CHAPTER 9
The Rule of a True King

Let us inquire into how to conduct the government. I say: Promote the worthy and the capable without waiting for them to rise through the ranks. Dismiss the unfit and the incapable without waiting for even a single moment. Execute those who incite others to bad deeds without waiting to teach them. Transform the ordinary people without waiting for government controls. If social divisions are not yet set, then take control of illuminating the proper bonds. Even the sons and grandsons of kings, dukes, gentry, and grand ministers, if they cannot submit to ritual and yi, should be assigned the status of commoners. Even the sons and grandsons of commoners, if they accumulate culture and learning, correct their person and conduct, and can submit to ritual and yi, should be assigned the status of prime minister, gentry, or grand ministers. And so, for those engaging in vile teachings, vile doctrines, vile works, and vile skills, and for those among the common people who are rebellious and perverse, give them each an occupation and teach them, and take a while to wait for them. Encourage them with accolades and rewards, and discipline them with punishments and penalties. If they rest secure in their occupations, then nurture them. If they do not rest secure in their occupations, then abandon them. The five types of handicapped people should be received by their superiors and nurtured, put to work according to their talents. Employ and feed and clothe them. Cover all of them with suitable labor, and let them engage in labor. Therefore, conduct go against the times should die without pardon. This is called Heavenly virtue, the government of a true king.

On the great division to be made in judging government affairs: If you use ritual to treat those who come bearing goodness, and use punishment to treat those who come bearing badness, then the worthy and unworthy will not be jumbled up, and what is right and what is wrong will not be confused. If the worthy and unworthy are not jumbled up, then heroes and outstanding men will come. If what is right and what is wrong are not confused, then the state and family will be well ordered. If things are like this, then your reputation will daily become more renowned, all people under Heaven will esteem you, what you order will be carried out, what you prohibit will come to a stop, and the work of a true king will be complete. In every case of judging such affairs, if you are strict and harsh and show no fondness for those trying to lend you their ways, then your inferiors will be fearful and will not draw near. They will be secretive, closed, and will not fully exert themselves. If things are like this, then important matters will be in danger of being handled loosely and minor affairs will be in danger of being let slip. If, on the other hand, you are easy-going and accommodating and show fondness for those trying to lend you their ways, but have no stop on them, then vile teachings will also all come, and speculative doctrines will proliferate sharply. If things are like this, then judging affairs will become too complex, and work will become laborious. This will also harm governing. Thus, if one follows a model but does not debate over it, then cases where the model does not reach will surely be botched. If one holds a position but is not open-minded about things, then cases which one's assigned position does not cover are sure to be let slip. Thus, to follow a model and debate over it, and hold a position while being open-minded about it, so that there is no secret plotting, no goodness left undone, and out of a hundred affairs no errors are made—none but the gentleman is capable of this. And so, public-spiritedness and even-handedness are one's scales in holding a position, and balance and harmoniousness are one's plumb line in judging affairs. In cases for which there is a model, act according to the model. In cases for which there is no model, handle them according to their proper category. This is the utmost way of judging affairs. To be biased, partial, and have no guiding principle is a perverted way of judging affairs. Thus, there are indeed cases where having a good model still results in chaos. But from ancient times down to the present, a case where having a gentleman in charge results in chaos is unheard of. There is a saying, "Order is born from the gentleman. Chaos is born from the petty man." This expresses my meaning.

If divisions of goods are all even, then they cannot be made ample enough. If people's authority is all equal, then they cannot be unified. If all the masses are equal in status, then they cannot be put to use. However, just as there is Heaven and Earth, there is a difference between a above and below. An enlightened king must first arise and then can arrange the state so that it has established order. As for the fact that two nobles cannot serve each other, and two base men cannot employ each other, this is the Heavenly order of things. If people's authority and position are equal and their desires and dislikes are the same, then goods cannot be made sufficient for them, and

1 Compare 5.200–70.
2 See the discussion of "villains" at 6.109–15.
3 Compare "Heavenly virtue" at 3.126–27.
4 Compare 5.200–70.
5 Compare 12.1–16.
6 Compare 4.294–320.
7 This and the following sentence also appear at 27.324–27.
they will certainly struggle. If they struggle then there will certainly be chaos, and if there is chaos then they will be impoverished. The former kings hated this chaos, and so they established ritual and yin in order to divide up mankind, so as to cause ranking of poor and rich, and noble and base, so that they might take charge of them. This is the basis for nourishing all under Heaven. The Documents says, "Total equality is not order." This expresses my meaning.

If the horses are uneasy with the chariot, then the gentleman will not feel secure in riding the chariot. If the common people are uneasy with the government, then the gentleman will not feel secure in holding his position. When the horses are uneasy with the chariot, then nothing works better than calming them. When the common people are uneasy with the government, then nothing works better than treating them generously. Pick out those who are worthy and good. Raise high those who are dedicated and respectful. Promote those who are filial and act as good younger brothers. Take in those who are orphaned or widowed. Assist those who are poor and in dire straits. If you do this, then the common people will feel at ease with the government. When the common people feel at ease with the government, only then will the gentleman feel at ease in holding his position. There is a saying, "The lord is the boat. The common people are the water. The water can support the boat. The water can also overturn the boat." This expresses my meaning. Thus, if the lord of men wishes to be secure, then nothing works better than governing evenhandedly and showing concern for the people. If he wishes to have glory, then nothing works better than exalting ritual and respecting well-hired men. If he wishes to have accomplishments, then nothing works better than elevating the worthy and employing the capable. These are the great regulations of being the lord of men. If you abide by these three regulations, then the rest of your acts will all happen fittingly. If you do not abide by these three regulations, then even if the rest of your acts all happen fittingly, it will be of no benefit. Confucius says, "He who is right on the great regulations and right on the lesser regulations is a superior lord. He who is right on the great regulations, but who departs from the lesser regulations in some things while clinging to them in others, is a muddling lord. For him who is wrong on the great regulations, even if he is right on the lesser regulations, I simply cannot see him having any further acts at all."

Marquis Cheng and Duke Si were both lords who amassed income and calculated about the order of things, but they never went as far winning over the people. Zichan was a person who won over the people, but he never went as far as making government work. Guan Zhong was a person who made government work, but he never went as far as cultivating ritual. Thus:

He who cultivates ritual becomes a true king.
He who makes government work becomes strong.
He who wins over the people will be secure.
He who amasses income will not last long.

And so, the true king enriches the people. The hegemon enriches the gentry. The state which barely survives enriches its grand ministers. The state which perishes enriches its coffers and fills up its treasuries. When the coffers are rich and the treasuries are full, but the common people are destitute, this is called "overflowing at the top but leaking at the bottom." At home one cannot protect oneself, and abroad one cannot wage war, and so being overthrown or being destroyed are affairs one can simply stand by and wait for. Hence:

If I amass goods then I cannot last long.\(^{7}\)
My enemy uses this chance to grow strong.

Amassing income is the path to summoning invaders, fastening one's
destroying one's state, and imperiling one's person. Therefore, the enlightened ruler does not tread upon it.

He who seeks to become a true king seizes upon the right people.
He who seeks to become a hegemon seizes upon good relations. He
who seeks to rule by brute strength seizes upon territory. He who
seizes upon the right people will make the feudal lords his ministers.
He who seizes upon good relations will make the feudal lords his friends.
He who seizes upon territory will make the feudal lords his enemies.
He who can make the feudal lords his enemies is a true
king. He who can make the feudal lords his friends is a hegemon. He
who makes the feudal lords his enemies is endangering himself. In
using brute strength, when another person defends his cities or comes
cut to do battle, and I use sheer force to overcome him, then the harm
done to his people will surely be great. If the harm done to his people
is great, then his people are sure to have great hatred for me. If his
people have great hatred for me, then daily they will wish all the more
to fight against me. On the other hand, when another person defends
his cities or comes out to do battle, and I use sheer force to overcome

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\(^{7}\) See Staying, Living ("The Marquis of Lu on Punishment"), translated inWalzhan (1974, p. 230), though XuZai seems be using the sentence very much out of line with its original context, so the translation here is very different.
him, then the harm done to my own people will surely be great. If the harm done to my own people is great, then my own people are sure to have great hatred for me. If my own people have great hatred for me, then daily they will wish all the less to fight for me. When his people daily wish all the more to fight against me, and my own people daily wish all the less to fight for me, then this is why those who try to rule by brute strength on the contrary only become weaker. The territory may come to them, but the people will abandon them. They may have accumulated much, but they will have accomplished little. So even though the land they have to defend is increased, their means to defend it are reduced, and this is why those who hold to enlarging themselves on the contrary only become diminished.

