

AN EARLY NINTH CENTURY DEBATE
ON HEAVEN:

Liu Tsung-yüan's *T'ien Shuo* and Liu Yü-hsi's *T'ien Lun*

An Annotated Translation and Introduction

by H. G. LAMONT

PART II

In turning to the *T'ien shuo* itself, we shall begin with the critical comments of the late Ch'ing scholar, Lin Shu 林紓, whose essay on the work gives a fairly balanced picture of its contents as well as some clues as to its purpose:

"The Theory of Heaven" is most remarkable. Because of what Mr. Han [Yü] said, [Liu Tsung-yüan] carried on a debate with him. Mr. Liu criticizes Mr. Han for being hasty (*chi* 激). In truth, Mr. Han proceeds to say that Heaven is conscious, but for all its consciousness, it still misapplies its rewards and punishments. It seems that noxious men ought not to dig out holes that cause ruin and spread their wisdom and strength; therefore, Heaven punishes them. Mr. Liu's words are not hasty (*chi*) but approach levity (?); he makes light of Heaven's having no consciousness, and at the same time affirms that he does not believe that it has rewards and punishments. All rewards and punishments come from what man can see with his own eyes, and Heaven is not at all conscious of them. Clearly he seems to be calming Mr. Han's exasperation and comforting Mr. Han's grief. Thus he does not realize that he is criticizing the creative force (*tsao-hua* 造化) for making no distinction between good and evil; his words are even more hasty (*chi*). It is comparable to blaming Chieh 桀 and Chou 紂 [evil last sovereigns of Shang and Chou respectively] for reversing obedience and contrariness. How should good fortune come yet injure Pi Kan 比干 [a righteous minister killed by the tyrant Chou]? These are words still tinged with emotion. The extreme ones will say Chieh and Chou were like a poisonous snake and a ravenous beast, which, though unknowingly, were able to injure men; nevertheless, they have no joy or anger, favour or resentment. Such words seem to be overdoing it, and in truth, they blame Heaven even more [than Han Yü's ideas]. It is possible to say that both men were hasty (*chi*).

The text [of "The Theory of Heaven"] says, "When the primordial ether and the yin and yang decay, man is produced from them." I do not understand on what principle he is basing these words. The most wonderful part is the sentence, "The one who makes them flourish and multiply is the enemy of material things", which speaks of man and material things as indissolubly interconnected. Vermin are the enemy of things; disease is the enemy of man; man is the enemy of Heaven. If vermin and disease can destroy man and material things, then man can destroy the material things of Heaven. Therefore, the idea that Heaven

is the enemy of man is derived from the idea that man and material things are the enemies of vermin and diseases. To be an enemy of Heaven and yet seek Heaven's blessing is a very unrealistic way of doing things and so the punishment received is even greater. All that has been quoted above emphasizes the punishments meted out by Heaven, but they never can mention the fact that man's harmful actions being reversed to bring down Heaven's favour. Therefore, [Han Yü] says, "In my opinion, if someone could destroy these people so as to decrease poor days . . . then he would be a benefactor to Heaven . . ." This is employing empty phrases.

In sum, Mr. Han's view only takes account of the idea that good men do not receive good fortune from Heaven; therefore, he speaks in this way. Yet this theory does not appear in Han's works. In my opinion, following Liu's disgrace, he composed these words of resentment and grief to comfort Liu. Liu thereupon presented him with an explanation for it, in which he implied his own calamity had no connexion with Heaven. Between Heaven and Earth there is the primordial ether; there are the yin and yang. Thus, since the primordial ether is said to be "all mixed up", then, no matter what, if one is beneficial to them, they do not know whom to repay, or if one is injurious to them, they do not know on whom to send disaster. If one by chance (*ou-jan* 偶然) obtains good fortune or by chance receives disaster, it is in no way to be reckoned a reward or a punishment. Calling it reward or punishment is a great error.

These two gentlemen's theories are quite at variance with the theory that the sage fears the Mandate of Heaven. Yet the essay is extraordinary, saying what no one had ever said. From this, Han and Liu wrote in an interlocking fashion.¹⁰¹

Lin Shu accepts what is a fairly common view of the *T'ien shuo*; namely, that it is a work of the exile period. This is accepted by Wu Wen-chih and Hou Wai-lu,¹⁰² but both insist on giving a precise year, 814, as the date of its composition, based on the assumption that the *T'ien shuo* was written as part of a series of letters by Han Yü and Liu Tsung-yüan on the duties of the History Office (*Shih-kuan* 史館) to which Han had been appointed in 813. Admittedly in this exchange Liu does take Han to task for believing in retribution from Heaven, for Han, wanting to withdraw from what he considered a potentially dangerous office, used as one of his excuses the idea that many historians of the past had been struck down either by Heaven or by men;¹⁰³ Liu castigates this view as cowardly and unsubstantiated and attri-

butes such disasters to mere chance; evidently, Liu was expounding his usual views on the subject, but it must be remembered that he was doing so in the wider context of urging Han Yü to do his duties properly and not shirk his responsibility.¹⁰⁴ Certainly his arguments in his letters to Han Yü are complete in and of themselves. Hou has to postulate that the *T'ien shuo* was written in addition to the letter, and it would seem that there would have been little need for this; moreover, the *T'ien shuo* does not contain any reference to the earlier debate, nor does it seem to be the logical next step from the letter on the History Office. Finally, we must note that the real logical sequel to Liu's letter on the History Office, a second letter to Han, does not mention the subject of Heaven or retribution at all.¹⁰⁵ From this, I think that it is reasonably clear that, convenient though such an explanation would be, there is little reason to believe that the debate of 814 had much to do with the *T'ien shuo* except that both reveal Liu's sceptical ideas.

The problem of dating the work thus becomes more difficult than the Marxists would have us believe. Pulleyblank has suggested a number of possibilities on the tentative assumption that the conversational format of the *T'ien shuo* indicates that Han and Liu actually had a face to face exchange on the subject; he further speculates that Liu Yü-hsi may have been present. He proceeds to suggest that the conversation could have taken place only before 794 or after 801 with the latter period a more likely time; he more or less dismisses Shih Tzu-yü's dating of the piece to the Yung-chou period as "subjective judgement".¹⁰⁶ Although Pulleyblank is correct in noting that Shih produces no evidence for his dating of this work, I, nevertheless, feel that there is good reason to accept the current interpretation of Wu Wen-chih and Hou Wai-lu (apart from their dating it to 814) as well as of Lin Shu. The key piece of evidence, which has been noted by Hou,¹⁰⁷ is an expression in the *T'ien lun* 天論 ("On Heaven"), Liu Yü-hsi's complementary piece to the *T'ien shuo*: "Now to substantiate the existence or non-existence of Heaven by the failure or success of a single person is deluded." This is given at the end of one of Liu Yü-hsi's summations and it looks very much as if it is referring to the fate which befell both Liu's after 805. If this is so, then there is little doubt that the *T'ien shuo* itself was written after the debacle of the Wang party. Another interesting phrase is Liu Tsung-yüan's description of Han's argument as having been composed "on the spur of the moment" (*chi erh wei* 激而爲). Liu Tsung-yüan used almost the same phrase of certain people who, at the death of Chang Hou-yü in 808, attempted to think up hasty explanations for his untimely death. It is possible that Han has offered a similarly hasty explanation for the disaster of 805.

¹⁰¹ Wu Wen-chih, ed., *Liu Tsung-yüan chüan* 柳宗元卷 (Peking, 1964), II, 592-3.

¹⁰² Wu Wen-chih, *Liu p'ing-chüan*, 205; Hou, *T'ung-shih*, 354-5; Hou, *Liu hsüan-chi*, Preface, 3.

¹⁰³ *HCLC*, 15'e, 7, 69-71.

¹⁰⁴ *LHTC*, II, 498-500.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 500-1.

¹⁰⁶ Pulleyblank, "Neo-Confucianism", 333, n. 152.

¹⁰⁷ Hou, *T'ung-shih*, 354.

This still leaves us with the problem of dating more precisely; moreover, the suggestion that the *T'ien shuo* actually reflects a conversation between Han and Liu cannot be easily reconciled with the evidence that the piece was written after Liu's fall, for from 803 on Han Yü was away from the capital and only in the year 815 were the two men together in the capital again¹⁰⁸ and I think that it is rather unlikely that the debate started at that late date, especially when we remember the amount of work that Liu Tsung-yüan devoted to this and allied subjects while at Yung-chou. Thus I think that we must conclude that for some reason Liu decided to cast his work in the form of a dialogue and not that it was actually based on a conversation between the two. Of course, Lin Shu's observation that there is no equivalent or similar material in Han's extant works would tend to support the hypothesis that it was originally a conversation rather than a written exchange; however, as the Sung writer, Shao Po 邵博, pointed out, this and other instances may well be cases where material was lost by the editor of Han's writings.¹⁰⁹

In general, although a precise date is, unfortunately, impossible to establish in view of the lack of material, I tend to think that Han and Liu corresponded not too long after Liu went into exile. Although Han had a great dislike for leaders of the Wang faction he remained friends with Liu Tsung-yüan himself, and the speech attributed to him in the *T'ien shuo* probably represents his reaction to the news of his friend's disgrace. It is interesting to note that one of Han's first remarks in his speech is that those who feel aggrieved at Heaven do not really understand Heaven. As we have noted, Liu was often given over in his mortuary writings to cursing Heaven when disaster struck down his friends; it is possible that Han is here reacting to similar expressions used by Liu in cursing his own fate in exile. Such expressions would not necessarily have been inconsistent with Liu's usual practice, as seen in his sacrificial text to Lü Wen in 811:

Alas! Was it Heaven? What fault had this true gentleman that Heaven should truly be hostile to him? Of what crime were the common people guilty that Heaven should truly be hostile to them? He was intelligent and upright, his actions were those of a true gentleman; then Heaven had to hasten his death. He was virtuous, benevolent and dutiful, he aspired to save the common people; then Heaven had to give him an untimely death. I know for certain that Blue [Heaven] is not to be believed and that the pure quietude has no spirits. Now at Hua-kuang's [Lü Wen's] death, my resentment grows deeper and the venom

¹⁰⁸ Interestingly enough, Liu Yü-hsi did meet Han Yü who was still serving in Chiang-ling 江陵 on the way to Lien-chou his first exile post, which was changed to Lang-chou before he arrived in the tenth month of 805. It is just possible that this meeting had something to do with the exchange of views on Heaven. See Pien Hsiao-hsüan 卣 蔡 董 Liu Yü-hsi nien-p'u 劉 萬 編 年 譜 (Shanghai, 1963), 45.

¹⁰⁹ Wu Wen-chih, *Liu chüan*, I, 66.

[within me] increases. So again I cry to Heaven saying, "Oh! Heaven! How bitter! . . ." ¹¹⁰

Here we see how paradoxical Liu's thought can be, for while denying that Heaven has any kind of personality or spirit, he curses it as if it were a deliberately malicious force. This may be due in part to Liu's grief: a text of this sort could not be expected in most circumstances to be a logical exposition of his views. But we should also note how ambiguous the concept of Heaven could be: Liu was able to deny the traditional beliefs about Heaven as a god or as a purposeful natural order, yet at the same time he could use Heaven as a convenient target for his own bitterness. Similarly, it is quite possible that Liu had expressed his bitterness about the exile in Yung-chou in the same conventional terms that he often used in lamenting the untimely deaths of his friends and family, and that Han's opening remarks against railing at Heaven are a criticism of Liu's outbursts.

There is, moreover, a possible political interpretation to the *T'ien shuo*, which would tend to confirm its dating as post 805. If we take into consideration the fact that Heaven could traditionally be used to represent the Son of Heaven and that the vermin described at length by Han Yü could represent the eunuchs, with whom the Wang faction came into conflict in 805 and who were widely employed by the new emperor, Hsien-tsung 憲宗 (r. 805-820), the *T'ien shuo* takes on a definite political significance. Both Han and Liu, though on opposite sides in regard to the Wang clique, would have shared the literati's usual dislike for the eunuchs, and Han's description of the vermin boring through things, causing decay that gives rise to other vermin, may well be an allegory of the eunuchs' insinuating their way into positions of power at this time. On the same lines, Han may be trying to advise Liu Tsung-yüan not to resent the new emperor, represented by Heaven. At the end of his remarks he may be holding out the possibility that eventually justice will be done and that Liu will regain favour. Liu's reply, in turn, appears to express his denial that there is any justice whatsoever in the emperor's government; the great forces in the regime are mindless and have no regard for true worth to be found in men like himself. We must not, of course, carry such an interpretation too far, but the allegorical use of vermin and animals to represent political foes is found in the writings of Liu's contemporaries and in his own works,¹¹¹ and there is no reason to

¹¹⁰ *LHTC*, II, 643-4.

¹¹¹ In Liu's own works his *sao* pieces use this type of allegory with animals representing political figures; e.g., see his *Tseng Wang-sun wen* 憎王孫文 (The Hateful Wang-sun), *LHTC*, I, 322-3, trans. Gentzler, "Biography", [224-227], or the *Fu-pan chuan* 蝮蟻傳 (Biography of the Dung Beetles), *LHTC*, I, 312-13, trans. Gentzler, "Biography", [230-231]. In a memorial by Yang Yen several decades earlier, he referred to the eunuchs as "maggots" *T'ang Hui-yao* 唐會要 (The Institutes of Tang) (*Kuo-hsieh chi-pen Ts'ung-shu* ed.), II, 1015; D. C. Twitchett, *Financial Administration under the T'ang* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 1970), 340.

believe that it could not have been used here in a similar fashion. Moreover, the use of such an allegory would have been highly expedient in the first years of Liu's exile when, after the enforced suicide of Wang Shu-wen in 806, Liu was expecting his turn to come next. Han Yü, of course, was not involved in the downfall of the Wangs, but he, too, would have had to be very careful about what he said; his remarks, it should be further noted, passed through Liu's hands and it is his version alone that is extant.

Some further, though indirect, evidence in favour of this interpretation is found in a note prefaced to the *T'ien shuo* in Liu's works some time in the Sung period.¹¹² It describes an incident in the *Kuo shih pu* 國史補, in which Han Yü was trapped at the top of a mountain precipice and, thinking that he could not get down, wrote his farewell to the world. The note adds that only Shen Yen 沈顏, a late T'ang writer of sceptical tendencies was able to understand it. Shen's essay on the subject definitely treats the incident that happened to Han as a kind of allegory, for he says that Han's grief was over those who are greedy for high positions in the world and who tread a path as dangerous as a high precipice.¹¹³ The mention of this interpretation in the note would tend to indicate that the Sung commentator saw some sort of overtones, and more particularly political overtones, in the *T'ien shuo*.

A final piece of evidence can be adduced from the *T'ien shuo* itself: Liu near the end of his argument enunciates that one should keep within the limits of one's own benevolence and righteousness and accept the round of the universe while maintaining one's integrity. This could seem to refer again to the political side of life, and he seems to be saying that, since he cannot find appreciation at court, he will, at least, remain true to his own standards. This would again be a very likely attitude for him to take as he was trying to accommodate himself to being exiled.

The existence of this political level of meaning, however, does not imply that the philosophical debate was merely a screen for some potentially dangerous comments on the court of Hsien-tsung. Even if Han's argument was merely a theory thought up on the spur of the moment, it is obvious that Liu's ideas expressed here are completely consistent with the whole drift of his thought in the Yung-chou period; indeed, if the hypothesis that the *T'ien shuo* was written soon after his exile began is correct, this work would form one of the earliest expressions of Liu's more fully developed scepticism.

There is little in the *T'ien shuo* on Liu's idea that we cannot find elsewhere in his sceptical essays. The theme of fortuity (*ou-jan*), though not

¹¹² I suspect that the note (*LHTC*, I, 285) may be by the Sung Commentator, Liao Yung-chung 廖瑩中: it occurs in *Ho-tung Hsien-sheng chi* (Taipei, 1968, repr. of 1923 ed.), Vol. I, ch. 16.1a-b.

¹¹³ See Li Chao 李肇 *T'ang Kuo-shih pu* 唐國史補 (*Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh ts'an-k'ao ts'u-liao hsiao ts'ung-shu* 中國文學參考資料小叢書), 38. Shen Yen's brief remarks are found in *CTW*, 868, 6b-7a.

specifically named, is nonetheless present, as Lin Shu observed; the main line of argument that things are merely material objects without any consciousness or purposefulness of their own; with this as his premise Liu naturally proceeds to deny the possibility of retribution, since retribution depends on a conscious determination of what and who is to be repaid. He then concludes that virtue rewards itself while vice punishes itself. Ultimately, it is human integrity that matters most so that external agents of retribution are not only impossible but really unnecessary.

