

Lao-tse

We introduce to the Asiatic philosophers Buddha and Lao-tse; but it needs a little more fundamental clearing up of certain terms of Lao-tse in order to discuss him rightly. I suppose that all of you have read by now this little book of Lao-tse's, Tao Teh King, in the translation of Lin Yu Tang, and even perhaps some of the additions he gives -- the additions of Chuang-tse, a late pupil of Lao-tse more than 200 years later than Lao-tse. Now the trouble with this is that we have first to set the book stright -- that means this edition. As far as the introduction goes which you all might have read, there is nothing much to say against it except that there is one mix-up in terms. Lin Yu Tang thinks that Lao-tse is a most modern philosopher and most appropriate for our situation. I agree with <sup>him</sup> fully in that, but he thinks so because he thinks Lao-tse is a mystic philosopher and a mystic and now since we have come to the limits of science as he lines out very well in his introduction, we need mystics again. So he calls into remembrance the writings of Emerson and Whitman, who have much to do with Lao-tsean thinking but are not mystics either and he calls them mystics and he also thinks that when Eddington the great scientist who thinks in the year 1927 that we have chased matter down in the electron and there we lost it so, so that we really do not know any more what we have in hand in science, that then the time had come in 1927 to make it possible for

a scientist to become a really religious man. And by religious Lin Yu Tang means a mystical man, a mystical thinker, a man who now feels free to speculate into the nebulous about possible mystical relations. I do not agree with that.

I do not think that there is any need for mystics in that respect, but what has turned up in this modern experience this time is the fact that we finally discovered and now can put it philosophically very clearly -- namely, that science and all things that can be handled by science will never reveal meaning to us. Now the distinction between philosophy and science becomes as clear and as possible as the distinction between religion and philosophy became when Immanuel Kant had finished his work by pointing out that there is no possibility with the procedure of human reason and with reason alone to approach the question of God, that it is impossible to make out anything religiously or mystically by reason, that it can only be done by voluntary belief, by the force of faith, so that it has nothing to do with philosophy. It was at that time the distinction was made between religion and philosophy which until then had always been thought to be as one and the same, in a way, or at least in a polarity, but very nearly related. Up to now, and it is still so in our time, the distinction between philosophy and science became almost impossible because philosophers gave in to science and thought that they could be the servants of science.

Symbolic logic, logic, all those developments which call themselves philosophic developments and are really only scientific developments, claim to take the place of philosophy. Only with those discoveries of a modern atomic physicist, where science finally found its boundaries by scientific objective proof, discovered its limits, then the first scientists came who were ready to talk with the philosopher again and say, "Yes, there might be a realm which cannot ever be covered by science, a realm that can be covered only either by religion and mystics or by philosophy."

That is our situation. This realm can be fairly well described now: namely, we know now and can prove it scientifically as well as philosophically that all things we handle in science, all that can be found out by science, belongs only to the realm of human activities where we can use things for our life. We can use perhaps the whole being, the whole world outside of man for the life of man. We can make use of it. This is given to us and the development of science, especially in our modern age, has shown to us to what a high degree it is given to us. We can even make use of nature and of physical things to such a degree that we perhaps can blow up the very natural condition of our own existence -- namely, the earth. If we want to destroy our life we can also do it by the help of science. We can use all things for the life of man and that is the realm of science and



since we have now seen how great science is, how it is a creative force of man and how great the power is that man can win over being and the world by the help of his science, at just the same moment science had to see that it can never give an answer to the other urgent question of man: namely, what to use himself for.

He can use the whole world for himself, but that can never give him an answer to what to use himself for, what to live for. Science will give him an infinity of propositions on how to live, how to live better, how to eat up the whole world if possible, but it will never answer him the question 'what for' ~~and~~ in man's limited life, and the questions 'what for' and 'why' will arise again and again and now we know that this is the question that philosophy always tried to answer.