All the feudal lords remember past dealings and keep resentment and do not forget their enemies. They look for holes in the big and strong state, and they take advantage of the big and strong state's errors. That is a dangerous time for the big and strong state. He who truly understands how to be big and strong does not work at being strong. He deliberates with a view to obtaining the kingily mandate. He keeps his strength undivided and solidifies his virtue. Since he keeps his strength undivided, then the feudal lords cannot weaken him. Since he solidifies his virtue, the feudal lords cannot diminish him. If there is no true king or hegemonic ruler in the world, then he will always be victorious. Such is one who understands the way of being strong.

The hegemon is not so: He opens up farmland, fills up his granaries, and makes ready supplies. He then carefully recruits and selects by review men of talent and skill. Thereafter, he advances honors and rewards in order to encourage them, and he makes strict penalties and punishments in order to restrain them. He preserves those about to perish and reinstates lineages which have been broken off. He protects the weak and suppresses the violent. If he does this all without a heart bent on taking over others, then the feudal lords will have affection for him. If he cultivates a way of befriending his rivals, and treats the feudal lords with reverence, then the feudal lords will delight in him. The reason they have affection for him is that he does not try to take them over. If there should be any appearance of taking them over, then the feudal lords will distance themselves from him. The reason they delight in him is that he befriends his rivals. If there should be any appearance of making them subjects, then the feudal lords will abandon him. Hence, he makes clear to them that his conduct really does not aim at taking over others, and he gets them to trust that his way really is to befriend his rivals. If there is no true king or hegemonic ruler in the world, then he will always be victorious. King Min was destroyed by the five states, and Duke Huan was coerced by Duke Zhuang of Lu. These things happened for no other reason than that they did not follow this way and instead deliberated with a view to becoming king.

The true king is not so: His rule over the world. His yi over the world. His awe-inspiring authority is not over the world. His yi over the world, and so no one in the world fails to have affection for him. His yi over the world, and so no one in the world fails to honor him. His awe-inspiring authority is not over the world, and so no one in the world dares to oppose him. He uses this unopposed awe-inspiring authority to assist his way of making people submit, and so he is victorious without engaging in battle, and gains without attacking people. Without labors of weapons and armor, the whole world submits to him. Such is one who understands the way of a true king. For one who understands these two means, if he wishes to become a true king, then he becomes a true king. If he wishes to become a hegemon, then he becomes a hegemon. If he wishes to be strong, then he is strong.

The character of a true king is that he ornamens his every move with ritual and yi. He hears and decides cases in accordance with their proper kinds. He holds up for clear inspection the fine points of things. His policies adapt to changes endlessly. This is called having a proper source [of action]. Such is the character of a true king.

The rule of a true king is such that his ways do not go back beyond the Three Dynasties, and his models do not deviate from the later kings. If a person's way goes back beyond the Three Dynasties, he calls it reckless. If a person's model deviates from the later kings, he calls it refined. His clothing and garments are properly regulated. His palaces and houses have their proper measure. His followers have their proper order. In funerals and sacrifices, the implements all accord with rank and proper position. As for music, everything that is not refined music is discarded. As for sights, everything that is not the patterns of old is discontinued. As for implements, everything that is not the equipment of old is destroyed. This is called recovering the ancient ways. Such is the rule of a true king.

The judgments of a true king are such that those without virtue are not honored, those without ability are not given office, those without meritorious accomplishment are not rewarded, and those without criminal trespass are not punished. In the court, no one obtains their position through luck. Among the people, no one obtains a livelihood through luck. He elevates the worthy and employs the capable, and no ranks and positions are left unattended. He cuts off false
shows of virtue and prohibits brutality, but his punishments and penalties are not excessive. The common people then all clearly understand that if they do good deeds among their family they will receive rewards in the court, and if they do bad deeds in secret they will suffer punishment in the open. This is called having fixed judgments.

Such are the judgments of a true king.

On the graduated taxation and governmental actions of a true king; He uses the myriad things as resources, and this is his means to nourish the people. He only takes one-tenth of the produce from the fields. The mountain passes and markets are overseen but no fees are collected. The exploitation of mountain forests and dammed marshes is not taxed, but is prohibited in certain seasons. He measures up the quality of the land and adjusts his government policies accordingly. He reckons upon the distance of the route and requires contributions accordingly. He causes resources, goods, and grain to circulate without delays and causes people to move to its appropriate place, so that the region within the four seas becomes like a single family. Thus, those nearby do not hide their abilities, and those far away are not troubled by the required labor. Among the isolated and remote states, all quickly send envoys and take comfort and delight in him. This is called being the teacher of the people. Such is the model of a true king. In the region of the northern sea, there are swift-running horses and barking dogs. However, the central states are like these and employ them. In the area of the southern sea, there are bright feathers, ivory, tough hides, bronze, and beautiful stones. However, the central states get to use them as resources. In the area of the eastern sea, there are purple fabrics, fish, and salt. However, the central states get to use them for clothing and food. In the area of the western sea, there are hide armor and patterned banners. However, the central states get to use them. Thus, the people are provided sufficiently with wood, and people in the mountains are provided sufficiently with fish. The farmers neither carve wood nor craft ceramics, but they are provided sufficiently with tools. The craftsman and merchants do not plow fields, but they are provided sufficiently with vegetables and grains. And so, although the tiger and leopard are ferocious animals, the gentleman nevertheless has them skinned and makes use of them. Thus, all the areas covered by Heaven and all the areas supported by Earth produce their finest goods and contribute them for use. Above, they decorate good and worthy men. Below, they nourish the common people and bring them comfort and joy. This is called great spirit-like power. The Odes says:

Heaven made the high mountain.
The Great King opened the land.
These works were completed,
And King Wen made them more grand.\textsuperscript{33}

This expresses my meaning.

Use the proper categories to manage muddled cases, and use the one right standard manage the myriad situations, beginning and then ending, ending and then beginning again, just like the way that a jade loop has no endpoints. If you abandon these things, then the whole world will consequently fall into decline. Heaven and Earth are the beginning of life. Ritual and yi are the beginning of order. The gentleman is the beginning of ritual and yi. Practicing them, habituating oneself in them, accumulating great regard for them, making oneself fond of them—these are the beginning of becoming a gentleman. Thus, Heaven and Earth give birth to the gentleman, and the gentleman brings order to Heaven and Earth. The gentleman is a third partner to Heaven and Earth, a supervisor for the myriad things, and mother and father to the people. If there were no gentleman, then Heaven and Earth would not be properly ordered, and ritual and yi would be without a unifying guide. Above, there would be no lords or teachers, and below, there would be no fathers and sons. Such a state is called utmost chaos. When the positions of lord and minister, father and son, older brother and younger brother, husband and wife all begin and then end, end and then begin again,\textsuperscript{34} when they are part of the same order with Heaven and Earth, and persist as long as the myriad generations—this is called the great root.\textsuperscript{35} And so, the great root of society, court appearances, royal greetings, and military matters all proceed by this one standard. Embellishing and degrading, killing and giving birth, and becomind and taking all proceed by this one standard. To treat the lord as lord, the minister as minister, the

\textsuperscript{11} This sentence appears at 15.328-30, where the idea of the "teacher of the people" is also mentioned.

\textsuperscript{12} As I understand it, this statement is supposed to describe the true (age) king, in virtue of the fact that his government policies bring about the situation described in the lines that precede this remark. Regarding "spirit-like power" (shen shi), see chapter 1, note 10.