By contrast, Han Yü's views on Heaven, especially in the absence of corresponding and supplementary material in Han's writings, are somewhat more difficult to follow. He opens with a warning that railing and feeling resentment against Heaven demonstrate an ignorance of Heaven. Such a pronouncement would be entirely in a good Confucian mould, for Confucius himself did not resent Heaven, according to the *Analects*.¹¹⁴ Han Yü then proceeds with an exposition of the theory of the spontaneous generation of life from decaying matter: vermin, produced from the decay of material things cause decay, which, in turn, generates more vermin. He concludes that the one who destroys the vermin will be a benefactor to material things and the one who nourishes the vermin will be an enemy to these things. At the next stage, he proceeds to treat man's relationship to the universe in a similar way: just as vermin attack material things, including man's body, so man despoils the universe, and thus becomes an enemy to Heaven and Earth. Of course, Han also states if any one could rid the universe of these despoilers, he would be a benefactor to the world, although a relationship of enmity between man and Heaven seems to be the actual norm in Han's view. He then concludes this argument by saying that most men in their ignorance rail at Heaven, and that if Heaven heard their resentfulness, the rewards and punishments of the benefactors and destroyers would be great.

Lin Shu's essay, quoted earlier, extracts the following conclusions from the argument: first, Han does seem to believe that Heaven has some sort of consciousness and the ability to reward and punish; secondly, Han is trying to show that Heaven's relation to man is analogous to that of man and things to the vermin which attack them: there would seem to be a perpetual state of enmity between each. Finally, Han seems to think that appeal to Heaven while in this state of enmity will only make the punishment worse. Thus Heaven's relationship to man seems to be one of conscious hostility because of man's reckless treatment of the universe. Although this view would seem to be a departure from the more usual Chinese theories about man's relationship to Heaven, it does have some precedent in the seventh chapter of the *Huai-nan-tzu* 淮南子.¹¹⁵ Moreover, Han's attempts to

¹¹⁴ Legge, *Classics*, I, 288.

¹¹⁵ *Huai-nan-tzu* (*Shih-chieh shu-chü* 世界書局 Taipei, 1968, repr. of *Chu-tzu chi-ch'eng* 諸子集成 ed.), 113-14. Dr. Loewe called my attention to this chapter.

define this relationship primarily in terms of enmity may have been the reason that Liu Yü-hsi chose to expound his theory that Heaven and man have advantages over each other in their respective spheres, although that theory itself obviously came from other sources; in any case, the *T'ien lun* contains a more highly developed theory of man's relationship to Heaven than Han's rather negative view, which after all, was probably meant rather as an expression of sympathy for his friend than as a complete theory of the cosmos.

One interesting point to be noted in Han's and Liu's arguments is their use of the expression, "Primordial ether" (*yüan ch'i* 元氣): Han uses the term to designate a substance at the beginning of the world which subsequently decayed and gave rise to the various phenomena, and entities, and life of the universe, including men. To Liu Tsung-yüan, however, the "primordial ether" means a confused substance between Heaven and Earth; thus it probably refers to much of the phenomenal universe as we know it. It is by means of this concept that Liu Tsung-yüan introduces the implied element of coincidence (*ou-jan*) into his argument. We have noted that his principal reply to Han was based on his denial of consciousness in things themselves; here he seems to be balancing this by asserting that the whole process is chaotic and not to be explained by a teleological hypothesis. Liu seems to be departing somewhat from tradition by using this term to designate not the primeval chaos but the present state of the world. However, it would seem to be rather similar to the Heavenly ether or fluid (*t'ien ch'i* 天氣) found in Wang Ch'ung's writings, in which it is said that Heaven emits its fluid everywhere and acts spontaneously.¹¹⁶ In both Liu's and Wang's thought the spontaneity of the natural order is emphasized. By contrast, Han Yü, though basing himself on the negative principle of spontaneous generation of life from decay, seems to endow the various entities in the universe with a purposefulness of their own; in this, although he is departing somewhat from the most commonly accepted tradition, he is maintaining some form of teleology and to Liu such a concept was unacceptable in any form.

The *T'ien shuo* was to some extent a failure as a treatise on the relationship of Heaven and man, for Han Yü's exposition was not very clear and was mostly concerned with showing a kind of antipathy between the two. Liu Tsung-yüan, on the other hand, all but reduced the universe to mindless chaos, and, while denying the principle of retribution, did not attempt to define man's place in relation to the natural order. Given the probable circumstances under which the *T'ien shuo* was composed, this is not surprising; Han's theory, as Liu states, was something composed on the spur of the moment, while Liu's own theory, though in line with his sceptical tenden-

¹¹⁶ Forke, *Lun Heng*, I, 92; *Lun Heng chiao-shih*, III, 775.

cies, was, after all, a brief and possibly equally hasty answer to Han. It is little wonder then that Liu Yü-hsi decided to compose his *T'ien lun* to present a coherent and fairly well developed picture of man's relationship to Heaven.

Liu Yü-hsi had been an intimate of Liu Tsung-yüan since the time that they had both served in the capital, and, being equally involved in the Wang party, suffered the same fate of exile as Liu Tsung-yüan. Both men had an interest in Legalism, which, in fact, plays a role in the first section of the *T'ien lun*: Liu Yü-hsi, however, probably derived some of his legalism from the famous statesman, Tu Yu 杜佑 (735-812) under whom he served in 800 and 801,¹¹⁷ whereas Liu Tsung-yüan seems to have derived his interest from a certain Tuan Hung-ku 段弘古, whose writings have, unfortunately, perished.¹¹⁸ Apart from these ties, there seem to have been a number of differences between the two men: Liu Yü-hsi does not appear to have been closely associated with either the Lu Ch'un school of criticism or with the *ku-wen* revival taking place at the time; indeed, in some ways he seems to be rather unique, standing apart from various groups, except the ill-fated Wang faction. Moreover, Liu Yü-hsi had a very pronounced interest in divination, which Liu Tsung-yüan in his *Fei Kuo yü* had described as "a superfluous art of the world and of no use to the Way".¹¹⁹ Naturally, Liu Yü-hsi was also interested in the allied field of *I Ching* studies, which was to play a role in his ideas about the nature of the world, and he had a life-long interest in medicine.¹²⁰ Although Liu Tsung-yüan did correspond with him on the *I Ching*,¹²¹ here again his interest was not as keen as Liu Yü-hsi's in this subject. In general, one gets the impression that Liu Tsung-yüan was more a litterateur and that Liu Yü-hsi, while not ignoring literature, had more technical interests.

There is little in Liu Yü-hsi's writings to give us any direct background to his attitude towards Heaven *per se*; the term seldom occurs in any of his works. Moreover, although he did write critical essays on various topics, he never seems to have felt it his duty to expose false traditions and beliefs as did Liu Tsung-yüan. In fact, his interest in divination indicates an attitude much more favourably disposed towards the traditional "sciences" and beliefs than can be found in any of Liu Tsung-yüan's essays.

The few references concerning Heaven to be found in Liu Yü-hsi's writings outside the *T'ien lun* are mostly very brief and in the mortuary writings amount to little more than such very conventional phrases as

¹¹⁷ Pien, *Nien-p'u*, 19, 22-3.

¹¹⁸ Pulleyblank, "Neo-Confucianism", 97; *LHTC*, II, 656-7, 819-20.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 764.

¹²⁰ Pien, *Nien-p'u*, 11. See letters on medicine, *LPKC*, 83-4. See also Feng Han-yung 馮漢鏞 ed., *Chuan hsün-fang ch'i-shih* 傳信方集釋 (Shanghai, 1959), a reconstruction of a pharmacopoeia by Liu.

¹²¹ *LHTC*, II, 501-02.

"Heaven snatched away his good fortune"¹²² in speaking of a person's death; the mortuary writings as a whole lack any of the bitter outbursts against Heaven that we have observed in Liu Tsung-yüan's writings. A fair proportion of the references to Heaven appear to come from the *fu* 賦 written for the most part while Liu Yü-hsi was in exile between 806 and 819. The following are some examples from these *fu* and other writings:

Sowing up life depends on Heaven; perfecting talent depends on the ruler. Heaven is the ruler of things; the ruler is "Heaven" to the people.¹²³

You understand Heaven without becoming mired in spirits and wonders.¹²⁴

The sun and stars revolve; when I observe Heaven's numbers (*shu* 數) and look at the people's customs, so many situations appear and change among them.¹²⁵

Heaven gives birth to man but cannot cause his feelings and desires to be moderate. The ruler shepherds men but cannot do without his awesome power to keep them in order.¹²⁶

In the original contexts these statements are not elaborated on, and there is nothing unusual about the statements themselves. However, two points seem clear even in these fragments: first, the first and fourth quotations seem to imply a definite distinction between the human and Heavenly spheres of operation, an idea that is at the centre of much of the *T'ien lun*'s argument; secondly, the second quotation expresses the idea that Heaven may be observed but not made into an object of superstitions; the exact meaning of the term "heaven", however, is not clear from the context, and it may refer to either the sky as an area where portents are frequently observed or it may even mean nature as a whole; lastly, there is the concept of "Heaven's numbers" in the third citation; this particular passage tells us little about what he makes of this, although it would seem that Liu is referring to the dimensions and motions of Heaven in much the same way as the second section of the *T'ien lun*. Moreover, the concept of cycles and numbers was extremely important to Liu's intellectual tendencies during the period of exile and afterwards. The origin of Liu Yü-hsi's concepts of the numbers and cycles which are part of nature as a whole and, indeed, of all things having a form seems very definitely linked to his interests in divination and the *I Ching*. Part of his concept of numbers and cycles was probably due to his attempts to comfort himself with the thought that the cycle which brought his downfall in 805 would eventually carry him back to power: his

¹²² LPKC, 22.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

fu "On having been in exile for nine years" says, "Extrapolating from the numbers at the culmination [of a cycle, we find] there are none that go beyond nine. So my exile has arrived at its culminating number."¹²⁷ Thus not only the motions of the universe but also those of human destiny are seen in terms of numbers; it is likely from this concept that Liu Yü-hsi eventually evolved the idea of numbers as the ultimate entities within all things with form and thus came to use number in some sense like the neo-Confucian concept of "principle" (*li* 理). Moreover, we can see here another difference between Liu Yü-hsi and Liu Tsung-yüan, for the former's concept of number and cycles implies a kind of order in the universe with definite laws or patterns (*tse* 則) as opposed to the latter's doctrine of fortuity (*ou-jan*); indeed, Liu Tsung-yüan seems to have denied this concept of patterns by name.¹²⁸

One piece dating from the exile period at Lang-chou 朗州 (806-814), the *fu* "Why prognostication?" gives an interesting insight into Liu Tü-hsi's ideas on these cyclical patterns of the universe, obviously linked to the hexagrams of the *I Ching* in his mind; there is also a definite element of self-comforting stoicism as he attempts to make himself accept the cycles which have caused his downfall. The piece is especially interesting for the navigation example, reminiscent of that used in the *T'ien lun*, towards the end of the *fu*.¹²⁹

When I was young I was confused about the theories of effort and destiny (*li ming* 力命).¹³⁰ I was for a long time uncertain and increasingly doubtful. My mind meandered about in ignorance. I was going to consult an oracle. Among the men of Ch'ü 楚 who are ordinary shamans and who love such arts there was an old man who made his living by prognosticating and who came to mind; so I summoned him and inquired (*hsün* 訊).¹³¹ "Alas! There is not one man who is blocked

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 7. Cf. *Chou I chu-su*, II, 37.

¹²⁸ Needham, *Science*, II, 561; *LHTC*, I, 229. This denial of *tse* would be, according to Needham, in agreement with the general tendencies of Chinese thought, which lacks a real concept of natural laws. (Needham, *Science*, II, 518-83). Some of Needham's assumptions have been challenged by Derk Bodde, "Evidence for 'Laws of Nature' in Chinese thought", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, XX (1957), 709-27. Cf. also W. Allyn Rickett, tr., *Kuan Tzu*, I, 123, n. 1. I think that Liu Tsung-yüan's denial of *tse* is very much in keeping with his emphasis on the fortuity of the universe. This is a sharp contrast to the emphasis on "numbers" (*shu* 數) by Liu Yü-hsi, who held doctrines concerning the orderly cycles of the universe. Liu Yü-hsi may well have been associated with a much more significant trend in Chinese thought because of his emphasis on this mathematical dimension of the universe.

¹²⁹ LPKC, 7; LMTWC, 77.

¹³⁰ Cf. Yang Po-chün 楊伯嘯 ed., *Lieh-tzu chi-shih* 列子集釋, (Hongkong, 1965), 120-35 (ch. 6); trans.: A. C. Graham, tr., *The Book of Lieh-tzu* (London, 1960), 118-34, where the mechanistic nature of the universe is discussed. *Li-ming* is the title of the chapter.

¹³¹ This follows LMTWC, 77; LPKC, 7, has *chu* 祝.

but sometimes can get through: thus for a long time I have been increasingly unsuccessful. There is not one man who is ill but sometimes gets a respite: thus for a long time I flourished. I have heard that man has correspondences to (*hsiao* 宵)¹³² the five elements. Their movement and rest have patterns (*tse* 則). The four seasons go around continually, changing when they come to their culmination (*chi* 激). If it is a drought of one year, then the people ready their boats; if it is a three-month heat-wave, then the people ready their fur coats, for at their culmination [the seasons] must reverse. [It is as inevitable] as a tally fitting together. My head is round and my feet are square. My belly is yin, and my back is yang.¹³³ What forms (*hsing-hsiang* 形象) have these correspondences and yet do not follow the norm in their transformations? The *Classic*¹³⁴ says, 'When *Pao* 剝 comes to its culmination then, *Pi* 賁 [arises]: who has remained in *Pi* and yet never experienced *Pao*? When *P'i* 否 comes to its culmination, then one receives *T'ai* 泰: who has remained in *P'i* and yet never experienced *T'ai*? Why are the crane's [long legs] not shortened? Why are the wild duck's [short legs] not supplemented?¹³⁵ Why is the *K'uei* 夔 punished by limping along on one foot? Why is the millipede rewarded by being held up [by its thousand legs]?¹³⁶ How many! How confused! They are unrestrained: they rush about in opposing paths. They seem to give, yet seem to seize; they seem to be credible, yet seem to be fraudulent. Who controls them all?¹³⁷ This I enquire of your tortoise.'

The diviner said, "You summoned me about something coarse, yet you ask me about something subtle. There are right and wrong applicable to the world and there are right and wrong applicable to individuals (*jen-jen* 人人).¹³⁸ What is praiseworthy (*mei* 美) in the

former, is ludicrous in the other.¹³⁹ One was completed long ago, the other was lost [only] today. You, sir, ask whence derives the control of the seasons. The seasons! The Seasons! Once they go they cannot be called back; once they come, they cannot be escaped. Who casts [them] away and who holds [them] without any effort. The poison bristles of a boar's snout,¹⁴⁰ the lowly fuzz on a chicken's head, each in its season heads its own sphere. With the art of butchering dragons¹⁴¹ it is not that one would say, 'It is not extraordinary'; [rather] there is no occasion to use it: it is not as worthwhile as judging pigs by pressing with one's foot (*lü-hsi* 履豨).¹⁴² With the work of making grave-images,¹⁴³ it is not that one would say, 'It is valuable' [rather] there are occasions to use it: it is more prized than planing wood for wheels.¹⁴⁴ With bridled head and tethered hooves, an extraordinary horse¹⁴⁵ cannot gallop half a pace even without any obstacles [any more than] a lame tortoise could go a thousand *li*. For those who cross a river together, what sort of occasion [*shih* 時] it is depends on the wind. Fortunate the ones who follow it downstream; unfortunate the ones who go against the current. For things planted together in the fields, the [growing] season depends on the moisture. Thus the long growing grain can yield a profit, the short-term grain can fail.¹⁴⁶ Therefore, I say: Is it right? Is it wrong? The controlling force is the season! Truly good and evil are produced together: how can one tell what is proper. Since this is the case, gain is not what I admire; loss is not what I am ashamed of.¹⁴⁷ How can one predict their departure?¹⁴⁸ How can one anticipate

¹³⁹ *Chuang Tzu yin-te*, p. 18, l. 74; Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 87.