It tried to answer it in the metaphysical way; before that myth tried to answer this question, then metaphysical religion, metaphysical philosophy, a fight between religion and philosophy, and finally now free philosophy claims to be the only capability of man that cannot give an answer to that question, but it can pursue that question with clear reason. In that sense Lao-tse, to our knowledge, was the first, or one of the first, who made that claim: namely, to pursue the question, to ask for the first time at all the question: 'what for?' because this question could not even have been



raised in mythical circumstances. I am very glad to see that finally some mythologist has finally succeeded in writing a good analysis of myth as far as this can be done by science. It has been done by Mr. Henry Frankfort in a book called, "Before Philosophy." This book might be of great help to you at least to see or to check that I am not talking through my hat -- that means, that the scholars of myth have finally arrived at certain conclusions about the mythical mind itself that are very near to my conclusions though they are not put in the philosophical way, but they are facts and since they are facts, those facts at least can give you a certain help in seeing how difficult it is to understand the mythical mind.

For us it might be helpful here to know that the mythical mind could not raise the question, 'Why' because the question was already always answered. Being itself was meaning. One just had to do certain things, it was meaning. There was no split between meaning and being. This split could only come at the same moment when man, himself, did not feel contained any more in being and set himself, so to speak, apart from being and against being. At that moment science became possible. Science would never have developed if man would not have taken nature into his own hands. This was done first by philosophy.

Those philosophers we are talking about made possible the development of free science, free art and free philosophy

and in a way metaphysical religion -- that means everything that built our culture since then. The shock that they must have received is almost unimaginable. Those first men who discovered that there might be a split between being and meaning, that no meaning is guaranteed in being, that the question, 'What for' was by no means answered, that, on the contrary, it has to be raised. Lao-tse is a contemporary -- he lived in the 6th Century before Christ. He is a contemporary of the first independent Greek philosophers from Thales, Pythagoras to Heraclitus; he is a contemporary of the Buddha in India, of Zarathustra in Persia and he is a contemporary of the Hebrew prophets. What a time and what contemporaries! That is the time he lived in though he did not live in a time where he knew about those people or where he could have had any idea. No communications like today. If such a time like that would happen to us and we would have contemporaries like the Jewish prophets, the Greek philosophers, the Chinese philosophers, the Indian philosophers of Buddha -- well, we would at least know it and what a joy that must be, but we haven't such a time. We had such a time and did not know it. He belongs to those contemporaries.

Now the strange thing here is that though there was no communication. Today we even aim at one world and for the first time we are entitled to dream that beautiful dream and

to try. At that time everybody and every people were isolated and now we see the strange phenomenon that nevertheless there was a unity of the human mind -- namely, all those achievements -- the first Greek philosophy, the Jewish prophets, the Zarathustrian teaching, Buddha's teaching and Lao-tse's teaching all had something definitely in common. They are all as if they had been in communication, as if they knew each other. Sometimes one cannot even understand that Zarathustra could not have known Buddha and Lao-tse because without knowing them, how could he ever have arrived at a middle position between them, taking both their positions into account and making a synthesis of them, but he surely did not know them. He proceeded as all the others did, only purely out of the reasoning process of the human mind that had started at that time and they all came to related results -- very much related results -- which makes for us a unity of the first appearance of the free human mind.

Coming out of myth, breaking with myth, was a little easier in China than it must have been for the Buddha in India. In the first place the Indian myth is the richest in the world. The Chinese is poor compared to it but, on the hand, it was more difficult because at the time of Lao-tse in the breakdown of the Chinese empire, the old mythical empire, there had arisen teachers who came straight out of the myth by rationalizing the myth, not asking fundamental ques-



tions like 'Why' and 'What for,' but by just re-interpreting the myth in a rational way, making doctrines out of it, had almost the power in China -- the great representative of this trend is Confucius. Confucius and all the other teachers of this time belonged to a class that was the servant class of the emperor and the little kings and the feudal lords in China. The clubs, the writers -- Chinese culture was from the beginning a writing culture, only to learn the 14,000 signs in Chinese language means to be a great scholar, so it was a secret caste, a caste of educated, highly trained men and they tried to interpret the meaning of the ten old emperors -- namely, the meaning of the myth -- and to rationalize it.