\textsuperscript{13} Mao #70. The Great King is King Wen's grandfather, Gu Gong Danfu. According to traditional stories, he moved the Zhou people to the Qishan area of what is now Shaanxi province and founded a city there. This quotation seems intended to illustrate how the true king arranges for optimal use of human products and natural resources. Compare the citation of this poem at 17.193-6.

\textsuperscript{14} The Chinese at this juncture is ambiguous. As I understand it, here the cycle of "beginning and ending and beginning again" refers primarily to the way that these various roles, and especially the proper relations between them, can be maintained over time by different people faithfully carrying out these positions. (E.g., in one sense, the pact of marriage between a husband and wife ends when one of them dies, but when their child weds and exchanges vows with his or her spouse, another marriage begins.) The point is that such relations should be so maintained, as the text goes on to say, over "myriad generations."

\textsuperscript{15} I.e., the great root of social order, which is the foundation for all other goods in life.
father as father, the son as son, the elder brother as elder brother, and
the younger brother as younger brother all proceed by this one stan-
dard. To treat the farmer as farmer, the officer as officer, the crafts-
man as craftsman, and the merchant as merchant all proceed by this
one standard.

Water and fire have qi but are without life. Grasses and trees have
life but are without awareness. Birds and beasts have awareness but
are without yi. Humans have qi and life and awareness, and moreover
they have yi. And so they are the most precious things under Heaven.
They are not as strong as oxen or as fast as horses, but oxen and
horses are used by them. How is this so? I say it is because humans
are able to form communities while the animals cannot. Why are hu-
mans able to form communities? I say it is because of social divisions.
How can social divisions be put into practice? I say it is because of
yi. And so if they use yi in order to make social divisions, then they
will be harmonized. If they are harmonized, then they will be unified.
If they are unified, then they will have more force. If they have more
force, then they will be strong. If they are strong, then they will be
able to overcome the animals. And so they can get to live in homes
and palaces. Thus, the reason why humans can order themselves with
the four seasons, control the myriad things, and bring benefit to all
under Heaven is none other than that they are able to get these social
divisions and yi. And so human life cannot be without community.
If humans form communities but are without social divisions, then they
will struggle. If they struggle, then there will be chaos. If there is
chaos then they will disband. If they disband then they will be weak.
If they are weak then they cannot overcome the animals. And so they
will not get to live in homes and palaces. This is the meaning of say-
ing that "one must not let go of ritual and yi for even a moment."

One who can use these to serve his parents is called filial. One who
can use these to serve his elder brother is called a proper younger
brother. One who can use these to serve his superiors is called prop-
erly compliant. One who can use these to employ his subordinates is
called a proper lord. The true lord is one who is good at forming
community. When the way of forming community is properly prac-
ticed, then the myriad things will each obtain what is appropriate for
them, the six domestic animals will each obtain their proper growth,
and all the various living things will obtain their proper life spans.

And so, when nurturing accords with the proper times, then the six
domestic animals will multiply. When reapingaccords with the
proper times, then the grasses and trees will flourish. If government
commands accord with the proper times, then the common people
will be united, and good and worthy men will submit and obey.

These are the regulations of a sage king. When the grasses and
trees are flowering and abundant, then axes and hatchets are not to
to enter the mountains and forests, so as not to cut short their life, and
not to break off their growth. When the turtles and crocodiles, fish
and eels are pregnant and giving birth, then nets and poisons are not
to enter the marshes, so as not to cut short their life, and not to break
off their growth. Flow in the spring, weed in the summer, harvest in
the fall, and store in the winter. These four activities are not to miss
their proper times, and then the five grains will not be depleted, and
the common people will have a surplus to eat. Be vigilant in the sea-
sonal prohibitions concerning ponds, rivers, and marshes, and then
turtles and fish will be fine and plentiful, and the common people will
have a surplus to use. Cutting and nurturing are not to miss their
proper times, and then the mountains and forests will not be barren,
and the common people will have surplus materials.

This is the way a sage king operates: He observes Heaven above,
and applies this knowledge on Earth below. He arranges completely
everything between Heaven and Earth and spreads beneficence over the
myriad things.

His actions are subtle, yet they are shining.

Though they are brief, their results are long-lasting.

Their scope is narrow; their impact, wide-ranging.

He has spirit-like powers of intelligence that are broad and vast, yet
work by the utmost restraint. Thus it is said: the person who by even
the slightest movements always does what is right is called a sage.

The Proper Order for Officials: The Master of Cups oversees the
arrangements of sacrificial animals for hosting guests, for making of-
ferings, and for banquets. The Director of Workers oversees the ar-
rangements of the hundred ancestral clans, of building city walls, and
of provision of implements. The Director of Cavalry oversees the ar-
rangements of military campaigns, of weapons and armor, and of
chariots and foot troops. The work of the Music Master is to cultivate
government regulations and orders, to keep watch over poetry and
artistic form, to prohibit perverse music, and to smoothly cultivate
these tasks at the appropriate times, so as to prevent barbarian, vul-

20 Compare Analects 12.11.
21 Compare 5.104–21.
22 Compare 10.104–16.
23 Here Xunzi is playing upon that fact that the words "lord" (jun) and "commu-
nity" (jun) were very similar in both pronunciation and written form during
ancient times (a similarity that one can still perceive in their present pronunciations
and written forms).
24 Compare this paragraph with Mencius I.A.3.
25 The text of this paragraph is very difficult, and the translation is tentative.
gar, and deviant tunes from daring to disorder the refined pieces. The work of the Director of Public Works is to repair dikes and bridges, to open up gutters and ditches, to make water drains flow, to make water reservoirs secure, and to dam these up or release them at the appropriate times, so that even if the year is poor due to flooding or drought, the farmers still have something to reap. The work of the Overseer of Fields is to size up high and low ground, to inspect for rich or poor soil, to arrange the five seeds, to judge agricultural endeavors, to keep careful watch over harvesting and storing, and to smoothly cultivate these tasks at the appropriate times, so that the farmers are dedicated in their work and restrict their efforts in other areas. The work of the Master of Provisions is to cultivate the regulations concerning burn-off, to nurture the mountains, forests, marshes, trees, grasses, fish, turtles, and the hundred necessities, and to prohibit collecting these or to open them up at the appropriate times, so that the state and families have sufficient supplies for their uses, but resources and goods are not depleted. The work of the Village Master is to make districts and neighborhoods harmonious, to demarcate dwellings, to nurture the six domestic animals, to train people in horticulture, to encourage transformational teaching, to foster filial piety and good brotherly behavior, and to smoothly cultivate these tasks at the appropriate times, so that the common people will comply with orders and peacefully and happily dwell in their villages. The work of the Master of Craftsmen is to judge the hundred craftsmen, to keep watch over the seasonal tasks, to distinguish between success and failure, to honor perfection and usefulness, and to prepare equipment and materials so that people do not dare to make up ways of carving, poling, and patterning by themselves at home. The work of the punch-headed shamans and lame-footed seers is to assess the yin and the yang, to divine the orens and portents, to drill the tortoise-shells and lay out the hexagrams, to preside over ceremonies for warding off ills, selecting lucky days, and the five prognostications, and to know good and bad fortune, the auspicious and the inauspicious. The work of the Overseer of Cities is to cultivate cleaning, to make the roads easy to pass, to watch out for robbers and murderers, to keep the prices of lodging fair, and to cultivate these tasks at the appropriate times, so that guests and travelers will be secure and goods and wealth will flow. The work of the Director of Justice is to strike down false shows of virtue and prohibit brutality, to prevent licentiousness and eliminate perversity, and to discipline such behavior with the five punishments, so that violent, brutal peo-

ple are reformed, and vile, perverse people do not appear. The work of the Overseer of the Lands is to lay the grounds for government by education, to set straight the laws and standards, to hear all sorts of cases and at the appropriate times to supervise [the laws], to measure people’s accomplishments, to judge rewards and penalties, and to carefully cultivate these tasks at the appropriate times, so that the hundred administrators are completely diligent and their many underlings are not lazy. The work of the Grand Duke is to judge rituals and music, to make correct his personal conduct, to broaden the transformational influence of teaching, to beautify the customs of the state, and to superintend all these things and harmonize and unify them. The work of the Heavenly King is to make perfect his practice of the Way and virtue, to achieve a lofty and elevated state, to reach the utmost in proper form and good order, to unify the whole world, and to set right even the smallest matters, so that the whole world complacently sides with him and submits to following him. Thus, if governmental affairs are chaotic, it is the fault of the Grand Overseer. If the states and great clans lack their proper customs, it is the fault of the Grand Duke. If the world is not unified, and if the feudal lords make rebelling their custom, then the one occupying the position of Heavenly King is not the right person.