¹⁴⁰ This passage is particularly difficult, and there may be an allusion which I have missed. Moreover, *LPKC*, 7, has *shih hui chih tu chin* 豨之毒莖, *LMTWC*, 77, has *chin-hui chih tu ch'in* 豨 (= 豨?) 之毒莖. *Chin-hui* would appear to refer to poisonous plants (*LHTC*, I, 334). I have followed *LPKC*, 7. Tentatively, I would suggest that the meaning of the sentence as a whole is that even noxious things can have their proper use and place in nature.

¹⁴¹ *Chuang Tzu yin-te*, p. 89, l. 18; Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 355-6. This art, while costly to learn, obviously has no practical value.

¹⁴² *Chuang Tzu yin-te*, p. 59, l. 46; Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 241. A contrast to the previous reference; judging pigs in this manner requires one to press the lowest parts of the animal to ascertain its true worth, but the skill is, at least, useful.

¹⁴³ Cf. Legge, *Classics*, II, 133-4, where Mencius cites grave images with adverse comment. This again is a common art, though, if the allusion to Mencius was intended, not without some stigma attached. Of course, it might also refer to the cheapness of the images made, as well as their essential uselessness in contrast to the wheels in the next note.

¹⁴⁴ *Chuang Tzu yin-te*, p. 36, l. 69; Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 152. According to the passage apparently alluded to here, this art required a certain indescribable skill.

¹⁴⁵ *Chuang Tzu yin-te*, p. 43, l. 36; Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 180. The horse referred to was supposed to travel a thousand *li* in one day.

¹⁴⁶ *Chou Li*, *SPTK* ed., 33-4; Biot, *Tcheou-li*, I, 148.

¹⁴⁷ *Chuang Tzu yin-te*, p. 42, l. 17; Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 177.

¹⁴⁸ Following *LPKC*, 7, *ch'ü* 去 as apposed *LMTWC*, 77. 去.

¹³² Following *LPKC*, 7; *LMTWC*, 77, has *hsiao* 宵.

¹³³ This seems to be a reference to man as microcosm. Cf. Forke, *Lun Heng*, II, 109; *Lun Heng chiao-shih*, II, 621.

¹³⁴ Although the text quoted does not correspond to the *I Ching* as we now have it that would seem to be the only work meant here unless it is Yang Hsiung's 楊雄 *T'ai-hsüan Ching* 太玄經 (Classic of the Great Mystery). According to the tables in Needham, *Science*, II, 315-16, *Pao* (*Po*) represents disaggregation or dispersion, while *Pi* represents ornament or pattern; *P'i* represents stagnation or retrogression as opposed to *T'ai*, which represents upward progress. Clearly the two sets, especially the latter, are opposites. Note that in both cases Liu emphasizes that good follows bad; this would tend to indicate an attempt by him to comfort himself on his misfortunes.

¹³⁵ *Chuang Tzu yin-te*, p. 21, l. 9; Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 99-100. These are both cases of things which are best left alone lest they be harmed by unnatural tampering.

¹³⁶ *Chuang Tzu yin-te*, p. 44, l. 53; Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 183. Liu seems to be denying that there is any retribution in things; each being's condition is just what it is without the need for application of moral values.

¹³⁷ *Chuang Tzu yin-te*, p. 36, l. 1; Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 154.

¹³⁸ *LMTWC*, 77, has *jen jen* 仁人, which also might fit here, especially if one remembers Liu's concern with the morality of man as opposed to the amorality of the universe (Heaven).

their arrival? Why not just tread the norm and wait for them? Why prognosticate?"

His words finished, he picked up his tortoise and arose [to go]. I withdrew to compose the *fu* 賦 "Why prognosticate?" Thereupon, my idea to tread the Way was unified and my will to await the seasons [and whatever they brought] was affirmed. Within I saw a host of doubts break up like [melting] ice.

Although the figure of the shaman in this *fu* may be conventional, it is worth noting that one of Liu's biographies records that, while at Lang-chou, he often associated with the shamans of the native non-Han populations, even to the point of attending their ceremonies and composing lyrics for their tunes.¹⁴⁹ Numbers are not specifically mentioned in this piece, of course, but it is evident, at least, that Liu Yü-hsi was thinking in terms of a vast and amoral cycle, connected with the hexagrams of the *I Ching* and parallel to the more obvious cycles of nature. The term *shih* 時 translated "occasion" or "season" indicates not only the seasons affecting man, but also the point of the cycle at which something occurs. Thus it is one's position on these ever-moving cycles that determines how one will fare. Moreover, Liu emphasizes the relativity of all values in the light of this doctrine: depending on the cycle's time or position, the results of all endeavours vary considerably. In some ways this would seem to be similar to the relativity of man's relationship to Heaven, as seen in the *T'ien lun*'s second section: each one has the advantage in differing circumstances, so that at one point on a journey we can see nature's amoral dominance and at others man's moral order in the pre-eminent position.

Probably Liu Yü-hsi's interest in divination was closely connected with his studies of the *I Ching* with Tung T'ing 董挺 (d. 812) at Lang-chou about 811.¹⁵⁰ It was at this time that Liu, basing himself on Tung's theories, wrote what he claimed was a new exposition of the *I Ching* quite different from that found in the orthodox commentary (*Chou I Cheng-i* compiled in 640 by K'ung Ting-ta 孔穎達 (574-648)). Interestingly enough, Liu Tsung-yüan became interested enough in the project to write a refutation of Liu Yü-hsi's claim to originality.¹⁵¹ Moreover, Liu Yü-hsi used as an authority for his theory a passage in the *Kuo yü* which had been refuted by

¹⁴⁹ *CTS*, 160.7a. Cf. Arthur Waley, *The Life and Times of Po Chü-i* (London, 1951), 167. As Waley notes, this was partly due to the desire to spread Chinese culture among these "barbarians". Cf. Hisayuki Miyakawa, "The Confucianization of South China", in A. F. Wright, ed., *The Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford, 1960), 40. But I feel that Liu, while bringing Confucian culture to these people, may himself have fallen under their influence in matters such as divination.

¹⁵⁰ Liu had already been engaged in this study with Tung and Ku T'uan 顧象 since 806, but apparently many of his works on the subject date from about 811. See Pien, *Nien-p'u*, 51, 58, 59; *LPKC*, 55-9, 151-2, 261-2.

¹⁵¹ *LHTC*, II, 501-3.

Liu Tsung-yüan in the *Fei Kuo yü*.¹⁵² This may indicate that Liu Yü-hsi was a good deal more tolerant of phenomenalism as an intellectual tradition than was his friend. Although in expounding his theory on the *I Ching* Liu Yü-hsi did not discuss *per se* the theory of numbers behind all phenomena or of numbers as the ultimate principle of form, it is fairly obvious that numerology, as expressed in the *I Ching*, is part of his hypothesis. Moreover, the derivation of this theory which he claims is as follows: "Formerly Master Tung [T'ing] said he based it on [the teachings of] Pi Chung-ho 畢中和, who based it on those of his teacher, and his teacher's learning was based on that of I-hsing."¹⁵³ I-hsing 一行 (683-727), a Buddhist monk, was the greatest mathematician, astronomer, and diviner of his time; although most of his works have perished, his reputation in all these fields remained widespread for centuries. It is of interest that Liu Yü-hsi in expounding his *I Ching* cites a passage from I-hsing's *Ta-yen lun* 大衍論 ("On Indeterminate Analysis"), and that the type of equation treated in that treatise not only had significance for mathematics but also divination.¹⁵⁴ Perhaps the clearest connexion between the development of Liu Yü-hsi's thought and the technique of divination deriving from I-hsing is seen in a poem and preface addressed "To the Venerable Wei Liang 惟良" some five years after Liu Tsung-yüan's death; despite the late date, it is clearly proof of the direction in which Liu Yü-hsi's interests lay:

Those who observe Heaven by its outward appearance say, "It is like Ch'ien 乾 and strong; it is vast and high."¹⁵⁵ Those who look up to Heaven in accordance with its numerical value (*shu* 數) say, "Those used are forty-nine."¹⁵⁶ Heaven, in fact, because it has form (*hsing* 形) cannot escape from its numerical value. [The sages] established the images (*li-hsiang* 立象)¹⁵⁷ in order to arrange the divining stalks, and having completed them, they bequeathed them. When the ancients said, "The spirit conjoins with the creative force."¹⁵⁸ it is no empty saying.

The Yellow Emperor [a Sage emperor of high antiquity] received the Mandate of Heaven; his ministers were all sages; therefore, he succeeded. It is the T'ang who have succeeded to Heaven's [Mandate],

¹⁵² *LPKC*, 59; *LHTC*, II, 774; *Kuo yü*, 10.11a-12a.

¹⁵³ *LPKC*, 56; *LMTWC*, 87.

¹⁵⁴ Needham, *Science*, III (Cambridge, 1959), 119-20 (n. j).

¹⁵⁵ The translation is based on a conflation of the texts of *LMTWC*, 54, with *LPKC*, 250 to read *ch'ien jan erh chien shan-yu jan erh kao* 乾然而健單于然而高, which is the reading of the latter source except for the first *erh*.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. above, n. 154. *Chou I chu-su* 11.24b. As Needham shows, this sort of expression refers not only to the 49 divining stalks out of a total of 50, but also refers to Indeterminate Analysis in mathematics.

¹⁵⁷ *Chou I chu-su*, 11.37a, which gives a different reason for the setting up of the "images", namely, to complete the sage's intent (*chin-i* 盡意); here we see Liu's interest concentrating on divination.

¹⁵⁸ I have not been able to identify this quotation.

for their virtue is like that of the Yellow Emperor. They had a minister outside of the court, I-hsing 一行: was he, too, a sage? He compiled the calendar and studied the elements (*yüan* 元).^{158a} When his writings were complete, he passed into the beyond. At present a man of Tan-t'u [in modern Kiangsu], Wei-liang, is living and is able to understand [the writings of I-hsing]. It is not that he seeks it from outside, rather by means of the divining stalks for Ch'ien 乾 and K'un 坤, he fits in with the numbers of ten whole yearly cycles.¹⁵⁹ He concentrates his mind on making his calculations; above he responds to the orbits of the heavenly bodies. He observes the boundless vastness of the Dark¹⁶⁰ and Yellow [Heaven and Earth]; limitless, they possess a constant norm. He has no understanding of the mechanism [of Heaven and Earth] and his knowledge is fuzzy (?); he only depends on meeting with the spirit (*shen*). The numbers arise [again] on returning to the first nine.¹⁶¹ Sounds are produced from the *kung* 宮 note of the *huang-chung* 黃鍾 [pitch-pipe].¹⁶²

He practices subtleties and works from the abstruse, his words and the transformations [of Heaven and Earth] are in accord. Now when the numerical values of Heaven and Earth come to their culmination, they embody change, and, in changing, there is nothing through which they do not pass. Thus the rushing of spirits and the frightfulness of ghosts are not enough to shake him [for he understands them to be part of the passing current of change].

Wei-liang obtained I-hsing's teachings: therefore, he, too, was honoured as a minister outside the court. He mistakenly took me for a brilliant person among the worldly, and he came especially to pay me a visit. From the very start our theories were in harmony and we came to the point where words were no longer necessary.¹⁶³ Our words stopped

^{158a} Both versions consulted give *yüan*, although it is just possible that it should read *hsüan* 玄; *yüan* may refer either to the Great Origin of the universe or to something to do with the calendar; *hsüan* might mean the heavens; however, I believe that it refers to the elements which determine a person's fate in terms of the cyclical characters of his birth year. See Chao, "Fate-calculation", 299.

¹⁵⁹ I presume he is referring to a correlation between the calendar and *I Ching* hexagrams for divining; we have, for example, already seen this idea in one of Liu's *fu* (above, n. 127), which emphasizes nine as the number of change, and this may be linked to the number nine in the *I Ching*, where it is associated with the ch'ien 乾 hexagram (an image of Heaven). *Chou I chu-su*, I, 3a ff.

¹⁶⁰ Reading *hsüan* 玄 from *LMTWC*, 54, in place of *yuan* 元 in *LPKC*, 250.

¹⁶¹ See above, n. 159.

¹⁶² See S. Couvreur, *Li Ki* (2nd ed. Ho Kien Fu, 1913), I, 371. I am not sure what its significance here is, but it is interesting to note that it comes from the *Yueh-ling* 月令 or "Monthly Commands" in the *Li Chi* 禮記 or "Record of Rites", an almanack of correspondences in government, which was attacked by Liu Tsung-yuan.

¹⁶³ The original, *chin-yen* 盡言 may also mean that they went beyond the realm where words could express anything. This would imply in either case that Liu received some great truth from Wei-liang that certainly went beyond mere divination.

at the principles (*li* 理) which are profound. I carried on further by sighing: "How close is my master [to the sages]. Truly I believe the spirit gave it to him, yet I cannot plumb the means whereby the spirit imparted it. I believe that his method is comprehensive yet I cannot understand how the method works (?)"¹⁶⁴ Next to what I heard [from Wei-liang], what I once knew was like the knowledge of a frog in a well or an animalcule in vinegar.¹⁶⁵ In the fourth year of Ch'ang-ch'ing on the *chia-tzu* day of the eleventh month (13 December, 824), we talked far into the night and I then composed this poem as a memento of the occasion:

The lofty study is sprinkled by cold water;
This evening the monk from the mountains arrived.
The dark female has no gate key;¹⁶⁶
The precious book dispenses with writing.
Lamplight and incense fill the room.
When the moon is at its zenith, frost forms on the ground.
We spoke until the time came when we could say no more,
While worldly men all lay fast asleep.¹⁶⁷

There are a number of important points to note about this work: first of all, Liu Yü-hsi starts by stating exactly the same theory about the nature of Heaven as he did in the *T'ien lun*: since Heaven has form, it must have inherent dimensions and movements, which are expressed as numbers or numerical values; these constitute the ultimate principle which governs the nature of things of themselves and their interactions. A second point to note is that Liu Yü-hsi specifically states that the images of the hexagrams were established by the Sages of antiquity in connection with divination and not, as the *Appendices* to the *I Ching* state, to complete the Sages' meaning. Moreover, he seems to feel that the external appearance of Heaven, including the hexagrams themselves, is not as important as the internal aspect, expressed in numerical terms. The cycle is directly and openly connected with numerology, and one of the main purposes of this is for divination. At the same time, it would seem that the interview between this Buddhist monk and Liu had an almost religious aspect to it; towards the end of the piece he writes as if he had received some sort of religious experience, a point where words either were no longer necessary or were useless in describing the teachings, which ultimately derived again from the great master I-hsing a

¹⁶⁴ *LMTWC*, 54, gives *chien* 淺 and *LPKC*, 250, has *hieh* 洩 from which I have obtained the tentative translation given.

¹⁶⁵ See *Chuang Tzu yin-te*, p. 45, l. 69, p. 56, l. 38; Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 186, 227. Both are obviously similes for a limited scope of knowledge.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Lao-tzu 老子 (ch. 6). The "precious book" of the next line may refer to the *Lao-tzu* or the *I Ching*, especially the latter which in the hexagrams transcends writing in the ordinary sense.

¹⁶⁷ *LPKC*, 249-50; *LMTWC*, 54.

century before. Although Liu Yü-hsi obviously had developed his theory of numbers long before this meeting, Wei-liang does seem to have conveyed some new and apparently esoteric teachings on mathematical divination. There can be no doubt that for Liu numbers were the determining principle of all forms: they governed the relationship between things, and ultimately, as the piece just quoted shows, the cycle of the universe, both on a cosmic scale and on the level of individual fate.

