, Jan Chhiu acted as driver of his carriage. The Master observed, 'How numerous the people are!' Jan Chhiu said, 'Since they are thus numerous, what more shall be done for them?' The Master replied, 'Enrich them.' Jan Chhiu said, 'And when they have been enriched, what more shall be done?' The Master said, 'Educate them.'^d

Fan (Tzu-) Chhih (Fan Hsü) asked about benevolence. The Master said, 'It is to love men.' He asked about knowledge. The Master said, 'It is to know men.'^e

Thus in early Confucianism there was no distinction between ethics and politics. Government was to be paternalistic. If the prince was virtuous the people would also be virtuous. And there was to be no equivocation about what virtue, peace and justice really were. Basing themselves upon certain passages in the Analects,^f later (but still pre-Han) Confucians developed a doctrine of the 'rectification of names' (*chêng*

^a *Lun Yü*, XIII, iv, tr. Legge (2), mod.

^b A feudal lord of Chhu, whom Confucius probably met in Tshai; cf. pp. 92, 94 in Vol. 1 and p. 545 below.

^c *Lun Yü*, XIII, xvi, tr. Legge (2).

^d *Lun Yü*, XIII, ix, tr. Legge (2) and Ku Hung-Ming (1).

^e *Lun Yü*, XII, xxii, tr. Legge (2).

^f E.g. *Lun Yü*, XII, xi and xvii. XIII, iii has long been suspected of being a late interpolation.

*ming*¹), i.e. the precise definition of actions and relations.^a This was particularly associated with the school of Hsün Tzu (Hsün Chhing^b) in the – 3rd century.^c The nicety of the distinctions made in the rectification of names may be seen from the fact that in the traditional text of the *Chhun Chhiu*, of the thirty-six acts of regicide there recorded some are qualified as *shih*² (murder, implying the guilt of the assassin), while others are termed *sha*³ (killing, implying that the act was legally justified).^d Legally justified, because Confucian teaching also contained the democratic idea that the prince (and later, the emperor) derived his power primarily from the will of the people, expressing Heaven's will or mandate. This was much developed by the great Confucian apostle Mencius (Mêng Tzu), some hundred years later.^e Thus that 'right of rebellion against unchristian princes' which so exercised the minds of the + 16th and + 17th century theologians of Europe had already been laid down two thousand years before by the Confucian school. Its revolutionary tendency, combined with the desire to uphold the established order (which predominated in most Confucian circles later), was perhaps one of the factors which permitted the Confucian bureaucracy of subsequent ages to rise superior to every change of dynasty by espousing popular causes and then presenting itself to each new ruler as the only possible instrument whereby government could be carried on. But the democratic element was real.

These points are illustrated by the following passages:

Chi Khang Tzu asked Master Khung about the art of ruling. The Master said, 'Ruling (*chéng*,⁴ governing) is straightening (*chéng*,⁵ rectifying). If you lead along a straight way, who will dare go by a crooked one?'^f

Chi Khang Tzu was troubled by robbers. He asked Master Khung what he should do. Master Khung replied, 'If only you were free from desires, they would not steal even if you paid them to.'^g

Chi Khang Tzu asked the Master about government, saying, 'Supposing we liquidated all those people who have not the Tao in order to help those who do have the Tao, what would you think of it?' Master Khung replied, 'You are there to rule, not to kill. If you desire what is good, the people will be good. The *chün-tzu* has the virtue of wind, the people have the virtue of grass. The grass must needs bend when the wind blows over it.'^h

^a This might be described as the determination to call a spade a spade, no matter what powerful influences might be desirous of having it called something else. This was particularly important in Chinese culture, where social courtesy and face-saving brought euphemism from early times to the level of a fine art. But there are parallels among the early sophists especially Prodicus of Ceos (– 5th century); Freeman (1), p. 372. And Jeremy Bentham's 'Theory of Fictions is not far removed from it.

^b See below, pp. 19, 26 ff. Cf. Boodberg (3).

^c The famous ch. 22 of *Hsün Tzu* is entitled 'The Correct Use of Terminology'. Cf. especially Duyvendak (4). The doctrine was also acceptable to the Legalists (cf. pp. 204 ff. below), as appears from *Shang Chün Shu*, ch. 26, and *Han Fei Tzu*, ch. 2.

^d These interpretations of the historical classics were systematised chiefly by Tung Chung-Shu (cf. Fêng Yu-Lan (1), vol. 2, p. 71). They are very marked in the *Kuliang Chuan* and the *Kungyang Chuan*.

^e The *locus classicus* is *Mêng Tzu*, 1 (2), viii; cf. iv (1), ii, 4. See p. 16 below.

^f *Lun Yü*, xii, xvii, tr. Waley (5).

^g *Lun Yü*, xii, xviii, tr. Waley (5).

^h *Lun Yü*, xii, xix, tr. auct. adjuv. Legge (2), Waley (5).

¹ 正名

² 弑

³ 殺

⁴ 政

⁵ 正