When one has prepared the means to become a true king, one will become a true king. Or when one has prepared the means to become a hegemon, one will become a hegemon. Or when one has prepared the means to barely survive, one will barely survive. Or when one has prepared the means to perish, one will perish. The person who uses a state of ten thousand chariots is the one who causes its strength to be established, its reputation to be fine, and its rivals to yield before it. Control over whether or not the state is secure or endangered, whether it is well run or badly run, all rests here with him, not with others. Control over whether one becomes a true king, or becomes a hegemon, or barely survive securely, or live in danger, or am destroyed, all rests in me, not with others. If one’s strength is not sufficient to intimidate one’s neighbors and rivals, and if one’s reputation is not sufficient to hang over the whole world, then this is because one’s state cannot yet stand on its own, and so how could one avoid being tied up with troubles? When the world is threatened by violent states and my allies do what I myself do not want in these circumstances, then even though daily I share in the acts and the conduct of a lie, this does no harm to my becoming a Yao. For those things are not wherein merit and reputation accrue, not wherein survival or destruction.

This is a reference to ancient practices of divination. The “hexagrams” are the series of broken and unbroken lines that make up the main portion of the Yijing, or Book of Changes.

I.e., to hold sway over everyone.

From here to the chapter’s end, in many places the text is difficult and likely corrupted, so the translation is tentative.
tion, security or danger fall. What merit and reputation accrue to, and where survival and destruction, security and danger fall to, will surely be that wherein my joy and pain, my true heart, are located. He who truly makes his state the place of a true king will become a true king. He who makes his state a place of danger and destruction will be endangered and destroyed.

On the day when one has things right, accordingly one will stand neutral, without leaning to one side and engaging in the affairs of the Vertical and Horizontal alliances. Calmly one will hold one's military and remain still, and instead watch the violent states finish each other off. Accordingly, one will make one's government and education evenhanded, inspect one's regulations, and honor the common people, and on the day when one accomplish this, then one's military will dominate as the mightiest in all the world. Accordingly, one will cultivate ren and yi, achieve an exalted and lofty character, set straight laws and standards, pick out good and worthy men, and nourish the common people. On the day when one accomplishes this, then one's reputation will dominate as the finest in all the world. When one's power is weighty, one's soldiers mighty, and one's reputation fine, then not even Yao and Shun, in the way they unified the world, could add anything to this. When people who scheme after power and loot others are selected by review men of talent and skill. Thereafter, one will advance honors and rewards in order to encourage them, and make strict penalties and punishments in order to prevent them from doing wrong. One will select men who understand affairs and cause them to lead and control each other. Then one will engage in ample storing up and repairing; and goods and supplies will become sufficient. While others are daily dissipating and wasting their goods, wealth, and grain in the central grasslands, I will be storing and collecting mine in my granaries. While others are daily using up their men of skill and talent, their top aides, their strong and brave men who fight tooth and nail, through clashing and breaking them against the enemy, I will be drawing them to my side, reviewing and incorporating them, and honing them in my court. When things are thus, then the others will daily accumulate faults, and I will daily accumulate perfections. The others will daily accumulate poverty, and I will daily accumulate wealth. The others will daily accumulate toils, and I will daily accumulate ease. While through harshness the relation between lord and ministers, superiors and subordinates will daily become more es-

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20 The "Vertical" (north-south) alliance was an alliance of states formed to combat the rising power of the state of Qin. The "Horizontal" (east-west) alliance was an alliance of states formed to support Qin. The two sides were involved in various political intrigues against each other.

21 I.e., agriculture.

22 I.e., getting good people in government, making one's rivals yield, and enriching the state.

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519 are attracted to the fragrance of orchids or sesame. Looking back, they will regard their own superiors like the punishments of branding and tattooing, or like mortal enemies. Even though the people's disposition and nature were the same as Jie or Robber Zhi, how would they be willing to do what they hate in order to do villainy to those whom they like? I will already have seized them. Thus, among the ancients there were two states, having only a single state. This was not because they traveled about to do this. Rather, they cultivated and governed their own places, and so everyone longed for them. When they did this, then they could punish the violent and prohibit brutality. Thus, when the Duke of Zhou led his punitive campaign to the south, the northern states complained, "Oh why does he not come here only?" When he led his punitive campaign to the east, the western states complained, "Oh why does he put us alone last?" Who could fight with such a one? Accordingly, one who uses his state to do these things will become a true king.

525 Or, on the day when one has things right, accordingly one will skill one's military and rest one's subjects, and take loving care of the common people. One will open up fields and grasslands, fill up the granaries, and make ready supplies. Accordingly, one will carefully recruit and select men of talent and skill. Thereafter, one will advance honors and rewards in order to encourage them, and make strict penalties and punishments in order to prevent them from doing wrong. One will select men who understand affairs and cause them to lead and control each other. Then one will engage in ample storing up and repairing; and goods and supplies will become sufficient. While others are daily dissipating and wasting their goods, wealth, and grain in the central grasslands, I will be storing and collecting mine in my granaries. While others are daily using up their men of skill and talent, their top aides, their strong and brave men who fight tooth and nail, through clashing and breaking them against the enemy, I will be drawing them to my side, reviewing and incorporating them, and honing them in my court. When things are thus, then the others will daily accumulate faults, and I will daily accumulate perfections. The others will daily accumulate poverty, and I will daily accumulate wealth. The others will daily accumulate toils, and I will daily accumulate ease. While through harshness the relation between lord and ministers, superiors and subordinates will daily become more es-

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23 I.e., The virtuous rulers will have captured their hearts before any conflict could begin.
tranged and hateful among the others, through kindness it will become more close and loving on my side. I will use these things to act against their faults. Accordingly, one who uses his state to do three things will become a hegemon.

Or, in establishing one's character, one may follow vulgar customs. In carrying out affairs, one will accord with vulgar reasons. In promoting and demoting people, ennobling and degrading them, one will elevate vulgar men. The way such a person interacts with the common people below is to treat them with vulgar kindness. Such a one will barely survive securely.

Or, in establishing one's character, one may be flippant and crude. In carrying out affairs, one will work at promulgating dubious schemes. In promoting and demoting people, ennobling and degrading them, one will elevate silver-tongued and crafty men. The way such a person interacts with the common people below is to be fond of taking from them and invading and stealing from them. Such a one will be endangered.

Or, in establishing one's character, one may be arrogant and violent. In carrying out affairs, one will engage in overthrows. In promoting and demoting people, ennobling and degrading them, one will elevate dark and dangerous men, who are deceitful and act for ulterior motives. The way such a person interacts with the common people below is to be fond of using their dying efforts, but to be slow in recognizing their labors and merit. He is fond of using their tax revenues, but forgets about their fundamental works. Such a one will be destroyed.

One must carefully choose from among these five grades. For they are the means for becoming a true king, or becoming a hegemon, or barely surviving securely, or living in danger, or being destroyed. He who chooses well from among them will control others. He who does not choose well from among them will be controlled by others. He who chooses well from among them will become a true king. He who does not choose well from among them will be destroyed. The distance between being king and being destroyed, between controlling others and being controlled by others—is it not great indeed?