It is rather difficult to say exactly how Liu Yü-hsi thought that numbers interacted to cause situations. At times, numbers seem to be the inherent dimensions of things and at other times they are "between them" (*ts'un hu ch'i chien 存乎其間*), a phrase which occurs in Chuang-tzu in relation to *shu* 數, except that there the usual gloss identifies it with *shu* 術, which one translator has rendered by "knack".¹⁶⁸ The two uses of *shu* may not, however, be totally at variance. The context of story in *Chuang-tzu* describes a wheelwright who denigrates books and contrasts his own art which cannot be transmitted in words and which he himself cannot express. It is simply a certain relationship that exists in the work he does. It is possible that when Liu uses *shu* as "number" with this same phrase lifted from the *Chuang-tzu*, he is trying to express a similar idea about the subtle numerical relationship between things. It is even possible that the numbers were regarded by Liu as having geometrical shapes which somehow fit together and determine the conditions between objects. Certainly this rather Pythagorean concept of numbers was not unknown to the Chinese.¹⁶⁹

In the *T'ien lun* Liu makes it quite clear that all things with form are subject to the limitations of their "numbers"; moreover, he insists that, in effect, all things have form and that what is described as formless is really merely matter with subtle form. He thus asserts what amounts to a doctrine of universal existence (*yu* 有) and effectively denies a place for a true void in his cosmology. Interestingly enough, the idea may have carried over into one of his occasional Buddhist writings: "How can one demonstrate enlightenment if one does not depend on *lakṣaṇas* [*hsiang* 相, a distinctive mark]? How can one realize non-being (*wu* 無) if one does not proceed from being (*yu*)?"¹⁷⁰ Although the passage acknowledges non-being, it is rather similar to Liu's belief that what is commonly called "formless" is actually subtle form dependant on things and being. In general, then, for Liu all things are limited by numerical entities, and these somehow fit together to form relationships in which things are able to interact. Liu does not tell us how complex such relationships can get, for he only mentions

relationships between two things at a time, such as a boat and water, but presumably they could become more complex.

On the other hand, Liu makes a somewhat different comment on the relationship between numbers (*shu*) and situations or conditions (*shih* 勢) in his undated piece, *Kuan po* 觀博 ("Observing Gambling"), which describes successively a dice game and a chess game, in both of which the same person loses. The text at the end of the piece is particularly vague, but Liu seems to be speaking of the two games having the same result for the man who lost when he inserts the following remarks as part of his conclusion: "As for the two, how could there have been any numerical relationship (*shu*) between them? The situations (*shih*) in which they were positioned were different and that is all."¹⁷¹ This is directly contradictory to the theory found in the second part of the *T'ien lun* where it is said that numbers or numerical relationships must exist between things before situations can be formed between them. Unfortunately, we do not have enough context in this short description of gaming to ascertain whether Liu was simply expressing an exception or limitation to what otherwise seems to have been a major cosmological concept in his thought or whether he had at the time this piece was written changed his opinions on the subject.

However Liu Yü-hsi may have shifted his opinions over the years, it is fairly clear that his *T'ien lun* was closely connected with the theory above. In his exposition of the theory of different spheres for Heaven and man, he starts out by noting that everything that is limited by form (and hence by numbers) has limits on what it can do; as a result, Heaven and man have distinct sets of abilities and as a result must act in separate spheres even if toward the same object: Heaven is limited to certain actions, movement, and creative and destructive activity, so that its mode of existence and action is that of amoral power; by contrast, man, though produced by Heaven's workings, is a distinctively moral and intelligent being, able to make use of the advantages of his environment for his own higher ends. Heaven and man thus to some extent come into conflict with each other, though we must be careful not to read Western concepts of struggling against nature into Liu's writings. He holds that the natural order and the human order have the advantage in different circumstances. Indeed, it is probable that he is presenting this theory as a more sophisticated alternative to Han Yü's theory of what seems to be actual enmity between Heaven and man.

It is evident from what has been said already that the *T'ien lun* seems to have affinities with the tradition of the two spheres that we have seen already in writers such as Chung-ch'ang T'ung;¹⁷² however, it is also clear

¹⁶⁸ Liu Wen-tien 劉文典, ed., *Chuang-tzu pu-cheng* 莊子補正 (*Chuang-tzu* Supplemented and Corrected), (Shanghai, 1947), B.17a-b; Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 153.

¹⁶⁹ Needham, *Science*, II, 268-73, III, 54-61.

¹⁷⁰ LPKC, 36. Cf. Hou, *T'ung-shih*, 374.

¹⁷¹ LPKC, 157-8; LMTWC, 150.

¹⁷² Hou, *Liu Hsuan-chi*, 6.

that Liu Yü-hsi is going beyond the more usual expressions of this tradition by positing, first, a numerological theory of form governing the whole universe and its processes, and, second, the theory that Heaven and man have the advantage over each other in their respective spheres. We have already tried to trace some of Liu's ideas on form and numerical relationships to his interest in divination and specifically to the tradition emanating from the school of I-hsing, with which Liu came into contact in both 811 and 824; unfortunately, when we attempt to trace Liu's ideas on Heaven and man being predominant in their respective spheres, we have little contemporary material to rely on. The more conservative type of scepticism involving this idea of separate realms of action for Heaven and man was, of course, quite widespread at this period, but Liu's particular concept of how the two spheres were related seems to be almost unique to him. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that two of Liu's friends, Po Chü-i 白居易 (772-846) and Yüan Chen 元稹 (779-831), both wrote pieces which seem to bear some resemblance to ideas on the subject. In the case of Yüan Chen's *yüeh-fu* 樂府 on the subject, I have not ascertained the date, so that it is possible that this piece was not, in fact, influential in shaping Liu's thought; indeed, it may have been influenced by Liu, and in any case, the resemblance is less striking than in the case of Po's essay.

Yüan's poem entitled "The Way of Man is the Lesser" (*Jen tao tuan* 人道短) deals basically with the old controversy about whether the humanistic concerns or "Heavenly" concerns were more important, particularly, of course, with reference to good government. The last half, however, contains statements that seem vaguely reminiscent of some of Liu Yü-hsi's ideas in the *T'ien lun*. Yüan says, for example, that "Heaven can act as Heaven, man is fated to be man, so that the Way has no limit."¹⁷³ This is reminiscent of Liu's teaching that Heaven and man are limited by their respective abilities and that all things, being dominant in their respective spheres, function in them so that the natural order is limitless. Yüan Chen further contrasts the blind creativity of Heaven with the very specific selectivity of human activity. This again would seem to be akin to Liu's constant reiteration of the belief that man is a moral and purposeful creature, operating in the ethical sphere, while Heaven is an amoral power operating in the sphere of creation and destruction. Admittedly, the correspondences between the two works are not particularly specific, but I feel that Liu's work and Yüan's *yüeh-fu* may well demonstrate some sort of interchange of ideas on the subject between the two men.

In the case of Po Chü-i's essay, on the other hand, there is a more specific resemblance in language; moreover, since the latest date for Po's

¹⁷³ Yüan-shih *Ch'ang-ch'ing chi* 元氏長慶集, SPTK ed., 85; Hou, *Liu huan-chi*, 136.

essay, which he wrote as practice for a Palace Examination, is 806,¹⁷⁴ it is quite possible that it influenced Liu in writing his discussion of the subject. The essay was written as an answer to the question of whether disasters are due to human actions (more specifically, the ruler's deeds) or whether, in fact, they are due to the "fixed numbers (or schedules) of the yin and yang" (*yin-yang ting shu* 陰陽定數);¹⁷⁵ both views, of course, could be supported by citing texts from the classical tradition. Po here opts for a compromise view by recognizing that lesser disasters are brought about by human conduct, whereas really large-scale calamities are the products of these fixed schedules in nature. Only the former can be really prevented by man. Of the latter type Po says:

They are not due to the ruler's failing in the Way, but are due to the fixed numbers (or schedules) of the yin and yang. This is what your servant would call a disaster which cannot be removed because it comes from the cycle (*yün* 運). If that is so, then the Sage cannot remove the disaster but he can resist the disaster. He cannot go against the seasons, but he can make use of the seasons. The future depends on the constancy of his storing and collecting and on the foresight of his benevolence and favour. If he prepares for them [disasters] by storing up provisions, then even in a terrible famine the people will have no hungry looks. If he secures them by his kindness and trustworthiness, then even with hardships to worry about, the people will feel no disaffection. As for the provisions stored, they will be collected in abundant years and disbursed in lean years. As for kindness and trustworthiness, they will be practised in quiet days and employed in dangerous times. If it is like this, then, even though the numbers (or schedules) of yin and yang cannot be changed, the disasters of flood and drought will not be able to do any harm. Therefore, when it is said, "Man's strength has the advantage over Heaven", it refers to this.¹⁷⁶

The last phrase, which exactly parallels Liu's thought in the *T'ien lun* is, of course, found in older texts along with analogous phrases,¹⁷⁷ so that it is

¹⁷⁴ Eugene Feifel tr., *Po Chü-i as a Censor* (The Hague, 1961), 22. Professor Twitchett suggests that these essays are actually, in part, several years earlier.

¹⁷⁵ *Po-shih Ch'ang-ch'ing chi* 白氏長慶集, SPTK ed., 242.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 242-3.

¹⁷⁷ E.g., *Shih chi*, VII, 2176: "I have heard that the mass of people can have the advantage over Heaven; but what Heaven determines can likewise have the advantage over people."; *K'ang-tsang-tzu* 亢倉子 (*Hu-pei hsien-cheng i-shu*, 72; Kuang-chou, preface, 1923), 10a: "K'ang-tsang-tzu said, 'Flood and drought come from Heaven; order (*li* 理) and disorder come from man. If human affairs are harmonious and well-ordered, then, even if there are flood and drought, they can do no harm. [The sagely rulers] Yao and T'ang were thus. Therefore . . . man's strength has the advantage over Heaven; if human affairs fall into disorder, then, even though there be no floods or drought, there will be more and more collapse day by day.'" This last quotation may well have been the inspiration of Liu's major theses; the *K'ang-t'sang-tzu* had been composed by Wang Shih-yüan 王士元 in the mid-eighth century.

possible that Liu actually derived directly from older sources, but I think that it is entirely possible that this essay by Po chü-i was the contributing text, especially in the light of his concern with the idea of numbers or schedules (*shu*). On the other hand, Liu Yü-hsi would probably not have agreed with the phenomenalism which Po had to accept in order to answer the question, which, it will be remembered, was cast in the style of those used in the state examinations. Such limitations would have forced Po to keep within more traditionally acceptable lines of thought than Liu, who was writing the *T'ien lun* for his friend Liu Tsung-yüan.

Though it cannot be dated exactly, there is no doubt that the *T'ien lun* was a product of the exile period, quite possibly dating from Liu Yü-hsi's time in Lang-chou 朗州 (806-814).¹⁷⁸

Quite clearly neither theory put forward in the *T'ien shuo* satisfied Liu Yü-hsi and he used the same expression "on the spur of the moment" (*chi* 激) to describe Liu Tsung-yüan's as the latter had used of Han Yü's theory; incidentally, its use by both men would tend to indicate that the whole series was written in some haste or excitement, such as might have occurred to both Liu's after the collapse of their faction in 805. The two theories which he describes at the beginning of the *T'ien lun* represent not only the traditional belief in retribution and punishments and good fortune sent from Heaven in response to human action and the scepticism which denied or doubted this belief, but also the views put forth in the *T'ien shuo*. Although the traditional belief in retribution is much more clearly summed up by Liu Yü-hsi than it is by Han Yü, who is more concerned with the supposed hostility between Heaven and man than with the theories put forth in Han and pre-Ch'in literature, nevertheless, the first theory is probably intended as a summary of the same type of thought as is found in Han Yü's exposition even if it differs from the theory in particulars.

On the other hand, the theory of complete fortuity presented by Liu Tsung-yüan seems almost as unpalatable for him as was Han Yü's concept. Whereas he characterizes the retribution theory as "obvious" (*chao-chao* 昭昭) implying thereby its shallowness, he condemns the sceptics for having fallen into "obscurantism" (*ming-ming* 冥冥). If the former theory was rather naive in its acceptance of the traditional theories, the latter made a clean sweep without bothering to define the nature and operation of the relationship between Heaven and man. It is this relationship that Liu Yü-hsi sets out to explain, not only on the level of the realities of nature and the human condition, but also on the level of man's beliefs seen in terms of society. Combining the tradition of the spheres of Heaven and man with his theory about the numerical aspect of the universe and about Heaven as seen in different political situations, he succeeds in creating one of the most sophisticated treatises on the subject of any age in Chinese history.

¹⁷⁸ Pien, *Nien-p'u*, 69-70; Pulleyblank, "Neo-Confucianism", 333, n. 152.

Liu Yü-hsi commences his argument with the premise that all things having form are subject to certain limitations in their abilities; although he does not mention the theory of numerical dimensions and relationships until the second part of the treatise, it is obvious that he is basing his theory on the idea of the inherent limitations of form. Such limitations in abilities naturally apply to Heaven and man as well as other things, and they compel the two to remain effectively within their respective spheres. Basically, this separation is not particularly on the traditional lines that Heaven and man are physically separate: such a concept, of course, had been due to the ambiguity of the word "Heaven", which we have seen in its early evolution. Heaven, while referring to nature as a whole (Heaven and Earth), could easily be used in its older sense of the sky or the god or providential force in the sky;¹⁷⁹ certainly the two concepts were not entirely separate, and the *T'ien lun* itself contains examples of this ambiguity. Since, however, Heaven, in general, was for Liu Yü-hsi a term for nature, his separation of Heaven and man was conceived of in terms of morality and purposeful action. Heaven, he believes, is an amoral process, sometimes creative, sometimes destructive, while man, by contrast, is a pre-eminently moral being, capable of purposeful action. Thus Heaven and man are involved with various situations in different ways: Heaven, for example, is involved with fire only as a destructive agent, whereas man uses it for useful and beneficial purposes.¹⁸⁰ Clearly the activity is not different in its essentials, but rather in the different levels of activity by Heaven and man.

Having set out this distinction between Heaven and man, Liu proceeds to describe in terms of political conditions the evolution of superstitious beliefs in Heaven. It is noteworthy that he does so in terms of a legalist type of State; it is quite probable that his interest in legalism derives from Tu Yu, under whom, it will be remembered, he served at the very beginning of the ninth century. Of course, in this respect he is close to Liu Tsung-yüan's political position.¹⁸¹ The decline of the ideal legalist type of State is, for Liu Yü-hsi, the cause of the rise of superstitious concepts of Heaven: man, in search of justice, can find this only in the State with strictly enforced laws, and, as these laws are relaxed, injustices force them to look to Heaven as the obvious source for these injustices. It is difficult to say what Liu Yü-hsi feels is the real meaning of Heaven in this case; possibly he thinks that men come to believe Heaven is somewhat hostile to them (as seems to be the case in Han Yü's theory) or perhaps he supposes them to hold that Heaven is simply anything beyond human control. The situation is one in

¹⁷⁹ Liu had to dissociate his concept of Heaven from astronomical theories in Part Three of the *T'ien lun*, yet in Part Two he had subtly shifted its meaning to the physical sky to prove his point about Heaven's being limited by numbers.

¹⁸⁰ See below, p. 75.

¹⁸¹ See above, p. 45.

which, once again, the ambiguity of the term "Heaven" causes some difficulties. Nevertheless, it is fairly clear that, in Liu's ideal State, interest in Heaven would be of interest in terms of the calendar and also have slight and rather formalized religious overtones: Heaven in such a State would be of concern only in the traditional State rituals, which, I suspect, he treats in a rationalistic way reminiscent of Hsün-tzu's ideas.¹⁸² It is only in a society where laws are not stringently enforced that Heaven, however it is interpreted, would come to have any real meaning to people in ordinary life. Once the whole legal system collapses, moreover, man is reduced to not only believing in Heaven as a real force in human affairs, but Heaven, in fact, seems to take on that role, for, according to Liu, man's ability to act as a moral being is lost when the laws are not enforced at all. The prevalence of disorder in such cases makes men living in such a State incapable of understanding their true role in the world. However, though Heaven is in some sense predominant here, in that morality has been lost and brute force comes to the fore, Liu insists that in the final analysis Heaven is not purposeful in its actions even when it predominates over man.

The second part of the *T'ien lun* is devoted to two examples drawn from travelling, of which the second leads Liu to an exposition of his theory of numerical dimensions and relationships in the realm of form. Both these examples may reflect Liu's unsettled life and the second one, involving boats, is indicative of his fascination with travel by water.¹⁸³ The first example simply notes that travel in the wilds is largely concerned with Heaven, that is, the sphere of mere force, whereas in the cities, where human mores predominate, ethical considerations come first. In the course of this Liu refers to K'uang and Sung, two States where Confucius suffers hardships on his travels, apparently in an attempt to answer the question of supposed injustice done to sages such as Confucius and Yen Hui noted in the first part of the *T'ien lun*: Liu's answer seems to be that it just so happened that the States in question were rather like the lawless State mentioned before, where Heaven (the amoral order of the universe) had become dominant and force prevailed over human morals. On the other hand, Liu does point out other instances where moral action came to prevail even in situations where presumably force might be expected to.