Confucius was only the most successful of them. He rationalized it in a way that from him dates what we still, in the 20th Century, call Chinese education and that is a thing which is absolutely full of horrors because it means training from earliest childhood in certain definite ways, permanently impressing on the human mind duties upon duties from the smallest performance on. The Chinese child always has to behave in certain definite ways. For every situation a certain point is absolutely prescribed. He has to learn that. Then he grows up, he becomes an intellectual; the young man has 20 years more of training in order to understand all the signs of Chinese and become a learned man -- an education

that depends only on learning, not on thinking. Confucianism has prevailed in China and it has made the Chinese people, so to speak, always ready to be ruled -- and that by totalitarianism.

Lao-tse was not only Confucius' enemy (if he was a contemporary of his which we do not exactly know) but certainly the enemy of all those teachers. We must first understand that in order to understand why Lao-tse always talked about not acting. When we read that we think he means we shouldn't do anything, but he just wants to make a distinction between acting and doing -- by acting he understands this busybodiness without any thinking, that, not only at that time but through all Chinese history, has been the main stigma of the Chinese; a busybodiness that they were born for and pressed into by toiling the land. There is no race in the world that has labored that much in history as the Chinese and they had to and that goes into their learning and into everything. So a man who turns up in the midst of this busybodiness and suddenly does not act, he must make such an impression. He defies society and the whole life around him in a way, in a most daring way, and that is what Lao-tse did. It is almost inconceivable for now to know what it must have meant at this time and how the man could survive because if we consider his non-acting and take that seriously at face value then we would have to explain why, for heaven sakes, such a quiet man

who does not act, who apparently didn't even talk much, let alone write, because this little book was written only when he left his country as an emigrant because he had to leave and a custom officer at the border asked him a few questions and he gave him answers and so he said. "But why do you want to take that wisdom away with you? One doesn't do that. Won't you sit down and write it so that we might have it, too?" Then he is supposed to have written for the first time in his life and he was then 70. So a man who has not written a word, who has not spoken much it seems, who never acted -- if we take that at face value -- why did he have to leave the country in order to save his skin?

We have in him the father, the originator of what still plays a role in our time and has played a big political role in our time -- namely, by the help of Gandhi -- on non-resistance. Non-resistance is one of the most active things in the world -- even politically -- and Lao-tse, for example, was called by the Chinese, 'the hidden one' as the Greeks called Heraclitus the dark one, the obscure one. Well, Heraclitus knew why he chose a form of writing that seemed to be obscure -- though his writings are really clear as lightening. And Lao-tse knew why he was so silent and chose a form of writing and communication that was so hidden. In his life he was hidden himself; he was unassuming, he was a clerk in the imperial archives, he lived by that, he belonged to that



class, but he must have had a followership. In China where everything is prescribed, this land where for centuries and centuries a definite Confucian and scribes' rule has been exerted, this same China has also always been the country of secret societies since its earliest beginning -- and secret societies in China did not and does not mean what we mean by it today, it meant always centers of passive resistance, skeptics, people who wanted to live another way and built little societies within that tremendous society.

Lao-tse was the best known of them. He built such a followership and they knew very well why they expelled him -- as the Athenians knew very well why they killed Socrates. He had it coming to him, so to speak! He had made it come to him by his passive resistance to the main principles of Chinese mythical and rationalized mythical life and he was a radical in the real sense of the word -- not in the sense that he was extremist or a revolutionist. He was a radical in the real sense. He smelled the root of that whole system and he directed his acts directly against that root. This root is Tao -- what the Chinese called then and call now Tao. In his Book, Tao-Teh King, we have meaning and being, already in the title and it is split. (King means the great book; Teh we could translate best as life and Tao as meaning.) Teh is the key to what Lao-tse has to say -- namely, he says, "There is no identity of being and meaning." Meaning --

Tao originally means only the way. In the oldest Chinese writing, before they ornamentalized it, when the hieroglyphics were still given in a primitive manner, then Tao was a sign of just a way and many feet in it. It just means the way of all flesh, the way of all being, the way all thinks go, the outtrodden way, that means the most known way, the way of all things, all beings go this way -- which is meaning, the way of Tao. Meaning and being are identical. It is the most known, the most agreed upon way of life because it is the way of all things, of all beings. That is the meaning of Tao in Chinese.