Enriching the State

The myriad things share the same cosmos and have different bodies. They have no intrinsic fitness but are useful for humans. This is simply the arrangement of the world. Various grades of people live together. They share the same pursuits but have different ways. They share the same desires but have different understandings. This is simply the way they are born. Everyone approves of something, and in this the wise and the stupid are the same. Yet, what they approve of differs, and this is what divides the wise from the stupid. If people's authority is equal but they understand things differently, if they act for selfish gain and do not fear disaster, if they let their desires run wild without end, then the people's hearts will be stirred up and cannot be appeased. If the situation is thus, then the wise will not get controlling power. If the wise do not get controlling power, then no recognition of merit will be made. If no recognition of merit is made, then there will be no distinction among the masses. If there is no distinction among the masses, then the positions of lord and minister will not be established. If there is no lord to regulate ministers, no superior to regulate inferiors, then all under Heaven will suffer harm from letting their desires run wild.

People all desire the same things and all hate the same things. But while their desires are many, the things to satisfy them are few, and since they are few, people are sure to struggle over them. Thus, the products of the hundred crafts are means to nurture a person, but even the most capable cannot engage in every craft, nor can people each fill every official post. If they live apart and do not help each other, then they will be impoverished. If they live together but have no social divisions, then they will struggle with each other. Poverty is a catastrophe, and struggle is a disaster. If you wish to save them from catastrophe and eliminate disaster, then nothing is better than to make clear social divisions and so employ the masses. If the strong threaten the weak, if the wise terrorize the stupid, if the people below disregard their superiors, if the young bully their elders, if you do not govern by virtue—if it is like this, then the old and the weak will face the worry of losing their means of nurture, and those in their prime will face the disaster of divisive struggle. Work and labor are what people dislike, and merit and profit are what they are fond of. But if there is no division of occupations, then people will face the catastro-

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39 Here, in an untranslatable pun, Xunzi plays on the fact that during ancient times the terms for "become king" (王) and "be destroyed" (亡) were very close in pronunciation and rhymed with each other; in contemporary Mandarin, both now have the same pronunciation, wáng.

1 For more on the notion of "approval," see 22.375-300.
phe of trying to complete their work by themselves and the calamity of struggling over merit. If the concord between male and female and the division between husband and wife are without rituals for introduction, betrothal, and marriage, then people will face the worry of losing concord and the disaster of struggling over mates. And so, the wise person makes divisions for these things.

The way to ensure sufficiency for the state is to keep expenditures frugal, to enrich the people, and to store up well any surplus. One keeps expenditures frugal through ritual, and one enriches the people through government. When one enriches the people, then there will be great surplus. For when one enriches the people, then the people will be wealthy. When the people are wealthy, then the fields will be fat and well maintained. When the fields are fat and well maintained, then their yield will be a hundred times greater. Those above take from this according to the proper model, and those below keep their expenditures of it frugal according to ritual. The surplus will then pile up like hills and mountains. If one does not occasionally burn some of it up, one will have no place to store it. So, what worry would the gentleman have about lacking a surplus? Thus, one who knows how to keep expenditures frugal and to enrich the people is sure to have a reputation for being rich and virtuous, for being sagely and good, and he will moreover have an accumulated wealth like hills and mountains. There is no other reason for these things; they are produced from keeping expenditures frugal and enriching the people.

If one does not know to keep expenditures frugal and to enrich the people, then the people will be poor. When the people are poor, then the fields will be starved and failing. When the fields are starved and failing, then their yield will not even reach half of what is normal. Then, even should those above be fond of taking from the people and invading and stealing from them, they will still have a pastrine harvest, and some will even try to keep expenditures frugal without ritual. As a result, they will have a reputation for being greedy for profit and rapacious, and their true income will be empty and depleted. There is no other reason for these things than not understanding how to keep expenditures frugal and how to enrich the people. The “Announcement to the Prince of Kang” says, “How vasty all-covering is Heaven! Accord with virtue and you will enrich your person.” This expresses my meaning.

In ritual, noble and lowly have their proper ranking, elder and youth have their proper distance, poor and rich, humble and emi-

gent, each have their proper weights. Thus, the Son of Heaven wears a red dragon robe and a high ceremonial cap. The feudal lords wear black dragon robes and high ceremonial caps. The grand officers wear lesser robes and high ceremonial caps. The regular officers wear fur caps and plain robes. One’s virtue must have a matching position, one’s position must have a matching salary, and one’s salary must have matching uses. The officers on up must be regulated by ritual and music. The masses and the commoners must be controlled by legal arrangements. One surveys the territory and then establishes the state. One calculates the benefits and then raises one’s people. One measures people’s strengths and then assigns tasks. One makes it so that the people are sure to be equal to their tasks, their tasks are sure to issue in benefit, and the benefits will be sufficient to nurture the people. One makes it so that in every case the incomes and expenditures of clothing, food, and miscellaneous goods fit each other, and then one makes sure to store up any excess in a timely manner. This is called a “balanced arrangement.” And so, one extends this from the Son of Heaven down to the commoners, no matter how great or how little their tasks, no matter how many or how few their tasks. Thus it is said, “In the court, no one obtains their position through luck. Among the people, no one obtains a livelihood through luck.” This expresses my meaning. Lighten taxes on the fields, make fair the tariffs at markets and passes, lower the numbers of merchants, rarely raise corvée labor parties, and do not drag people away during the times for agricultural work. If one does these things, then the state will be rich. This is called enriching the people through government.

In order for people to live, they cannot be without community. If they form communities but lack social divisions then they will struggle with each other. If they struggle with each other then there will be chaos, and if there is chaos they will be impoverished. Thus, to lack social divisions is the greatest harm to people, and to have social divisions is the root benefit for the whole world. And the lord of men is the pivot and crucial point in controlling social divisions. Thus, to adorn them is to adorn the root for the whole world. To make them secure is to secure the root for the whole world. To honor them is to honor the root for the whole world. In ancient times, the former kings divided up people and differentially ranked them. Thus, they caused some to be praised and others disdained, some to be generously pro-

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9 The “Announcement to the Prince of Kang” is a chapter in the Documents. See Wallich (1971, p. 148). Xunzi’s quotation differs from the received version of the Documents and seems to convey a somewhat different point.

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1 Compare 19:20–23. The wording of the next few sentences after this one is very similar to a passage at 27:27–31.


3 Compare 11:601–64.

vided for and others thinly provided for, some to live in ease and leisure, others to live in labor and toil. They did not do this to gain a reputation for perversity, arrogance, and self-aggrandizement. Rather, they did it in order to make clear the proper forms for ren, and in order to promote the smooth operations of ren. Thus, they created carving and inlay, insignias and patterns. They caused them to be sufficient to distinguish noble and lowly, and that is all. They did not seek to make them eye-catching. They created percussion instruments, stringed instruments, and wind instruments. They caused them to be sufficient to distinguish auspicious and inauspicious, to bring people together in joy, and establish harmony, and that is all. They did not seek anything more. They created palaces and homes, terraces and pavilions. They caused them to be sufficient to give shelter from dry heat and wetness, to nurture people’s virtue, and to distinguish humble and eminent, and that is all. They did not seek anything beyond this. The Odor says:

His emblems are made with fine carving.
Gold and jade are used in their crafting.
Spirited, spirited is my king!
The whole world he is rectifying.

This expresses my meaning.
As for being able to wear clothes of many colors, to eat foods of many flavors, to control many resources and goods, to bring together everyone under Heaven and be lord over them—one has these things not so that one can engage in perversity and arrogance, but rather they are originally for the purpose of reining as a true king over everyone under Heaven. In attempting to bring order to the myriad changes, to make use of the myriad things, to nurture the myriad people, and to control all under Heaven, nothing is as good for doing this as the goodness of the person who is ren. This is because his wisdom and deliberations are sufficient to order people, his generosity is sufficient to comfort them, and his virtuous reputation is sufficient to transform them. If you obtain him, then there will be order. If you lose him, then there will be chaos. The common people truly rely on his wisdom. Thus, they lead each other in toiling laboriously so they can give him ease, in order to nurture his wisdom. They truly admire his generosity. Thus, they will march out to die so that they can protect and save him, in order to nurture his generosity. They truly ad-

mine his virtue. Thus, they will make carving and inlay, insignias and patterns so that they can adorn him, in order to nurture his virtue. And so, when a person of ren serves as superior, then the common people will honor him like Shang Di, they will love him like their own parents, and they will happily march out to die for him. There is no other reason for this than that what they deem commendable in him is truly fine, what they obtain from him is truly great, and the ways they benefit from him are truly multitudinous. The Odor says:

We shouldered loads, used our hands to pull carts,
Filled wagons, and used oxen for hauling.
Since our work here is finally complete,
To our homes we shall now be returning.