The second example compares travel on small bodies of water where man can control the journey's progress with that on much larger rivers and the sea, on which travel is almost totally at the mercy of natural forces. Here Liu is again dealing with man's understanding of Heaven: although disaster on either type of voyage would be the same, in one case the reasons would

¹⁸² See n. 73.

¹⁸³ D. C. Twitchett, "Merchant, Trade and Government in Late T'ang", *Asia Major* (New Series), XIV (1968), 84.

be comprehensible and under human control whereas in the other case they would be mysterious and would immediately cause people to attempt to refer the matter to some outside controlling force, namely, Heaven. The situation is rather like that in Part 1 of the *T'ien lun* described above, in which the failure of law causes men to look for the causes of injustice in the same outside power. The difference, in this case, seems to be that it is not really due to the failure of human institutions that man's understanding goes awry, but rather the natural conditions under which he is travelling.

In this situation Liu Yü-hsi brings forward his idea of numerical relationships and dimensions to explain how such conditions arise, as opposed to the explanation which would attribute the causes to Heaven as some sort of vague controlling power. Liu first seems to describe numbers (*shu* 數) as the relationship that exists between two things, a relationship that makes possible the actual conditions between them. The original numerical relationship determines what the actual outcome is to be, and there are exact parallels between the numbers and the dependent conditions. Although numbers here are something existing "between" things (*ch'i chien* 其間), it is fairly clear that Liu, in further expounding and defending this concept, regards them as something inherent in form: form, in fact, is that which is measured by numbers. He illustrates his point by examples from astronomy and by using the term Heaven to indicate the sky, he proves his point that Heaven, so far from being a controlling force, is actually subject to the same geometrical conditions as everything else; the argument here, of course, depends on the ambiguity of the term for he can easily shift the meaning from "nature" as a whole to a designation for the heavens alone. He presses his point further by denying that there is, in fact, any truly formless thing which can escape the world of numbers and their resultant conditions. To do so, he identifies the term "formless" (*wu hsing* 無形) with emptiness (*k'ung* 空), which he, in turn, explains as extremely subtle form, so that his ultimate equation is the definition of "formless" as "without constant form" (*wu ch'ang hsing* 無常形). Even seemingly formless or empty things are dependent on things with form in order to be manifest. This seems to be the purpose of the final reference in the second part to vision as dependent on an outside light source.

Liu's theory of numbers, which occupies the entire last half of this second and longest of the three sections, is never as clearly defined as one would hope. It is a theory which is concerned with dimensions which go to make form, but not with the actual quality of matter itself. Moreover, as we have seen, the numbers also assume the qualities of relationships between things, parallel to the actual conditions produced. The dimensions in form were apparently considered to fit together in some way to produce the conditions, but Liu is not very precise about the manner in which this was done. Moreover, Liu's denial of the concept of emptiness is quite interesting

in relation to its implications for Buddhism; as we have seen above.¹⁸⁴ This may be related to similar views he expressed in regard to the realization of non-being in terms of being. Of course, the term "emptiness" as used in the *T'ien lun* does not refer to the specifically Buddhist concept of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), but there was quite possibly a connexion in Liu's thinking between the Buddhist void and the physical emptiness that is alluded to here.

In the last section of the *T'ien lun* Liu first defends himself from the charge that his ideas derive from the various traditional astronomical theories of Heaven. He had, of course, opened himself to this line of attack by using Heaven in its sense of "the sky" in the previous section to demonstrate its connexion with numbers. He obviously does not wish to identify his ideas with such theories, which would see men's separation from Heaven in terms of physical distance. His denial that his *T'ien lun* is derived from that sort of speculation is not explicit, but is implied in his denial that he is a disciple of Tsou Yen, the naturalist of the fourth century B.C. He evidently did not wish to be associated with certain aspects of phenomenalism, although it is clear that his number speculations might give rise to this impression. Interestingly enough, his answer, after denying that he is a disciple of Tsou Yen, follows the same principle of "induction" (*t'ui* 推) that was used by Tsou to prove his own theory of correspondences.¹⁸⁵

To counterbalance his former emphasis on the division between Heaven and man, Liu now tries to show the unity of the universe and even the idea that man and the cosmos parallel one another. At one point his terms are even vaguely reminiscent of Tung Chung-shu's ideas.¹⁸⁶ It must be emphasized, however, that he certainly does not commit himself to the theories of phenomenalism: rather his main point is to show that the essentially amoral processes of the universe throw up a being who with his "wisdom" is capable of shaping and using his environment to his own ends. But when man allows the ordered society he has created to decay, the amoral order becomes dominant and things return to a kind of primitive state, from which, apparently, society will again be reconstructed by man. Liu finishes by citing examples from high antiquity to which he attributes a kind of pure humanism, which had no need to involve Heaven in human affairs; but contrast, the Shang later on eventually collapsed because of their involvement with supramundane matters despite the essential sageliness of the ruler who restored that dynasty in midcourse. In all these cases the situation essentially depends on man's conduct, not on any action by Heaven, which is, after all, incapable of "planning" anything.

In general, there seems to be much in the *T'ien lun* that is reminiscent

¹⁸⁴ See above, p. 55.

¹⁸⁵ Needham, *Science*, II, 233.

¹⁸⁶ Tung Chung-shu 董仲舒, *Ch'un-ch'iu fan-lu* 春秋繁露, *SPTK* ed., 70; Wing-tsit Chan, *Source Book*, 281.

of Hsün-tzu: certainly Liu Yü-hsi's view of Heaven is not very different from Hsün-tzu's except that Liu is much more specific in defining the actual relationship between man and Heaven. Moreover, I feel that Liu's theory that man is a product of amoral nature, who can use his intelligence to moral ends in contradistinction to the amoral physical operations of nature, or else may fall back into the amoral state of brute force, strongly implies an acceptance of Hsün-tzu's view of human nature; Hsün-tzu says that man's anti-social tendencies can be overcome by proper education provided by the sages, and this is probably what Liu means by his reference to man's intelligence¹⁸⁷ as the means whereby he can take advantage of his environment. It is also worth remembering how Hsün-tzu's ideas prepared the ground for the Legalists,¹⁸⁸ whose ideas are quite apparent in the first section of the *T'ien lun*.

The final document in the discussion on Heaven was Liu Tsung-yüan's letter to Liu Yü-hsi giving his criticisms of the *T'ien lun*. This letter has, to some extent, been the object of misinterpretation by Marxist critics, who cite its first sentences as proof that the two men were in accord.¹⁸⁹ Further examination, however, quickly reveals that many of Liu Tsung-yüan's phrases in the first part were more politeness than anything else. Of course, he recognizes the complementary nature of Liu Yü-hsi's arguments to his own, and doubtless the two men were in general agreement as regards the rejection of the Han synthesis, but it is clear that Liu Tsung-yüan was not in agreement with much of his friend's argument. First of all, I strongly suspect that Liu Tsung-yüan did not really understand the *T'ien lun* completely: certainly he himself admits that he puzzled over it for the better part of a week. Moreover, he seems to have missed the point of the travel example at the beginning of the second section: he says that the travellers involved were all men and that the contrast of morality versus physical power has nothing to do with Heaven; obviously, Liu Yü-hsi's point had been to show how the human order cannot always stand up to nature, and that man's effectiveness depends on the conditions around him; thus in the wilds he was often reduced to the amoral level of nature's power struggles. Liu Tsung-yüan is also somewhat confused about what Liu Yü-hsi means by the creative power of Heaven; the *T'ien lun*, as we have seen, tends to deny any kind of external agent such as Heaven in a more traditional sense; however, it also says that Heaven functions in a creative way. Liu Tsung-yüan evidently believed in the spontaneity (*tzu-jan*) of production, and here

¹⁸⁷ Just as Hsün-tzu's sage develops rites and orderly practices to regulate man and keep him from anti-social tendencies, so Liu's is a human being who can regulate human affairs and, to some degree, impose a purposeful order on nature (Heaven). Cf. Watson, *Hsun Tzu*, 126-7, where the importance of the mind is discussed.

¹⁸⁸ Fung, *History*, I, 311.

¹⁸⁹ Hou, *T'ung-shih*, 361, cites this letter, while noting some differences between the two men. But I do not believe he really shows the misunderstandings by Liu Tsung-yüan.

he seems to be criticizing the use of Heaven in the sense of a creative agent. This undoubtedly is partially due to the ambiguity of the term Heaven, which, even in the *T'ien lun* can mean the natural order, the sky, or a vague providence. In this case Liu Tsung-yüan's criticism seems, at least, partially justified.

Liu Tsung-yüan also brings forth the argument that, since Heaven does not plan against man, why should man do this to Heaven? Here he misses the whole point of Liu Yü-hsi's arguments: man must manipulate the natural order to survive, and Liu Tsung-yüan's argument would reduce man's purposeful action to nothing, although I doubt that he really had such a proposition in mind. He simply does not seem to understand what his colleague was trying to say about the relationship between the human and Heavenly spheres. He is on somewhat firmer ground, however, when he notes that Liu Yü-hsi's arguments might seem to make Heaven out to be an evil force, although here again the *T'ien lun* certainly does not mean that. He further takes Liu Yü-hsi to task for dividing Heaven and man into four parts as opposed to his own bipartite division: his point seems to be that Liu Yü-hsi has not fully emphasized the fact that Heaven and man are the causes respectively not only of growth and regulation but also of destruction and disorder. Here, too, his argument seems to show that he has missed the implications of the *T'ien lun*, although he is correct in that the first part of the *T'ien lun* does state creativity and regulation to be the major attributes of Heaven (nature) and man respectively; these statements were balanced implicitly in the rest of the text, but evidently not clearly enough for Liu Tsung-yüan. The rest of Liu Tsung-yüan's letter criticizes Liu Yü-hsi's treatise on the general faultiness of his style and choice of arguments, as well as his supposed misuse of classical citations in the last section. However, interestingly enough, he does praise Liu Yü-hsi's ideas on the real meaning of formlessness. With this the debate ends, as far as the extant texts allow us to see, although I think that a further discussion must have ensued at some point, if only because of the unjustified criticisms that Liu Tsung-yüan made in his letter.

The debate as a whole probably had no widespread consequences; Liu Tsung-yüan's anti-phenomenalism does not have any effect, at least by itself, and his temerity in attacking the *Kuo yü* later brought down much criticism on his head, especially as Neo-Confucian orthodoxy made headway from Sung times onwards. Liu Tsung-yüan had been too bold and direct in many of his criticisms of beliefs which, at least, had to be given lip-service as enshrined in the texts of antiquity; other men, such as Ou-yang Hsiu, were able to remain more clearly within the bounds of orthodoxy in their criticism of phenomenism, if only because those boundaries were more clearly defined by Sung times. Liu Tsung-yüan also probably suffered by his own fame as a litterateur, for it made him a constant object of comparison

with Han Yü, who came to be regarded by the Sung Neo-Confucians as the forerunner of their own movement; although the comparison could be limited to a more or less literary plane, it was almost inevitable that his ideas should come under scrutiny as well as his style, just as he had criticized the *Kuo yü* for its intellectual faults while praising its style.

By contrast, his friend, Liu Yü-hsi, while not quite as famous, probably escaped extreme censure from later generations. This was not only because his style and writings do not seem to have had the influence of Liu Tsung-yüan's, but also because his own thought was probably much more acceptable to orthodox ideas, at least in its expression. We have already noted the general division that can be made in Chinese scepticism in regard to traditional concepts of Heaven between the more conservative "sphere" arguments and the more radical scepticism which denied not only Heaven's relevance to human affairs but also went on to reduce it to the level of a mere spontaneous operation. The two trends, of course, were not completely separate. However, it is noteworthy that Liu Tsung-yüan seems definitely to tend towards the more radical type of criticism, whereas Liu Yü-hsi seems to be the culmination of the older "spheres" tradition, at least in his presentation. Of course, he would have agreed with Liu Tsung-yüan on Heaven's lacking any purposeful action, but his expression of Heaven's relationship to man is cast along more traditional lines, especially in the first part of the *T'ien lun*, where Heaven is seen as basically irrelevant to affairs of government as long as the State runs smoothly. Moreover, the *T'ien lun* is obviously a more fully developed piece of writing than the *T'ien shuo*, which betrays a certain haste and bitterness on the part of its author, who, as I have suggested, was probably feeling the bitterness of exile. Indeed, if one may speculate on psychological states despite the great temporal and cultural differences, I think that Liu Yü-hsi may have ultimately adjusted better to his exile because of his ultimate faith in those numbers, which formed the ultimate principles and unity of the universe, and which would, he supposed, ultimately restore his fortunes. Liu Tsung-yüan, by contrast, saw the universe more in terms of a blind process which crushed men underneath its movements just as he had been crushed in the political upset of 805. Obviously there is a great deal of similarity between their two views, but their approaches to defining man's place in the universe were quite distinct. While Liu Tsung-yüan showed skill in his rationalistic and ethical criticisms of traditional beliefs, his views were perhaps better expressed in his writings on specific texts and practices than in the *T'ien shuo*, which is even more negative than his usual writings on the subject. On the other hand, Liu Yü-hsi in the *T'ien lun* succeeded in synthesizing a fairly sophisticated and more fully developed view of Heaven and man, which was expressed in terms more positive than Liu Tsung-yüan seems to have achieved in many of his writings.

B. TRANSLATIONS

I. Liu Tsung-yüan: The Theory of Heaven¹⁹⁰

Han Yü said to Master Liu, "Do you understand the theory of Heaven? I will expound the theory of Heaven for you. Now there are people who suffer extreme illness and pain, weariness and disgrace, and hunger and cold, and who, on this account, look up and rail at Heaven, saying, 'Those who harm the people prosper. Those who help the people suffer disaster.' Or again they look up and rail at Heaven, saying, 'Why have you caused us to come to this extremity?' All who behave in this way are incapable of understanding Heaven.

"Now when the fruits of trees and plants¹⁹¹ and food and drink decay, vermin (*ch'ung* 蟲) are produced from them; when a person's circulation¹⁹² is disrupted and blocked up, it causes tumours and wens, excrescences and swellings, scrofula, and piles, and vermin are likewise produced from them. When trees decay, woodgrubs are produced in them.¹⁹³ When plants rot, glow-worms fly from them.¹⁹⁴ Are these not cases of generation from decay? Thus when material things (*wu* 物) decay, vermin are produced from them. When the primordial ether (*yüan-ch'i* 元氣)¹⁹⁵ and the yin and yang decay, man is produced from them.

¹⁹⁰ Texts: *LHTC*, I, 285-7; *CSYPTLHSC*, 88. Appended to *T'ien lun*: *LPKC*, 47-8; *LMTWC*, 82-3. Also in Hou, *Liu hsuan-chi*, 51; *WYYH*, 362, 2a-3a; *CTW* 584, 9a-11a.

¹⁹¹ Gentzler, "Biography", [188], translates this phrase *Kuo-lo* 果蔬 as "Fruits and gourds". The term *kuo* is glossed in a note in *LHTC*, I, 285, as fruits (a) growing on trees, (b) bearing seeds, (c) borne on trees, (d) bearing husks. The *lo* is defined as the opposite in each case. The same note is found in *CSYPTLHSC*, 88, although in the first category, it has *pen* 本 for *mu* 木, so that the *kuo* would be a fruit growing under the ground, while *lo* would be on the ground. Obviously a translation is difficult with such diversity of meaning.

¹⁹² The term is literally, "blood and breath" (*Hsüeh-ch'i* 血氣), and only the context shows that some sort of circulation is meant. The Chinese did have some knowledge of blood-circulation, according to references in the medical work, the *Nei Ching* 內經: see K. C. Wong and Wu Lieh-te, *History of Chinese Medicine* (Shanghai, 1935), 35. However, *p'ien*, 24, of the *Nei Ching*, *SPTK* ed., 55-6, entitled *Hsüeh-ch'i hsing-chih* 血氣形志 (Blood and breath, body and will), seems to speak of the "blood and breath" in terms of balance versus imbalance rather than blockage versus circulation. I do not know from where Han Yü derived his theory of illness.