In that Confucius uses the same. He builds now a whole rationalized system on this way -- which is the old way, the way of the ten emperors, the way beings have always gone, will always go, and you, the little Chinese have to go, and you have to go, and you just have to go. And now Lao-tse comes and says like all great writers who do almost not write but in the end are forced to write finally a few lines perhaps or two epics like Homer, he states his purpose, he lays the ax to the root in the very first proverb of his. "The Tao that can be told of is not the absolute Tao. The names that can be given are not absolute names." That is in two sentences -- the whole overthrow of the Chinese and mythical systems. He says to them smilingly and very unobtrusively,

"You always talk and teach the way. You think you can teach the way. You think you know the way. You know nothing about the way. You know nothing about truth. We know nothing about the Absolute. We know nothing about Tao." He says the same that Socrates says. I know that I do not know -- and please you be aware that you do not know either and do not claim it. With that he cuts the ground, he blows the ground away upon which all those mythical and rationalized mythical teachers stand -- with that one sentence. By saying the Tao cannot be known. We do not know the Tao. The Tao is meaning which man does not know. In being it is not contained -- on the contrary, being might be contained in meaning, but we do not know that <sup>meaning.</sup> ~~meaning.~~ If we want to pursue that meaning, to go the way, though we will find out that it is not the down-trodden way, that it is precisely not the way of all beings, but that it is the hidden way, the way that only can be found by human reason, by striving for meaning and knowing first that one does not know meaning and not know Tao.

How Western that all is if we look nearer at it, how little the difference is between this thinker and a much later thinker who puts it all in much more philosophical terms, namely Socrates. And what happened to Socrates happened to Lao-tse -- only that it happened to Socrates already shortly after his death and to Lao-tse only 250 years later with his pupil, Chuang-tse -- a metaphysics was made out of his litte



book. So if you read the commentaries of Chuan-tse on Lao-tse, please be aware that you read Plato talking about Socrates and not Socrates himself. As to the original text, unfortunately Socrates, being a big talker, did not write himself. Lao-tse, fortunately, was forced to write by this custom officer, so we have his text and if you look at his text, only then will you find that he doesn't talk anything about the heavenly pleasure of contemplation, how the philosopher sits above all things and only contemplates in this heavenly pleasure of "theoria," Plato's pleasure, too -- namely, contemplation, being above all things, being, so to speak, in the middle of all things. Lao-tse himself doesn't say anything like that. He does not enjoy philosophy as a higher capability of man, putting it above all things -- no, he sees philosophy as what it is -- namely, as the task of man who wants to find out about his way in life, about Tao, the tremendous task to find out a little bit of the unknown and unknowable, Tao; to find the right way, to establish it here on earth ---a task, a task of hard thinking, reasoning and acting according to reasoning -- but not the joy of a man who thinks himself superior to other human beings. The difference between Chuang-tse and Lao-tse shows best first in the fact -- as Lin Yu Tang also said, though he thinks that Chuang-tse is a real Laotsean, but he notes the fact that with the lowness of Lao-tse, that he always

wanted to be the lowest one, the hidden one, because he needed time to think, that he thought the philosopher's role is the role of the man who takes upon himself all the most doubtful things in life, does not have ambition, is not entitled to have ambition, does not feel superior -- that Chaung-tse cannot realize, as Lin Yu Tang said. On the contrary, he enjoys the position of the philosopher being above all things.

Things have already been reversed, so we stick to the original teachings of Lao-tse and use commentaries of Chuang-tse only in order to light up certain points and we have to use those commentaries very, very carefully. So in Tao itself, in the very word Tao, the whole reversal of the Chinese world and, in a way, the best formulation for what was happening then for all the world, is given in one single sentence and interpretation -- which means being and meaning are not identical and meaning is not known; meaning has to be found, meaning has to be found out, it might have to be produced because man is the only being that cares for meaning, that has to care for meaning because he cannot live without meaning and when it is taken away from him, meaning in the sense that it is identical with being as it was in the myth, then this amounts to a great catastrophe, a catastrophe that makes him shake in his very existence because this seemed to promise certainty and seemed to answer the question 'Why' -- and suddenly we have no answer and have to ask 'Why' and 'What for' and that makes him tremble.