This expresses my meaning.
And so I say: The gentleman relies on virtue. The petty man relies on strength. Strength is the servant of virtue. The strength of the common people awaits [the gentleman] and only then does it have accomplishments. The community of the common people awaits him and only then is it harmonious. The wealth of the common people awaits him, and only then does it pile up. The circumstances of the common people await him and only then are they comfortable. The life span of the common people awaits him, and only then is it long. Without him, relations between father and son will not be close. Without him, relations between brothers will not be smooth. Without him, relations between man and woman will not be happy.

Through him, the young grow and mature.
Through him, the old obtain nurture.

Thus it is said, “Heaven and Earth produce them, but the sage completes them.” This expresses my meaning.
The current age is not like that.

The superiors make hefty collections of money and so snatch away the people’s wealth. They impose heavy taxes on the

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1 The exact meaning of “virtue” (de) here is uncertain. In this context the word is perhaps best read in its root sense of “power,” i.e., as a person’s life force, the idea being that these architectural inventions help people survive.

2 Mao 927. This quotation differs slightly from the received version. In its original context, this passage describes King Wen.

3 Compare the similar wording at 16.29–31.

4 Mao 927. According to commentaries, this poem describes the feelings of men returning home after building a camp at the behest of their (angry) rulers. Commentators on the Text offer varying opinions about its relevance in this context, but Yang Liang suggests very plausibly that the point is to illustrate how the common people will work hard for a good superior.

5 Given the lines that follow, “petty man” here is best understood in its political sense, as the “lesser person,” i.e., the commoner.

6 Wordings similar to this and the next few sentences appears at 27.200–6.
fields and so snatch away the people's food. They charge severe tariffs at passes and markets and so make difficulties for the people's affairs.13

And that is not all. They also engage in practicing entrapment, relying on deception, scheming after power, and plotting overthrow in order to completely delude and topple each other.14 The common people all clearly recognize that they are corrupt, arrogant, and violent and will be greatly endangered and perished. Thus, some ministers assassinate their lords, and some subordinates kill their superiors; they sell out their cities, betray their superior's regulations, and refuse to die in their service. These things happen for no other reason than that the ruler of men brings it upon himself. The Odes says, "No words will go unanswered. No virtue will go unrequited."15 This expresses my meaning.

The way to provide universal sufficiency for all under Heaven rests with making clear social divisions. Irrigating the land and marking out plots,16 cutting down weeds and planting grains, fertilizing often and fattening up the fields—these are the works of the farmers and the mass of commoners. Keeping watch over the seasons and putting the people's strength to work, advancing projects and fostering accomplishments, harmonizing and organizing the common people, not letting them be lazy—these are the works of generals and leaders. Ensuring that high areas are not too dry and low-lying areas are not too wet, keeping cold and heat harmoniously regulated so that the five grains ripen at the appropriate times—these are the works of Heaven. Universally keeping watch over the people, universally caring for them, universally Onticing them, so that even when the year's harvest is ruined by drought or flood they will not face the disasters of freezing or starving—these are the works of sagely lords and their worthy prime ministers.

In his teachings, Mozi worries very consciously about insufficiency for the whole world. However, insufficiency is not the common disaster facing the world. That is only Mozi's individual worry and erroneous reckoning. Now the way this soil gives birth to the five grains is such that if people tend it well, a single mu of land will yield several bushels, and within a single year one can have two harvests. Beyond these, the melons, peaches, dates, and plums are such that from a single plant one may count the yield in bushels and drums. Beyond these, the greens and vegetables can grow so as to fill up whole swamps. Beyond these, in a single season the six domestic animals and other beasts can become so numerous as to fill up every available cart. If the turtles, lizards, fish, and eagle give birth at the proper times, then in a single season they can form whole swarms. Beyond these, the flying birds, ducks, and swans can become so numerous as to be like billows of smoke in the sky. Beyond these, the insects and other myriad creatures live in the remaining space. Among all these, there are countless that are edible. So, the way Heaven and Earth give birth to the myriad things is such that there is originally an abundance sufficient to feed people. The fibrous plants and silk and the feathers, fur, teeth, and shells of the animals are originally in abundance sufficient to clothe people. So, the question of abundance or insufficiency is not the common disaster facing the world. That is only Mozi's individual worry and erroneous reckoning. Instead, the common disaster facing the world is that chaos harms people. Why don't we inquire together into who it is that makes it chaotic? I take it that Mozi's rejection of music will cause the world to be chaotic, and Mozi's advocacy of frugal expenditure will cause the world to be impoverished. This is not an attempt to slander him. It is simply that his teachings cannot avoid these results. If at his greatest Mozi had possession of the whole world, or if at the least he had possession of a single state, he would have people uncomfortably wearing coarse cloth, eating bad food, and though they might be sad, he would not deny them music. If it were like this, then the state would be starved. If the state were starved, then it could not provide satisfaction for people's desires, and if it could not provide satisfaction for people's desires, then rewards would not work. If at his greatest Mozi had possession of the whole world, or if at the least he had possession of a single state, he would reduce personnel and decrease the number of officials. He would put foremost and regard with merit titles that are laborious and bitter, dividing up the work evenly with the commoners and making equal all merit for laborers. If it were like this, then the state would not inspire awe, and if it did not inspire awe, then punishments would not work. If rewards do not work, then the worthy cannot be gotten to advance, and if punishments do not work, then the unworthy cannot be gotten to withdraw. If the worthy cannot be gotten to advance and the unworthy cannot be gotten to withdraw, then the capable and incapable cannot be accorded their proper offices. If it were like this, then the myriad things would lose what is appropriate to them, and when there were changes in circumstances, one would lose out on the appropriate response. Above one would lose out on Heaven's seasons, below one would lose out on Earth's benefits, and in the middle one would lose harmony among mankind. In that case, the whole world would be as though burned up or scorched. Then, even if Mozi were to try to do something about it by
Our decorum has been meticulous. Having become drunk, having become full,"  
Blessings and fortune are bestowed to us.  

This expresses my meaning.  
On the other hand, if the methods of Mozi are truly put into practice, then all under Heaven will exalt frugality but will become only poorer. The people will denounce fighting but will only struggle with one another more each day. They will engage in laborious and bitter toils, bent over and exhausted, but will only increasingly fail to have accomplishments. Melancholy and sorrowful, they will denounce music but will grow only less harmonious each day. The Odes says:  

Heaven is raining ills from the sky.  
Great is the chaos, and many die.  
No friendly words do the people cry.  
Will you not repent or even sigh?  

This expresses my meaning.  
If one neglects important tasks to nurture the common people, coddling and babying them, making gruel for them in the winter and giving them melons and porridge in the summer, in order to steal a brief moment’s praise from them, this is a thieving way."  
In this manner, one can briefly obtain the vile common people’s praise, but it is not a way one can persist in for a long time. Important tasks are sure not to be completed, and accomplishments are sure not to hold up, for these are vile methods for governing. If one hastily works the common people and rushes them to accord with the seasons, advancing tasks and developing achievements, taking bad reputation lightly and being content with losing the people’s affection, then tasks will indeed be advanced, but the commoners will hate it. This also cannot work, because it is merely stealing in another one-sided manner. It moves toward self-destruction, falls into collapse and is, on the con-  

The Chinese does not indicate who is drunk and full. In its original context, the subject is likely the spirits, who have partaken of the sacrificial offerings and so bestowed blessings. In the present context, the line might instead be taken as referring to the people performing the sacrifice, which would fit with the idea presented earlier that the former kings partook of certain indulgences and thereby achieved a well-ordered society (a "blessing").  
Mao 6274. Xunzi’s quotation differs slightly from the received version of the Odes.  
Mao 6514. In their original context, these words are directed to a government official as criticism, and the penultimate line is understood by commentaries as referring to complaints by the common people against this same official. Here it is imagined that the common people will have no friendly words for Mozi’s government, and the last line is directed to him.  
Compare the end of 3.225–29.
trary, sure to result in no achievements. And so, neglecting important tasks to nurture one's reputation cannot work, and pursuing achievements while forgetting about the people cannot work, because they are both vile ways.