¹⁹³ See Donald Holzman, *La Vie et la Pensée de Hi K'ang* (Leiden, 1957), 97, 165. This and the following note deal with the idea of spontaneous generation, which was common to the ancient Chinese and his Western counterpart (Needham, *Science*, II, 79).

¹⁹⁴ See Couvreur, *Li Ki*, I, 366.

¹⁹⁵ Gentzler, "Biography", 188, translates this as "primal force", although I think in the context something more concrete is called for. It clearly refers here to a substance at the beginning of the world which later decomposes into various objects. This view of the universe would seem to be in line with earlier developments: Zürcher,

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"When vermin are produced, material things decay even further, for the vermin gnaw away at them¹⁹⁶ and bore through them. Thus the destruction of material things by the vermin increases even more. The one who can get rid of them will be a benefactor to material things; the one who causes them to flourish and multiply will be the enemy of material things.

"Man's destruction of the primordial ether and of the yin and yang is even greater [than that done by the vermin]: he brings the virgin plain to the plough, hews down the forests on the mountains, drills down into the springs for drinking wells, digs holes and raises mounds in which to place the dead. He likewise digs latrines, constructs interior and exterior walls, inner and outer city walls, towers and pavilions, bevederes and pleasantries;¹⁹⁷ he opens up river channels, boundary ditches, reservoirs and ponds; he turns the fire-drill to light fires and melts metal for casting; he fires and moulds, polishes and grinds. Causing harm, he makes it impossible for Heaven and Earth and the myriad things to attain their true state (*te-ch'ing* 得情),¹⁹⁸ for he rushes headlong to attack and despoil¹⁹⁹ without ever once stopping. Is not his destruction of the primordial ether and of the yin and yang even greater than that done by the vermin?²⁰⁰

"In my opinion, if someone could destroy these people so as to decrease poor days (*jih-po* 日薄),²⁰¹ lean years, and the destruction of the primordial ether and of the yin and yang, then he would be a benefactor to Heaven and Earth. But the one who causes them to flourish and multiply is the enemy of Heaven and Earth.

"Now people in general are incapable of understanding Heaven; therefore, they rail and feel resentment. In my opinion, if Heaven heard their railing and resentment, then the benefactors [of Heaven and Earth]

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Conquest, I, 88, says, "... in Han times this *t'ai-chi* was interpreted as the amorphous "primeval ether" (*yüan-ch'i* 元氣) which existed before the formation of all things, thus assuming a temporal relation between the original unity in chaos and a later differentiation . . ." (The *t'ai-chi* 太極 or Great Ultimate is a kind of "permanent substrate" of the universe.) This view of the *yüan-ch'i* seems to be somewhat different from that propounded by Liu Tsung-yuan below (see n. 203).

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Liu Hsi, 劉熙 *Shih-ming* 釋名, *SPTK* ed., 5.

¹⁹⁷ This is a pun, suggested by Professor Twitchett, on the original *yu* 游 which can be used of pleasure outings or of detached residences such as might be used for such purposes.

¹⁹⁸ *HCLC ts'e* 3, p. 67 uses this expression in a similar fashion: "When the Way of man is in disorder, the *I* and *Ti* [barbarians] and the birds and beasts do not attain their true state."

¹⁹⁹ I have translated the term *pai-nao* 敗壞 in an active sense, although the passive would seem to be usual. (*HCLC ts'e* 2, p. 70). Possibly an alternative rendering might be "Rushing headlong, he attacks [material things, which are] utterly ruined and never stops for a single moment."

²⁰⁰ *WYYH*, 362. 2b has *ku* 蝨 in place of *ch'ung* 蟲.

²⁰¹ This expression might also refer to eclipses of the sun, though this would not be quite as parallel to the expression "lean years".

would certainly have a great reward, while the destroyers would receive an even greater punishment. What do you think of my words?"

Master Liu said, "Did you really make this up on the spur of the moment?"²⁰² If so, then it is really well-argued and elegant. I can complete your theory.

"That which is above and dark, the world calls 'Heaven', while that which is below and yellow, the world calls 'Earth'; and what is all mixed up in between the world calls 'the primordial ether';²⁰³ heat and cold, the world calls the yin and yang. Although these are immense, they are no different from fruits of plants and trees, tumours and piles, and plants and trees. Supposing there were someone who could get rid of [the vermin] which bore through [material things], how would mere things be able to give him recompense (*pao* 報)? And how would they be capable of feeling any anger towards anyone who causes them [the vermin] to flourish and multiply? Heaven and Earth are immense fruits of plants and trees; the primordial ether is an immense tumour or pile,²⁰⁴ the yin and yang are immense plants and trees. How can they reward the beneficial and punish the destructive? The benefactors benefit themselves; the destroyers destroy themselves. To expect them to be rewarded or punished [by Heaven] is a great error. Railing in resentment, wishing for and expecting pity and benevolence [from Heaven] is an even greater error. If you trust to your own benevolence²⁰⁵ and righteousness and stay within those limits, then it

²⁰² This expression *chi* 激 probably indicates the haste which would have been likely on Han Yü's part on hearing of Liu's exile. Liu Yü-hsi uses it of the *T'ien shuo* itself (see n. 218). Liu Tsung-yüan (*LHTC*, II, 637) used it to describe those who made up hasty theories about man's fate on hearing of the death of Chang Hou-yu in 808.

²⁰³ Here the term *yüan-ch'i* does not seem to mean a force or undifferentiated substance at the beginning of the world but rather the purposeless nature of the world between Heaven and Earth. It seems to refer to the spontaneous operation of the world process, which Liu may have felt resembled the chaos of the primal age, in that there was no purposeful retribution in it. He does not mean, of course, that the world is really in total chaos, but I think that he does mean that there is no meaningful higher order in it.

²⁰⁴ This particular comparison is somewhat reminiscent of Taoist imagery.

²⁰⁵ *LHTC*, I, 286, and *Ho-tung hsien-sheng chi*, I, 16.3b have only *i* 義, which Hou, *Liu hsuan-chi*, 51, appears to approve, but then he lists no variants. (In *T'ung-shih*, 360, he approves the following reading) *LPKC*, 48; *LMTWC*, 83; *CSYPTLHSC*, 88, all have *jen-i* 仁義, adopted here. Gentzler, "Biography", [189], follows the former reading and translates this sentence, "If you trust in your own principles, and live according to them to the end of your life . . ." It was Gentzler's interpretation of the first part of the clause that made me understand the general drift of the original; I have adopted the reading *jen-i* because of the mention of *jen* in the previous sentence. I think that on a political level, Liu Tsung is here covertly contrasting the unjust character of the government or, more precisely, Hsien-tsung himself to his own benevolence and righteousness, which will be the standard of his true worth; with these he can accept even the disgrace which has befallen him.

is simply a question of birth and death.²⁰⁶ How can one attribute survival and destruction, success and failure to the fruits of trees and plants, to tumours and piles, and to plants and trees?"

II. Liu Yü-hsi: On Heaven, Part One²⁰⁷

There are two doctrines concerning what the world terms "Heaven": Those who keep to the obvious (*chao-chao* 昭昭)²⁰⁸ say "Heaven and man truly reflect and echo (*ying-hsiang* 影響)²⁰⁹ one another. Disaster will necessarily be sent down [by Heaven] on account of crimes; good fortune will necessarily be sent on account of goodness. When one cries out [to Heaven] in extreme distress, one may certainly be heard; when one prays in secret pain, it certainly may be answered." [To these people] it is as if material things are clearly being regulated by a controlling force (*tsai-che* 宰者);²¹⁰ therefore, the theory of automatic recompense (*yin-chih* 陰鷲)²¹¹ prevails among them.

Those who are mired in obscurantism (*ming-ming* 冥冥)²¹² say, "Heaven and man have quite distinct spheres:²¹³ when thunder shakes beasts and vegetation, it never has anything to do with guilt; when spring sends its

²⁰⁶ Gentzler, "Biography" [189] has almost certainly mistranslated *sheng erh ssu erh* 生而死爾 as "live . . . to the end of your life."

²⁰⁷ Text of all three parts: *LHTC* I, 287-92; *LPKC*, 43-7; *LMTWC*, 83-6; *CSYPTLHSC*, 246-7; Hou, *Liu hsuan-chi*, 129-134. *WYYH*, 739.4b-9a; *CTW*, 607. 1a-6a.

²⁰⁸ This term may also imply that the traditional phenomenalist view is worthy only of the vulgar. Cf. *Lao-tzu* 老子 (ch. 20): *Su-jen chao-chao*; *wo tu hun-hun* 俗入昭昭; 我獨昏昏。

²⁰⁹ This was an expression commonly used in describing retribution: see, e.g., Legge, *Classics*, III, 54, or Han shu 漢書 56, (*Chung-hua* ed., repr., Hongkong, 1970), VIII, 2517.

²¹⁰ This sentence and its nearly parallel counterpart in the following paragraph are rather difficult constructions. Liu Yü-hsi seems to be saying that some people believe that there is an external controlling force in events; on the other hand, the parallel sentence is directed against those who feel that there is merely a spontaneous process in the universe (and, of course, Liu Tsung-yuan would be one of these): these people still do not really solve the problem because their theory seems to waver between belief and disbelief in such an agent.

²¹¹ This expression comes from the famous *Hung-fan* (The Great Plan) 洪範 chapter of the *Shu ching*, a section full of early phenomenalist views. See Legge, *Classics*, III, 320. It refers to the unseen workings of Heaven, and the present translation is slightly broader in scope.

²¹² Professor Twitchett suggested this translation, and certainly the use of the word "mired" (*mi* 泥) would indicate Liu's disapproval of this view as well as the preceding phenomenalist.

²¹³ As elsewhere in this translation, the word "sphere" does not come from an exact Chinese equivalent, but is a convenient translation to express Liu's ideas on the relationship between Heaven and man; probably the closest expression to it is the word *chi* mentioned in n. 219. The usual reading here for the Chinese original of "quite different" is *ts'u-i* 刺異 apparently miswritten *la-i* 刺異 in *WYYH*, 739.4b; *LMTWC*, 83, has *hsiang-i* 相異 which would not really change the sense. *Tz'u-i* is a rather peculiar expression but the *LMTWC* reading obviously reveals what is meant.

moisture upon the *chin* 菫 and *tu* 荼 plants,²¹⁴ it never selects the good [to receive its moisture]. How was it that [Robber] Chih 盜跖 and [Chuang] Ch'iao 莊騶²¹⁵ were successful? How was it that Confucius and Yen Hui 顏回 were in danger?²¹⁶ These are the ones who are confused about whether or not there is a controlling force; therefore, the theory of spontaneity (*tzu-jan* 自然) prevails among them.

My friend from Chieh 解 in Ho-tung 河東,²¹⁷ Liu Tzu-hou [Liu Tsung-yüan] composed "The Theory of Heaven" to controvert the words of Han T'ui-chih 韓退之 [Han Yü]. Its style is truly elegant, but since it was written on the spur of the moment,²¹⁸ it does not provide the means whereby one might exhaustively treat the relationship between Heaven and man.²¹⁹ Therefore, I have composed "On Heaven" in order to develop his arguments to their conclusion:

In general, things within the realm of forms (*ju hsing-ch'i* 入形器)²²⁰ all have some abilities and some inabilities. Heaven is the greatest of those having form; man is the greatest of living beings (*tung-wu* 動物).²²¹ What Heaven can do, man certainly cannot do; what man can do, Heaven likewise in part cannot do. Therefore, I say, "Heaven and man predominate in their respective spheres and that is all."²²²

The "Theory [of Heaven]" says that the way of Heaven consists in

²¹⁴ These plants are mentioned in Ode 237 of the *Shih ching*. B. Karlgren, tr., *The Book of Odes* (Stockholm, 1950) 190-1, simply transliterates the terms, and I have followed his. Legge, *Classics*, IV, 438, translates example as "violets and sowthistles".

²¹⁵ These were supposed to be both notoriously evil men of pre-Han times. Robber Chih was a brigand of Lu, who terrorized the empire with impunity. See *Chuang Tzu yin-te*, pp. 80-4 and Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 323-31. Chuang Ch'iao was a general of the state of Ch'u who, after conquering various territories to the west, was blocked off from Ch'u by Ch'in troops and stayed on as local king, adopting local customs and native dress. See *Shih chi*, IX, 2993; Watson, *Records*, II, 290-1.

²¹⁶ Confucius and Yen Hui, his favourite disciple, met with considerable difficulties in the course of their journeys (see below, n. 247), and Yen Hui himself died at an early age. This would be a stock example of sagely men who were requited with evil.

²¹⁷ This was the traditional home of the Liu's, although Liu Tsung-yuan was actually born in the capital. Ho-tung roughly occupied modern Shansi, while Chieh county was around the present An-i county in the same province.

²¹⁸ Cf. n. 202 above. As was stated before, this apparently indicates the high state of emotions and rationalizations about human destiny that accompanied the debacle of 805.

²¹⁹ This expression, *t'ien-jen chi chi* 天人之際, is used, of course, in phenomenalist works to indicate a reciprocal moral relationship between Heaven and man; here, however, Liu may have even taken the word *chi* in its literal sense of "boundary" indicating the demarcation between the spheres of Heaven and of man.

²²⁰ Cf. *Chou I chu-su*, 61.32b and 34b, the latter relating the passage of the *I Ching* text itself to "numbers" (*shu*).

²²¹ Or "animals".

²²² Again the word "spheres" is not equivalent to any specific Chinese word. *Sheng* 勝 translated either "predominate" or "have the advantage" should not be given too strong or active a sense, although this might apply somewhat to the conscious actions of man.

producing and increasing; its function [*ying* 用]²²³ consists of strength and weakness. The way of man consists in laws and regulations (*fa-chih* 法制); its function consists in right and wrong.²²⁴

With yang there is abundant growth; with yin there is death.²²⁵ Water and fire harm material things. Wood is solid; metal is sharp. In youthful vigour there is strength and health; in old age there is wasting away and blindness. Powerful energies (*ch'i* 氣) contend for mastery; mighty forces contend for pre-eminence: such are the capabilities of Heaven.

With yang he does the planting; with yin he gathers and reaps. He guards [his crops] against injury by using irrigation; he prevents fires and uses them for light.²²⁶ He cuts down timber and hollows out the solid [wood]. He saps and mines; he puts the swordpoint to the whetstone. With righteousness he controls the powerful and contentious; with the rites (*li* 禮)²²⁷ he distinguishes the senior and junior. He favours the worthy

²²³ Although the word *tao* is substituted for the other term, this resembles the well-known *t'i-ying* 體用 concept in Chinese thought, generally translated "substance and function". See Fung, *History*, II, 363. Thus to Liu Yü-hsi, the inherent quality of Heaven is its creativity, which manifests itself in terms of the amoral distinction between strength and weakness.

²²⁴ This is obviously parallel to the relationship mentioned in the previous note; it is perhaps significant that Liu treats the laws and regulations as being inherent in man whereas right and wrong are only their external manifestations. This would seem to be in line with the thinking of legalism and of Hsun-tzu, for it implies the idea that man's actual morality is not inherent but is, in effect, conditioned by the legal system of his society. Man's inherent nature in Liu's view is apparently a kind of desire for order as seen in definite legal system, and it is from this that morality flows. This seems to resemble the idea in Hsun-tzu that man (specifically the sage) establishes institutions for order out of practical necessity; this he is able to do, of course, by virtue of his intelligence. Thus man becomes a moral being by virtue of the intelligence which enables him to impose a practical order on the amoral state of nature, at least within certain limits. (See Fung, *History*, I, 279.)

²²⁵ Cf. *Lun Heng chiao-shih*, II, 628; Forke, *Lun Heng*, I, 279.

²²⁶ *LMTWC*, 83, has *chiu* 酒, "wine", which does not make sense here, in place of the more usual reading *kuang* 光. For the usual *chin-fen* 禁, *WYYH*, 739.5a, notes a variant *shu-chin*, "different prohibitions" which again does not seem to make as much sense here. What this *chin-fen* or "preventing fires" refers to is not precisely indicated. It is in clear contrast to the unchecked and purposeless fire of the previous paragraph, the fire in the realm of Heaven or nature. Thus *chin-fen* may simply refer to man's prevention of conflagrations of various sorts. However, rather similar terms, *chin-huo* 禁火, and *chin-yen* 禁煙 refer to the prohibition of fires on the third day of the third lunar month traditionally because on that day Duke of Wen of Chin in pre-Han times had burnt Chieh Tzu-t'ui 介子推 to death while trying to force him out of the mountain forest where he had been hiding. See *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (*Chung-hua* ed., Peking, 1965), VII, 2024-5. Cf. *ibid.*, IV, 1103, a reference to fire regulations by the term *chin-huo*. The reference to the days without fire with its moral overtones would be a significant contrast to the amorality of nature.