Thus, the ancients did not do things like this. They ensured that the common people did not succumb to the heat in the summer and that they did not freeze from cold in winter. They ensured that when they hurried the common people, it was not to the point of harming their strength, and when they allowed the common people to proceed slowly, they did not fall behind the seasons. Important tasks were accomplished and their achievements were firmly established, both superiors and subordinates were enriched, and the commoners all felt affection for their superiors. The fact that people turned to their leaders like water flowing down, loved them with the same kind of delight they had for their own parents, and happily marched out to die for them was for no other reason than that the superiors had achieved the ultimate in loyalty, trustworthiness, harmoniousness, and evenhandedness.

And so, if the ruler of the state and leader of the people wishes to keep up with the seasons and pursue achievements, then harmonious adjustment, adding to the people's work and relieving them from it, is more effective than rushing and hurrying them; practicing loyalty, trustworthiness, and evenhandedness is more persuasive than offering them rewards and prizes; and making sure first to correct what lies within oneself and only then slowly reprimand what lies with others is more awe-inspiring than threatening them with penalties and punishments. When these three virtues are truly present among the superiors, then the subordinates will respond to them like a shadow cast by light. Even if those who profit the people and not profiteering from them, to show the people care first and then work them does not produce as great accomplishments as showing them care and not working them. He who can profit the people and not profiteer from them, show the people care and not work them, will win over all under Heaven. He who first profits the people and then profiteers from them, first shows them care and then works them, will preserve his altars of soil and grain. He who uses the people without profiting them, works them without showing them care, will endanger his state and clan.

See Sheng, Ei hou ("The Announcement to the Prince of Kung"), translated in Waltham (1971, p. 148). Xuang’s quotation is slightly different from the received edition of the Documents, and he seems to be quoting these remarks without regard to their original context, so the translation here is very different from the way most commentators construe the passage as it appears in the Documents.

executions and punishments are not applied to the proper kinds of people, then subordinates will be confused about how to act, general custom will become unstable, and the common people will not be united.

Hence, the former kings made clear ritual and yi in order to unify the people, cultivated loyalty and trustworthiness in order to make them love their superiors, elevated the worthy and employed the capable in order to cause proper gradations among them, and made gifts of positions, emblems, and other rewards in order to make them exert themselves and redouble their efforts. The former kings made the people’s works accord with the times and lightened their burdens, in order to regulate them and bring them into line. Their broad concern included and covered all the people, and they nurtured and raised them, as though caring for a newborn. Since it was like this, vile and perverse people did not appear, robbery and villainy did not arise, and those who were transformed with goodness were encouraged. How was this possible? The ways of the former kings were easy for people to follow, the lessons with which they filled the people’s hearts were solid, their government and orders were unified, and their levels and depth markers were clear. Thus it is said, "When the superiors are of one mind, then the subordinates will be of one mind. When the superiors are of two minds, the subordinates will be of two minds." This expresses my meaning.

To profiteer from the people without profiting them is not as profiable as first profiting the people and then profiteering from them. To work the people without showing them care does not produce as great achievements as first showing them care and then working them. To profit the people first and then profiteer from them is not as profiable as first profiting the people and not profiteering from them. To show the people care first and then work them does not produce as great accomplishments as showing them care and not working them. He who can profit the people and not profiteer from them, show the people care and not work them, will win over all under Heaven. He who first profits the people and then profiteers from them, first shows them care and then works them, will preserve his altars of soil and grain. He who uses the people without profiting them, works them without showing them care, will endanger his state and clan.

9 *Levels and depth markers* appears to be a reference to rituals. See 7:238–41. See also 8:540–50.

10 In a word play that cannot be rendered easily in English, this paragraph makes use of the fact that the Chinese word  &  can function as an adjective meaning "beneficial, profitable," a verb meaning "to bring benefit or profit to someone," or a verb meaning "to use, employ" (in either a negative or positive sense). I have translated the last usage as "to profit from" in order to reflect that the same word is being used throughout and to convey the negative tone it carries here.
In observing whether a state is well-ordered or chaotic, in good shape or not, when one arrives at the territorial boundaries the signs are already apparent. If the watchmen and patrols are sparse and the government controls at borders and passes involve extensive investigations, this is simply the sign of a chaotic state. When one has entered the borders, if the fields are in poor condition and the urban areas are exposed to attack, this is simply the sign of a greedy ruler. If one observes the court and finds that the nobles are not worthy, if one observes the officials and finds that those in charge are not capable, if one observes the ruler’s favorites and finds that those trusted are not honest, this is simply the sign of a benighted ruler. If everyone from the ruler to the prime minister to the officials on down to the various functionaries are exacting and extremely careful when it comes to the giving, receiving, and tallying of goods and wealth, and their practice of ritual, if, and proper regulations are lax and withered, this is simply the sign of a disgraced state.

If those doing the plowing delight in their fields, the soldiers are at ease in facing difficulties, the various functionaries are fond of the proper model, the court exalts ritual, and the high ministers investigate and debate, this is simply the sign of a well-ordered state. If one observes the court and finds that the nobles are worthy, if one observes the officials and finds that those in charge are capable, if one observes the ruler’s favorites and finds that those trusted are honest, this is simply the sign of an enlightened ruler. If everyone from the ruler to the prime minister to the officials on down to the various functionaries are generous and easygoing when it comes to the giving, receiving, and tallying of goods and wealth, and their practice of ritual, if, and proper regulations are stringent and extremely careful, this is simply the sign of a glorious state. If, when those who are worthy are all on a par, the ruler’s old friends among them are first to be ennobled; if, when those who are capable are all on a par, the ruler’s old friends among them are first to be given official positions; if among the ministers and various functionaries, those who are corrupt are all transformed and become cultivated, those who are brutal are all transformed and become mild, and those who are conniving are all transformed and become honest, these are simply the signs of the accomplishments of an enlightened ruler.

In observing whether a state will be strong or weak, poor or rich, there are indicators and evidence to look for. If the superiors do not exalt ritual, then the military will be weak. If the superiors do not care for the common people, then the military will be weak. If promises that have been made are not trustworthy, then the military will be weak. If prizes and rewards are not given out, then the military will be weak. If generals and leaders are not capable, then the military will be weak. If the superiors are fond of engaging in offensive campaigns and crave magnificent accomplishments, then the state will be poor. If the superiors are fond of profit, then the state will be poor.

If there are great numbers of nobles and grand ministers, then the state will be poor. If there are great numbers of craftsmen and merchants, the state will be poor. If there are no regulations on quantities and no standards for measures, then the state will be poor. If those below are poor, then the superiors will be poor. If those below are rich, then the superiors will be rich.

And the fields and countryside are the starting point for wealth. Warehouses and granaries are the end point for wealth. Having the common people harmonize with the seasons and having their work proceed in proper order is the fount from which goods come. Making assessments, collecting taxes, and putting them in storerooms are the channels by which goods flow away. An enlightened ruler is sure to be careful in nurturing harmony with the seasons, restricting the flow of goods, opening up their fount, and pouring forth from it only at the appropriate times. Far and wide he causes all under Heaven to be sure of having surplus, and so superiors do not worry about insufficiency. When it is like this, then those above and those below are rich together, and for both there is no place to store all the goods—this is the ultimate in knowing how to plan for the state. Thus, there were ten years of floods during the time of Yu, and there were seven years of drought during the time of T'ang, and during those periods there was nothing with the color of vegetation anywhere under Heaven, but after the tenth year, the annual harvest of grain ripened again, and when set out and piled up there was a surplus. There is no other reason for this—it is called understanding the starting point and the ending point, the fount and the flow of goods.