²²⁷ This term is rather difficult to translate because of its wide range of meanings; it applies not only to actual ceremonies but to the whole traditional moral code, with its regulating function in society. (See Fung, *History*, I, 337-41). Its mention here balances the predominantly legalist tone of this first section. The term *chieh* 訐 "contentious" has the variant *yü* 讒 in *LMTWC*, 83, and *WYYH* 739.5a.

and esteems the meritorious. He establishes the highest excellence and prevents vice. Such are the capabilities of man.

The sphere in which man's capabilities have the advantage over those of Heaven is that of law. When the law is fully enforced, then right becomes the universally-accepted (*kung* 公)²²⁸ right and wrong becomes the universally-accepted wrong. The people of the empire who tread the proper way will certainly be rewarded; and those who oppose it²²⁹ will certainly be punished. Of those who are assigned rewards, even if they be as eminent as the Three Senior Statesmen (*san-ching* 三旌)²³⁰ or have a salary of ten thousand *chung* 鍾,²³¹ the inhabitants²³² will all say, "Why is it proper? It is just because they have done good things." Of those who are assigned punishments, even though it be the extinction of their whole clan or the grief of sword and saw,²³³ the inhabitants will all say, "Why is it proper? It is just because they have done evil things." Therefore, people will say, "How could Heaven plan this sort of affair?" Only at the rites of respectfully announcing to the ancestors,²³⁴ thanking the ancestors,²³⁵ setting forth the types [of sacrifices?],²³⁶ and heralding the seasons,²³⁷ do they say, "It is

²²⁸ In legalist terms, a uniform law code would lead to uniform morality because everything would be judged in terms of rigid laws instead of loose and personal moral standards.

²²⁹ For *chih* 之 *LMTWC*, 83, has *shan* 善, "good". Also noted in *WYYH*, 739.5a.

²³⁰ This term is equivalent to the term *san-kung* 三公, and I have used Dr. M. A. N. Loewe's translation for the latter term. The *san-ching* or *san-kung* were the three highest ranking ministers in government; their exact designations have changed a number of times.

²³¹ This would, of course, represent a very large emolument, a *chung* being 64 *tou* 斗 (Legge, *Classics*, II, 580); the latter measure has varied considerably in size. Cf. the expression *erh-ch'ien shih* 二千石, "two thousand bushels" indicating the highest officials who were paid that amount. The meaning of the whole sentence is that even the senior officials of state cannot avoid the law.

²³² "Inhabitants" is a translation of the somewhat peculiar expression, *ch'u-chih* 處之; I have assumed that the primary meaning of *ch'u*, "to dwell", is meant and that *chih* is basically a complement; however, *ch'u* might also mean "decide" or even "punish", in which case the phrase might conceivably mean "those who gave judgment on them" or "those who were judged (or condemned)". But I think that since Liu Yü-hsi is concerned about the effect of law on society as a whole and since the punishments are meant as a warning, it is quite probable that he does simply mean the populace, not the magistrates or the condemned men.

²³³ This refers probably to execution as well as mutilation; Liu here uses it in the sense of the ultimate penalty, although the *Kuo yü* 4.4b describes these as "middle punishments" (*Chung-hsing* 中刑).

²³⁴ *Kao-ch'ien* 告奠, probably the same as *ch'ien-kao*, referring to the announcements of significant events which were made to the ancestors in the temples.

²³⁵ *Pao-pen* 報本, literally, "repaying the origins"; the idea is that since the ancestors are responsible for our very existence they should be thanked with sacrifices. See Couvreur, *Li Ki*, I, 588.

²³⁶ *Ssu-lei* 肆類, which I have not been able to find as an established expression. However, I have found the expression *ssu-ssu* 肆祀, "to set forth the sacrifices" where *ssu* 肆 equals *ch'en* 陳. See Legge, *Classics*, III, 303. *Lei* would seem to mean in the

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Heaven and that is all." Thus under these conditions good fortune may be obtained by good actions; disaster may be called down by evil actions. How could this be planned by Heaven?^{237a}

When the law is somewhat lax, then right and wrong are mixed up: rewards are not necessarily completely for the good; punishments are not necessarily completely for the evil. Some, being worthy, are honoured and renowned, but at times the unworthy are included among them. Others, being at fault, are punished and disgraced, but at times the innocent are included among them. Therefore, people will say, "It is reasonable that these should in reality get what they deserve, but how could it be reasonable that those others are certain to get what they do not deserve? It is Heaven [that has done this]! Thus under these conditions good fortune may be taken by fraud, and disaster may be avoided by trickery. The way of man is thus confused, and, therefore, the theory the Mandate of Heaven (*T'ien-ming* 天命) will likewise become confused.²³⁸

When the law is very lax, then right and wrong change places: rewards always go to the insinuating, and punishments always go to the upright. Righteousness is not sufficient to control the powerful; punishments are not sufficient to overcome wrongdoers. The real means²³⁹ whereby man is able to have the advantage over Heaven are completely lost, and once the reality is lost, the name is kept in vain. Yet the ignorant urgently prescribe names without reality, desiring to oppose those who would [truly] speak of Heaven.²⁴⁰ Their methods are all used up. Therefore, I say, "What Heaven

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context various types of sacrifices. However, *lei* itself is the name of a type of sacrifice to Shang-ti. See *Chou Li*, *SPTK* ed., 119, and Biot, *Tcheou-li*, II, 86.

²³⁷ *Shou-shih* 授時 (cf. Chung-ch'ang T'ung's similar concept mentioned above in n. 38). This expression occurs in the *Shu ching* (Legge, *Classics*, III, 18), and apparently refers to the agricultural seasons, the advent of which the government is supposed to announce to the people.

^{237a} Hou, *Liu hsüan-chi*, 130, punctuates this whole last part beginning with "How could Heaven . . ." as one quotation. I take the last two sentences of the paragraph as Liu's editorial comment.

²³⁸ "Confused", a translation of *chiao* 駁, is quite clear in the first part of the sentence on the Way of man, but here it is slightly confused by *yen* 焉, which may mean "by it" or "in it". The first meaning would imply that the theory of the Mandate of Heaven was confused by the disorder of the way of man, whereas the second might mean that the theory of the Mandate of Heaven became mixed into something which was properly in the human sphere. *Yen* might also stand for *jan* 然 here. This would favour the first interpretation and the translation given.

²³⁹ This is, admittedly, a compromise between two alternative readings: *shih* 實, "reality", found in *LMTWC*, 84, and *WYYH*, 739.5b, as opposed to *chü* 具, "means" or "instrument", found in all the other texts consulted. Because the term *shih* is used again in the next sentence as part of the conventional contrast of reality to name (*ming* 名), I tend to favour the former reading, but the number of texts having *chu* seem an argument in its favour.

²⁴⁰ This would appear to refer to those who attempt to make use of the superstition which arises in a disordered, lawless state, by developing empty theories about Heaven; quite possibly it refers to the Han phenomenologists such as Tung Chung-shu.

can do is to produce the myriad things (*wan-wu* 萬物): what man can do is to regulate the myriad things."

Thus, when the law is fully enforced, people say, "What does Heaven plan for men? We shall simply tread the proper way." When the law is very lax, people say, "What does the proper way have to do with it after all; it merely depends on the men [employed]."²⁴¹ And when the law is somewhat lax, theories about Heaven in relation to man are confused. Now to substantiate the existence or non-existence of Heaven by the failure or success of a single person is delusion.²⁴²

I say, "Heaven always sticks to what it can do and thus looks down at (*lin* 臨)²⁴³ those beneath: it is not that it has anything to do with [human] order or disorder. Man always sticks to what he can do and so looks up at Heaven: it is not that he has anything to do with the cold and heat. For those born in times of order, the way of man is clear and they all know whence it comes [i.e., from man's laws]; therefore virtue and injustice are not attributed to Heaven. For those born during disorder the way of man is obscured and they may not know whence it comes. Therefore, everything that comes from man is attributed to Heaven, but it is not that Heaven has any plans for man.

III. Liu Yü-hsi: On Heaven, Part Two

Someone said, "Your saying that Heaven and man have the advantage in their respective spheres is a subtle principle. In order to use it to demolish people from house to house, why not pick a few examples from it?"

Master Liu said, "Do you know about travelling? Now many travellers come to green woods,²⁴⁴ seek respite under leafy trees, and drink from rivers and springs. The strong and powerful will certainly take precedence there, for, unless they were strong too, even sages and worthies would not be able to compete there. Is this not an instance of Heaven's having the advantage? Many travellers stop at towns, seek shelter under decorated eaves, and eat their fill from the sacrificial feasts.²⁴⁵ The sages and worthies

²⁴¹ For some reason this sentence is placed second instead of last and hence out of order in terms of the gradual degeneration of law which Liu had outlined above.

²⁴² This, as is pointed out in Hou, *T'ung-shih*, 354, may be a reference to the exile, and a criticism that Liu Tsung-yüan has come up with a theory of Heaven based on too little evidence, since he is seeing it largely in terms of his own exile. I have translated *wu-yü* literally as "existence or non-existence"; of course, Liu is merely referring to the possibility of a purposeful Heaven.

²⁴³ This particular verb may sound somewhat too personal in translation, but it is used in a similar way with Shang-ti in the *Shih ching* (Legge, *Classics*, IV, 436), and I think its use here indicates only a certain ambiguity about Heaven in Chinese writings, in which it can represent nature and yet take on quasi-personal attributes at times.

²⁴⁴ *Mang-tsang* 莽蒼 occurs in *Chuang Tzu yin-te*, p. 1, l. 9; I have followed the rendering in Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 30.

²⁴⁵ *Hsi-lao* 饗牢 refers to feasts given for envoys; see Couvreur, *Li Ki*, II, 692. *LMTWC*, 84 (notes), and *CTW*, 607.2b and *WYYH*, 739.6b have *ch'an* in place of *lao*.

will certainly take precedence there, for, unless they were worthies too, even the strong and powerful would not be able to compete there. Is this not an instance of man's having the advantage? If the road leads to Yü 虞 and Jui 芮,²⁴⁶ even the green woods will be like the towns; if it leads from K'uang 匡 and Sung 宋,²⁴⁷ even the towns will be just like the green woods. Thus in the course of one day's journey, we see that Heaven and man have the advantage in their respective spheres."

I assert, "If right and wrong are involved, then even in the wilds, the order (*li* 理) of man will have the advantage. If right and wrong are not involved, then even within the royal domain, the order (*li*) of Heaven will have the advantage. Thus Heaven is not the one to devote itself to having the advantage over man. And why? Because when man is unfortunate,^{247a} he attributes it to Heaven. Man is truly the one to devote himself to having the advantage over Heaven. And why? Because Heaven has no self-interest.²⁴⁸ Therefore, it is man who may devote himself to having the advantage. Thus in the course of one day's journey I came to an understanding about Heaven and man.²⁴⁹ Thus I have chosen [an example] from what is familiar."

Someone said, "If this is correct, then it is, indeed, credible that Heaven has no regard²⁵⁰ for man. But then why did the men of antiquity cite Heaven's actions?"

²⁴⁶ These were two ancient States, which, being unable to settle a quarrel over some territory, went to Hsi-po, the Chou ruler, to get a settlement. However, when they saw how deferential and moral the Chou people were to one another they gave up their quarrel out of shame. See Legge, *Classics*, IV, 441-2 (notes). Here Liu is citing these two states as places where morality finally triumphed over amoral force, in contrast to K'uang and Sung described in the following note.

²⁴⁷ K'uang and Sung seem to have no immediate connexion, but I believe that they are inserted here because they were both states in which Confucius and his disciples were endangered. See *Shih chi*, VI, 1919, 1921, and Legge, *Classics*, I, 217-18, 245. Interestingly enough, Confucius invoked Heaven in both places and in Sung he had to shelter with his disciples under a tree. Aside from being States based on force in contrast to Yü and Jui, K'uang and Sung are mentioned here apparently in answer to the question brought up in the first part of the *T'ien lun* on why sagely men such as Confucius and Yen Hui were endangered. Liu's answer seems to be that Heaven (amoral force) happened to be dominant over human mores in the places where they suffered ill-treatment.

^{247a} For the reading *hsing* 幸, "fortunate", used here, *LPKC*, 45, *CTW* 607.3b, *LMTWC*, 84, and *WYYH* 739.6b all have *tsai* 宰, "control", in which case the sentence might begin: "Because when man is not in control [of events] . . .". *CSYPT-LHSC*, 246, has *ch'ien*.

²⁴⁸ Cf. Couvreur, *Li Ki*, II, 396, and *Lao-tzu*, 79.

²⁴⁹ I am not certain if Liu actually is describing his own experiences in part here; certainly the boating examples below were inspired by his experience on the waterways; cf. above, n. 183.

²⁵⁰ The variants here from the reading *hsiang-yü* 相預 are: *hsiang-hu* 相乎 in *CTW*, 607, 3b and *LMTWC*, 84, the latter of which notes that *hsiang* is to be read in the falling tone; *WYYH* 739.6b has *hsiang chüiu* 相去乎, which does not make sense in the context: probably a gloss such as that in *LMTWC*, 84, indicating the falling tone (*ch'ü sheng* 去聲) has crept into the text.

I answered, "Do you know about steering a boat? Now for boats travelling on [small rivers such as] the Wei 濰 and the Tzu 淄 or the I 伊 and the Lo 洛,²⁵¹ the speed depends on man and the stopping places depend on man. The wind's angry roar cannot so whip up great waves nor can the current going upstream become so great as to overwhelm [human efforts]. If it should happen that there is a swift, calm voyage, it is due to man, and if it should happen that there is a capsizing or running aground, it is likewise due to man. Under these conditions, why is it that the man in the boat never once had occasion to speak of Heaven's [being responsible]? It is because the order (*li* 理)²⁵² was clear.

"For those travelling on [large bodies of water such as] the Yang-tze, the Han 漢, the Huai 淮, and the sea, the speed cannot be controlled and the stopping places cannot be ascertained beforehand. A wind that makes the branches whistle can create a maelstrom,²⁵³ and clouds like carriage awnings²⁵⁴ can manifest weird phenomena. Thus a peaceful crossing would be due to Heaven, foundering in the black depths would be due to Heaven, and a narrow brush with danger would also be due to Heaven. Under these conditions why is it that the men in the boat never once had occasion to speak of man's [being responsible]? It is because the order (*li*) was obscured."

The questioner said, "I see that what was harnessed (*p'ien* 駢) to them [the boats] so that they crossed over was simply the wind, the waters, and so on; nevertheless, some foundered and some did not: unless it be by Heaven, how are such things controlled (*ssu* 司)?"

I answered, "The waters and the boat are two things (*wu*). Now for things to be conjoined (*ho-ping* 合并), there must be numerical dimensions

²⁵¹ The Wei and Tzu Rivers are in Shantung, the Yi and Lo in Honan: see Legge, *Classics*, III, 102-3, 117-18.

²⁵² The interpretation of *li* here as with its parallel at the end of the next paragraph is somewhat ambiguous: it may either refer to the principle or order of things as a whole, and hence Liu's meaning would seem to be that when man can understand the workings of the universe, he has no need to bring in the concept of Heaven, and, conversely, when he does not understand the workings of nature, he cites Heaven as the responsible agent. This is the interpretation given in Hou, *T'ung-shih*, 368. On the other hand, 理 *li* may be equivalent to *chih* 治, "order" as opposed to chaos. In the first part of the *T'ien lun*, Liu Yu-hsi noted that a man born in times of disorder could not understand his role in the world and a man born under a good government could understand it clearly. Since the idea here seems to be a contrast between the natural "disorder" of the great rivers where man cannot impose his control as opposed to the smaller streams where he can, *li* may refer to "orderliness" here. It is even possible that both senses are meant. Cf. n. 280.

²⁵³ *Wo-jih* appears in *WH*, I, 252 in Mu Hua's 木華 *Hai fu* 海賦 "Fu on the Sea", which is interpreted literally as "verschleiert die Sonne" by Erwin von Zach, tr., *Die Chinesische Anthologie*, ed. Ilse Martin Fang (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), I, 182.

²⁵⁴ Cf. *WH*, I, 641, for this image describing clouds.

(*shu* 數)²⁵⁵ between them, and it is only when these numerical dimensions are present that actual conditions (*shih* 勢) can be formed (*hsing* 形) between them. Thus some [boats] founder on account of [these resultant conditions] and some cross over on account of them. In going, [the boats and the waters] match their numerical dimensions (*shu*) and accord with the resultant conditions (*shih*) and that is all. The way in which these conditions are produced dependent (*fu* 附)²⁵⁷ on things (*wu*) is like a shadow [dependent on the original object] or an echo [dependent on the original sound]. Where the things involved are essentially sluggish, the resultant condition is one of slowness. Therefore, man can understand it. Where the things involved are essentially quick, the resultant condition will be one of speed. Therefore, it will be difficult for men to understand it. This capsizing on the Yang-tze or on the sea is like capsizing on the Yi or on the Tzu, but conditions may be quick or sluggish. Therefore, sometimes men simply do not understand [that capsizing in either place is the same]."

The questioner said, "You say that the fact that conditions are produced only when numerical dimensions are present is not due to Heaven. But is Heaven in fact restricted by conditions?"

I answered, "The form of Heaven is always round and its colour is always blue. Its revolutions (*chou-hui* 周回)²⁵⁷ may be obtained by calculations; day and night may be measured by sun-dials (*piao* 表). Are these not due to the existence of numerical dimensions? [Heaven] is always lofty and not low; it always moves and does not stop. Is this not because it is following the conditions [produced by the numerical dimensions]? The blue [Heaven]²⁵⁸ is that way because once it has received its form as something lofty and large, it cannot of itself return to the low and small; once it has taken up its condition (*shih*) as something functioning and moving, it cannot

²⁵⁵ Numbers here seem to refer more to a relationship between things than to inherent dimensions of form, although the two concepts are probably complementary. Liu seems to think of the numbers of various forms fitting together in a relationship and thus producing concrete situations. It would seem, however, that the numbers in or between things indicate more than simply their spatial dimensions since they control other factors. Liu's whole concept of numbers, discussed in the introduction, may have been of some importance as a link between an earlier divination tradition and the numerology of the Neo-Confucians Shao Yung 邵雍 (1011-1077) and Ts'ai Ch'en 蔡沉 (1167-1230), a disciple of Chu Hsi 朱熹 (1130-1200). Shao's ideas can be traced to the Taoist, Ch'en T'uan 陳搏 (c. 906-989) (see Fung, *History*, II, 453), and it would be interesting to see if the line might be traced back further, if not through Liu to I-hsing, then at least by a kindred line of transmission. It is to be noted, moreover, that Wai-liang and I-hsing were both Buddhists, though this would not necessarily preclude any connexion between Ch'en and this earlier line. Needham, *Science*, II, 273, 484, cites passages from Ts'ai Ch'en and Chu Hsi showing concepts of numbers parallel to the idea of *li* 理 or principle. Certainly this field needs more research.

²⁵⁶ Literally, "attached to".

²⁵⁷ This term might also refer to the measurements of Heaven's circumference.

²⁵⁸ Cf. *Chuang Tzu yin-te*, p. 1, l. 4; Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 29.

of itself stop even for a single moment. Then how could it escape from its numerical dimensions (*shu*) and pass beyond the resultant conditions? I affirm that the reason why the myriad things are regarded as limitless is because each has the advantage in its own sphere and each functions by turn in its own sphere. Heaven and man are simply pre-eminent among the myriad things."

The questioner said, "Granted that Heaven cannot escape from its numerical dimensions (*shu*) because it has form, yet how can you specify the numerical dimensions of that which is formless?"

I answered, "Is not what you call 'formless' really emptiness (*k'ung* 空)?²⁵⁹ Emptiness is, in fact, the smallest and subtlest of forms; in its substance (*t'i* 體) it is not opposite to things (*wu*) and in its function (*yung*), therefore, it is always dependent (*tsu* 資) on the existence of things (*yu* 有), for it only takes form in dependence on things. Now in making buildings, the form of their height and breadth is contained within [their structure]; in making implements, the form of the square and compass [used in making them] is contained within [their structure]. When a sound is produced, whether loud or soft, the echo cannot surpass it. When a sundial is erected, whether straight or crooked, the shadow cannot surpass it. Are these not the numerical dimensions of emptiness?"

"Now when the eyes see, it is not that they can have a light [of their own]; of necessity, a light exists for them only because of the sun, the moon, or fire.²⁶⁰ What we call 'hidden by darkness' (*hui erh yu* 晦而幽) is simply that for which the eyes cannot find a light source.²⁶¹ Would one say that for the eyes of cats and weasels²⁶² or dogs and rats that which is in darkness (*hui*) is hidden (*yu*)? I affirm that seeing with the eyes is making out the coarsest of forms; seeing with wisdom is making out the subtlest of forms.²⁶³ How could there be anything [really] formless in Heaven and Earth. What the ancients called 'formless' simply meant 'without constant form' and this is necessarily seen only through things (*wu*), so how could it escape from numerical dimensions?"

²⁵⁹ It is rather interesting that Liu should find it necessary to adopt this as a middle term in his definition instead of simply saying that "formlessness" is the smallest and subtlest of forms. It may indicate some Buddhist influence, and, of course, Liu had as many contacts with members of the Sangha as his contemporaries did. Cf. above, n. 170.

²⁶⁰ This is in line with traditional Chinese theories of vision, which correctly posited an external light-source as opposed to the pre-modern Western idea of light generated within the eye. See Needham, *Science*, Vol. 4, Pt. 1 (Cambridge, 1962), p. 86.

²⁶¹ *Chu* 燭, literally, "a torch" or "candle". See *ibid.*, 79.

²⁶² Cf. *Chuang Tzu yin-te*, p. 43, l. 36; Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 180. Naturally, these animals can see much better than man and so what is hidden from man is not hidden from them.

²⁶³ Cf. the similar distinction made in Liu's *Yüan-li* 原力 (An inquiry into strength), *LPKC*, 52.

IV. Liu Yü-hsi: On Heaven, Part Three

Someone said, "Among the sayings of the ancients on the orderly phenomena (*li-hsiang* 曆象)²⁶⁴ of Heaven, there have been writings on [the rival theories of] the Brightness and Darkness (*hsüan-yeh* 宣夜), the Celestial Sphere (*hun-t'ien* 元天), and the Gnomon and Circular Path of Heaven (*chou-p'ei* 周髀):²⁶⁵ they said that Heaven is lofty and distant, far removed from the ordinary. There was [also] Master Tsou [Yen 鄒衍, the phenomenalist]:²⁶⁶ now do some of your words derive from him?"

I answered, "I am not that man's disciple. If, [examining] everything within the realm of numerical dimensions (*shu*), we extrapolate (*t'ui* 推)²⁶⁷ from the small up to the large, all will necessarily be in harmony, and likewise, from man up to Heaven all will be in harmony. From such order (*li*) we may ascertain that the myriad things (*wan-wu* 萬物) are a unity (*i-kuan* 一貫).

"Now man has a face, eyes, ears, nose, teeth, hair, chin, and mouth, which are the most beautiful of all the parts of the body, but the essentials [of the body] consist of the kidneys, intestines, heart, and stomach.²⁶⁸ Likewise, Heaven has the three luminaries [sun, moon, and stars] hanging in its vast expanse, which are the most divinely brilliant (*shen-ming* 神明)²⁶⁹ of the myriad phenomena (*wan-hsiang* 萬象), but the essentials [of the world] consist of mountains, rivers, and the five elements. Turbidity is the mother of clarity; heaviness is the beginning of lightness.²⁷⁰ When the two polarities (*liang-wei* 兩位: yin and yang) have been adjusted, they circulate

²⁶⁴ See Legge, *Classics*, III, 18, which refers to astronomical calculations. It may also refer to the sun, moon, and stars themselves.

²⁶⁵ These were the three major theories concerning the physical Heavens in China: the theory of Brightness and Darkness posited infinite space with occasional celestial bodies floating in it; the Celestial Sphere theory taught that the earth was rather like a yolk in an eggshell; finally the theory of the Gnomon and Circular Path of Heaven, also known as the *Kai T'ien* 蓋天 (Hemispherical Dome) saw the Heavens as a hemispherical cover over an earth that resembled an inverted bowl. The last was the most archaic but gradually died out in the sixth century A.D., while the Celestial Sphere theory became the orthodox cosmology from about the same time. The theory of Brightness and Darkness also continued to have influence until recent centuries. For a detailed account, see Needham, *Science*, III, 210-24. Obviously, Liu's concept of Heaven was not really connected with this type of cosmological speculation.

²⁶⁶ See Needham, *Science*, II, 232-41.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 233; interestingly enough this term is applied to Tsou's reasoning in favour of phenomenalism.

²⁶⁸ *Fu* 腹, but *WYFH*, 709.8b, and *LMTWC*, 85, have *fu* 腑, "the bowels".

²⁶⁹ This expression, of course, does not imply any kind of real divinity to the Heavens. Cf. the use of *shen* 神 by Hsun-tzu to describe the actions of Heaven: *Hsun Tzu yin-te*, p. 62, l. 9; Watson, *Hsun Tzu*, 80.

²⁷⁰ This, of course, refers to the cyclical nature of the universe; I have not been able to trace the expression.

to form an equilibrium. They are exhaled as rain and dew and belched forth as thunder and wind. Having been produced in accordance with the ether (*ch'i* 氣), all distinctions follow in order. Thus the class of planted things is called 'plant life' (*sheng* 生) and the class of mobile things is called 'animal life' (*chung* 蟲).²⁷¹ The greatest of the naked animals²⁷² is the wisest one, for he can grasp human order (*jen-li* 人理) and thus have the advantage over Heaven. Using the advantages of Heaven (*t'ien-li* 天理), he establishes human relationships (*jen chih chi* 人之紀); but should the orderly relationships (*chi-kang* 紀綱) decay, things will return to the original [state of nature].²⁷³

"The documents of Yao 堯 and Shun 舜 begin by saying, 'Investigate antiquity';²⁷⁴ they do not say, 'Investigate Heaven'. The poem of [the evil rulers] Yu 幽 and Li 厲 begins by saying, 'The Lord-on-High' (*Shang-ti* 上帝)²⁷⁵ it does not speak of human affairs. At Shun's court the worthies and harmonious ones (*yüan-k'ai* 元凱)²⁷⁶ were selected, and it was said of this, 'Chun employed them', not 'Heaven bestowed them'. Under Kao-tung 高宗 of Yin,²⁷⁷ disorder was beaten back and there was a dynastic revival. In his heart, he understood the worthiness of [Fu] Yüeh 傅說,²⁷⁸ but he said, 'The Lord (*Ti* 帝) bestowed him.' The people under Yao had experienced surplus and so were hard to deceive with talk about spirits. The mores of Shang [Yin] having been corrupted, they brought Heaven into [the sphere of human affairs] but still were cast out. From this I say, 'Does Heaven make plans for man?'"

²⁷¹ This word was earlier translated in the narrower sense of "vermin".

²⁷² For this expression, *lo-ch'ung chih ch'ang* 保蟲之長, see *Lun Heng chiao-shih*, I, 277; Forke, I, 353.

²⁷³ When man is no longer capable of imposing his orderly way of existence on nature's amoral force, nature or Heaven becomes predominant and man returns to being merely another animal, in effect, until he can rebuild the social structure by a legalist type of state.

²⁷⁴ The Canon of Yao and that of Shun (*Yao tien* 堯典, *Shun tien* 舜典 in the *Shu ching* begin with this expression except for an introductory particle. Legge, *Classics*, III, 15, 29.

²⁷⁵ *Shih ching* (ode 255) starts with a reference to *Shang-ti* and is associated with these two kings; see Legge, *Classics*, IV, 505.

²⁷⁶ An abbreviation of *Pa yüan pa k'ai* 八元八凱, "The Eight Worthies and Eight Harmonious Ones"; see Legge, *Classics*, V, 282-3.

²⁷⁷ Kao-tung or Wu-ting 武丁 was definitely the emperor involved with Fu Yueh (see following note) but *CTW*, 607.6a, *LMTWC*, 86, *WYYH* 709.8b, and *CSYPTHSC*, 247, have Chung-tung 中宗, probably because he was noted for a dynastic restoration (*Shih chi*, I, 100) such as the one attributed to Kao-tung. *CTW*, 607.6a, has Shang the alternative name of the Yin, while *WYYH*, 739.8b miswrites it *ti*.

²⁷⁸ The meeting between Kao-tung and Fu Yüeh is briefly described in *Shih Chi*, I, 102. *Ibid.*, 103, describes Kao-tung's mention of Heaven, but the incident is not connected with Fu Yueh.

V. Liu Tsung-yüan: A Letter Answering Liu Yü-hsi's "On Heaven"²⁷⁹

Tsung-yüan says, "I am writing to tell you that I received your essay, 'On Heaven' in three parts. Considering the 'Theory of Heaven' which I composed to be incomplete, you desired to bring what it said to a conclusion. When I first received it, I was most pleased; I said, 'Here is something that clarifies my intentions.' But when I had read it over for five or six days, seeking out the points wherein it differs from my 'Theory', I wound up by being unable to find any. Its principal thesis states, 'It is not that Heaven makes any plans for man.' In general, therefore, your treatise is simply an exegesis of my 'Theory of Heaven'; there are no differing doctrines in it. You have conscientiously corroborated my words. I do not know what to regard as the points of difference between us.

"Nevertheless, is not the point wherein you differ from me your praise of Heaven's ability to produce and increase? Now Heaven's ability to produce and increase is of long standing and did not have to wait for your praise for it to be obvious. Moreover, do you regard Heaven's production and increase as due to Heaven or due to man? Or is it self production and increase? If you regard it as due to man, then I do not know anything more about it. If, in fact, you regard it as self production and increase, then it is simply self production and increase. In what way does it differ from fruits of plants and trees being of themselves fruits of plants and trees, or tumours and piles being of themselves tumours and piles, or plants and trees being of themselves plants and trees? It is obvious that this was not planned by the vermin (*ch'ung* 蟲) just as Heaven does not plan against man. And since that [Heaven] does not plan against me, why should I devote myself to having the advantage over it? What you say about [Heaven's and man's] having the advantage in their respective spheres is like the idea that Heaven is always evil, man is always good, and, if man has the advantage over Heaven, then good will be carried out. This again is attributing too much virtue to man and attributing too many faults to Heaven.

"You also say that what Heaven can do is to produce and increase and that what man can do is to govern by laws and regulations. This is to say that you divide Heaven and man into four; but I say that production and increase as well as calamity and ruin are all due to Heaven; laws and regulations as well as chaos and rebellion are all due to Heaven: thus they can simply be divided into two. The affairs of each proceed without interfering with the other, and disaster and prosperity, order and rebellion are produced from them. To conclude: all your words have branches and leaves that are very beautiful but their roots are not straight enough to follow as a path.

"Also I say that the travellers you used as examples were all men. Yet

²⁷⁹ Text: *LHTC*, II, 503-04; *CSYPTLHSC*, 152.

in one case you say, 'Heaven has the advantage there', and in another case you say, 'Man has the advantage there.' Why, indeed? With those who take precedence in the green woods, strength is predominant; with those who take precedence in the towns, wisdom predominates. In Yü and Jui strength was exhausted; in K'uang and Sung wisdom was exhausted. As to whether right and wrong are involved or not involved, I do not see that it is [a question] applicable to Heaven. According to your theory, the important point is to take chaos as the order (*li*) of Heaven? But then is order (*li*) the order (*li*) of man?²⁸⁰ That would be erroneous. As for [your example using] what boatmen say about Heaven and man, it is simply the stock explanation of the ignorant people. When Yu and Li said that it was the Lord-on-High, there was simply no word of blame in it. This is not worthy of illustrating the Way. Surely you are familiar with it. Do not use superfluous words and redundant discussions in order to increase the branches and leaves. Why devote yourself to what can be obtained from the essentials [or the roots]? Is that not ample enough? The only excellent point is where you say that the 'formless' means 'without constant form.'" (Signed) Tsung-yüan.

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²⁸⁰ This is, of course, a pun on the two senses of *li* mentioned above in n. 252. Unfortunately, this pun does not help us to decide what *li* meant in that case, unless Liu Tsung-yüan's pun indicates that he saw it in both senses.

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