Thus, if the fields are bare but the state’s granaries are full, and if the people are drained but the state’s storerooms are packed, this is called a cetering state. When a state obliterates the starting point for goods, dries up their fount, and gathers them all at

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8 Nobility and high-ranking government officials did not pay taxes, but instead received income from taxes on the common people, so the more nobility and officials there were, the less money was left for the common people and the state.
9 Sun Tzu's concern here seems to be that if craftsmen and merchants (who do not produce raw materials, but only rework them or trade them) outnumber the farmers (who do produce the raw materials), then the state will lack the basic resources it needs.
10 Many commentators read this instead as "... there was nobody with a green complexion [i.e., a complexion of illness due to starvation]." This is possible, but seems to fit less well with the contrasting point that immediately after the floods there was a surplus.
11 The commentator Gu Qianqi suspects that there is a gap in the text here, and that it originally read "after the tenth year [in the one case], and after the seventh year [in the other case]. . . ." This seems likely to be right.
their ending point, but the ruler and prime minister nevertheless do not know that this is bad, then one can simply stand by and wait for it be overthrown and destroyed. When one has the whole state as one’s means of support but it is still insufficient to accommodate one’s person, this is called utmost greediness. Such is the utmost foolish ruler. He seeks wealth but winds up losing his state. He seeks profit but winds up endangering his person. In ancient times there were ten thousand states. Nowadays there are a few more than ten left among them. There is no other reason for this—the cause by which the others were lost is one and the same. May the lords of men be conscious of this! Even a state of merely a hundred li is sufficient to stand alone.

In all cases of those who launch offensive campaigns against others, if they are not acting for the sake of a good reputation, then they are acting for the sake of profit, or if for neither of those reasons, then it is because they are angry at those whom they attack. As for the way a person of ren uses the state, he will cultivate his intentions and thoughts, correct his person and conduct, achieve an exalted and lofty character, make himself loyal and trustworthy, and align himself with good form and proper order. If a man with only coarse clothes and roughly woven sandals were truly to do this, then even if he were to live in a poor neighborhood in a house with a leaky roof, kings and dukes could not compete with him for a good reputation, and if he had the whole state to back him, then no one in the world could obscure him. When the situation is like this, then those acting for the sake of a good reputation will not attack. The person of ren will open up farmland, fill up his granaries, and have ready supplies. Those above and those below will be of one mind, and the three armies will be united in strength. To vigorously pursue war far away against such a one will not work. His holdings within the borders are firmly guarded. When he sees that the time is right, he will meet the opposing army and strip it of its general as easily as husking cooked grains. Even if the invaders succeed, it will not be enough to mend his injuries and make up for his losses. Such men jealously protect their claws and teeth and fear their enemies, so when the situation is like this, those acting for the sake of profit will not attack.

The person of ren will cultivate what is 37 with respect to great and small states, strong and weak states, and maintain it carefully. His practice of ritual and proper regulation will display good form, his jade tablets and disks will be magnificent, and his greeting gifts will be generous. The person whom he sends to persuade another lord will surely be a gentleman with refinement, good form, skill in arguing, and great intelligence. If that lord has any human feelings in him at all, who would get angry at such a person? When the situation is like this, then those who get angry will not attack.

When those acting for the sake of a good reputation will not attack, and those acting for the sake of profit will not attack, and those acting for the sake of anger will not attack, then the state will be more solid than a great boulder and more long-lived than Ji and Yi. Others will all be chaotic. I alone will be well-ordered. Others will all be endangered. I alone will be secure. Others will all lose their states. I alone will then rise up and take control of them. Thus, the way that a person of ren uses the state is such that he will not merely hold on to what he possesses—he will also come to take in other people’s states. The Odes says:

As for the noble man and gentleman, Their standard does not err or deviate. Their standard does not err or deviate. On all four sides they correct every state.

This expresses my meaning. On the hard way and the easy way to maintain a state: “To serve a violent state is hard, but to make a violent state serve oneself is easy.” If one serves it with goods and treasures, then one’s goods and treasures will be depleted, and one’s relations will still not be secure. If one signs treaties with it in good faith or makes covenants with it sealed by oaths, then even though the treaty is set, hardly a day will pass before it is violated. If one cuts off some measure of one’s own territory in order to bribe such a state, then even though the loss of territory is set, its greed will still not be satisfied. The more pains one goes to in serving it, the more it will encroach upon one. The situation will surely come to the point where one’s resources are depleted and one’s whole state is offered up, and only then will it stop. Even if he had Yao as his advisor on the left and Shun as his advisor on the right, there has never been anyone who could escape from these things by following such a way. You can compare it to what would go.

31 I.e., if he were the lord of a state.
32 According to ritual protocol, emissaries to a foreign state brought jades to give as tokens of good will.
33 Ji and Yi were the names of states.
34 The basic meaning of the word is 之 is “deviate,” where this can refer simply to “change” from some previous state or, more particularly, to deviating from what is correct. Both senses are relevant here, but the latter seems primary for this context, so 之 is rendered as “er or deviate” to convey both the correctness and the constancy of the noble man and gentleman.
35 Mao #152. The “four sides” are the four directions (north, south, east, west). Compare the use of this same quotation at 15.37.44 and 24.13.24.
happen if a maiden clasping precious pearls, wearing precious jade, and carrying gold were to meet a bandit in the mountains. Even if she averted her gaze from him, went with bowed waist and bent knee, and acted compliantly like a household concubine, it still would not be sufficient for her to escape him. Thus, this is not the way to hold onto even a single person, and simply fearfully serving the violent with ingratiating manner and politeness is not sufficient to maintain a state or make one’s person secure. For this reason, the enlightened ruler does not follow this path.

Instead, he will surely cultivate ritual in order to set straight his court. He will rectify his models for conduct in order to set straight his officials. He will make his government evenhanded in order to set straight the common people. Only then will the regulations be set straight in his court, the hundred tasks set straight among his officials, and the masses set straight below. When the situation is like this, then those close by will vie to draw near to him, and those far away will send notice of their wish to submit to him. Those above and those below will share one heart, and the three armies will merge their strengths. His reputation will be enough to blaze over other states, and his authority and strength will be enough to thrash them. He need merely stand with hands clasped together and give directions, and then none of the strong and violent states will fail to hurry in doing his bidding. One can compare it with what would happen if Wu Huo were to wrestle with a dwarf. Thus it is said, “To serve a violent state is hard, but to make a violent state serve oneself is easy.” This expresses my meaning.

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The state is the most efficacious instrument in the world, and to be ruler of men is the most efficacious power in the world. If you take the Way to hold onto these, then you will have great security and great honor—they will be a wellspring of accumulated goods. If you do not take the Way to hold onto them, then you will face great danger and great ignominy—it would be better not to have them. And in the most extreme circumstances, though you seek to finish your days as a commoner, you cannot get even that. Such was the case with King Min of Qi and King Xian of Song. Thus, although being ruler of men is the most efficacious power in the world, it is not secure of itself. One who is to be secure in it must take hold of the Way.

So in using the state, if yi is established as your foundation, then you will be a true king. If trustworthiness is established as your foundation, then you will be a hegemon. If intrigues and schemes are established as your foundation, then you will perish. These three are what the enlightened ruler carefully chooses among, and what the person of ren works to get clear about. He takes hold of the state so as to call forth ritual and yi, and does nothing to harm them. To perform one act contrary to yi or kill one innocent person and thereby gain the whole world is something that the person of ren would not do. Like a stone—such is the fortitude with which he holds onto his heart and his state.

Those men with whom he collaborates in conducting the government are all men of yi. The punishments and laws he sets out for state and clan are all laws in accordance with yi. Those things which the ruler is extremely vigorous in leading his various ministers to turn their heads to are all yi intentions. When it is like this, then those below will look up to those above for being yi. This is a case where the fundamental things are firmly settled. When the fundamental things are firmly settled, then the state will be firmly settled, and when the state is firmly settled, then all under Heaven will be firmly settled.

Confucius lacked even so much land as to plant an awl in, but he sincerely cultivated yi in his thoughts and intentions, attached yi to his person and conduct, and made it clear in his words. From the days he had perfected it, he has not been obscure in the world, and his name has been passed down to later generations. Now take also the most eminent feudal lord in the world. Let him sincerely cultivate yi in his thoughts and intentions, attach yi to his laws, standards, and