This trembling, this fear and trembling of Søren Kierkegaard occurred again in the 19th Century when we once more lost an illusion: namely, the illusion that had been built up in the meantime that meaning is divided from being but that there is a meaning beyond being which is also being -- namely, the world of ideas or the world of the Christian heaven, the world of metaphysics, and therefore we can be quiet again. And we have been quiet; our soul, so to speak, has been quieted by metaphysical religion, metaphysical philosophy and all those assumptions. When they broke down with Kant's cold-blooded question 'Is metaphysics possible at all?' and the answer, 'No, it isn't,' then we were ~~xxxxx~~ in the same predicament as they were and again in fear and trembling because we knew that the foundations of our life had gone, that again we had to ask 'Why,' to look for a way of life that had new meaning -- we had to answer again. That is the identity of our situation with the situations of those philosophers.

The fear that must have crept in, we can see in the hatred of Chinese philosophers, Confucian and others, who were rationalizers of myth, against Lao-tse. The only exception is Confucius himself who seems to have respected Lao-tse and Lao-tse's teachings -- only saying, "I cannot understand Lao-tse." Of course, he could not understand Lao-tse because he thought everything was so clear and Lao-tse kept telling



and his pupils nothing is clear, we do not know the Tao. The others were of a hatred that is still astonishing and is only equalled in late Hellenistic and Roman times between Greek philosophers. They would almost have tried to kill him if he had still been alive. They said about him, "He is a preacher of nothingness. They teach nothing but nothingness, nothing is but nothing." It sounds as if it is said today because again they say, "Oh, those modern philosophers like Bergson, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Kierkegaard, they are such harmful boys. They seem to think about nothing but nothing. They think nothingness is the only thing that exists. They are only interested in nothingness. They are not positive. They are so negative. Let's kill them." It is the same situation.

Now Lao-tse is the first one who uses, in a way -- 'in a way' because the Chinese does not give exactly the same sense -- the term nothingness and nothing. He derives it from this statement that all that is being which is not identical with meaning, that therefore meaning must be in the nothing, in that which is not. By that which is not he means merely that which cannot be seen, that which is not bodily there, that cannot be seen but can only be thought, only by thinking and only for thinking (he means) exists meaning. Meaning cannot exist in what is being. It can only exist in thinking being because it exists only in thoughts. Whatever

it might be -- and he does not know what it is -- but it exists, if it exists, only in thought -- so it is not nothing; it is only not being but what is not being in the sensual sense, in the sense that it can be grasped, must not be nothing. It can be something which we just, by our senses, cannot become aware of, which we can only become aware of by our thoughts and by our thinking -- thinking, something that has no substance, that cannot be grasped and is nevertheless there and is decisive. This he now tries to describe in all different kinds of ways. It is interesting that in the speculation about nothingness in our time, in our most recent time, in the thinking of Martin Heidegger, nothingness has been defined in terms -- I do not know if he knows that, he might have -- of Lao-tse.

Let me first enlarge on a certain point so we understand the man, Lao-tse, better. The style of his is the style of proverbs, of folksayings. He writes in proverbs. They are all, of course, transformed proverbs. They are aphorisms that have an essence of thinking but those aphorisms are put in the most simple way, in analogy of proverbs as if he wanted to be read by peasants and not by Confucian scholars. It is astonishing, and a Chinese told me this once, how few Chinese hieroglyphics you need to know in order to read Lao-tse and how many you need to know in order to read the Chinese scholars. Here he is also an anti-scholar. He

tries to write in a way that everybody might understand because he claims that everybody can understand -- as Socrates claims -- that there is no class of higher philosophical superior beings, that man is a philosophic being and that everybody can think and understand. So he puts it always in the most simple way. As for so-called nothingness he says, "Walls and windows and doors make the house but the empty in the house is what makes the meaning of the house." That what is empty makes the essence and the meaning. He says, "We build bowls and pots of clay and they consist of clay but the emptiness in the pots is sense, the meaning and the essence of the pot." We make wheels and we have to unite them in the middle but what is empty there where all the spokes unite that makes the essence of the wheel because otherwise the wheel would not turn. That is a Laotsean analysis and perhaps the most famous one he ever made.

So he tries to make us aware that being is related to non-being. With non-being he means only emptiness, something that gives only space, makes only for possibilities, cannot be grasped by our senses, cannot be had and nevertheless is there, is definitely there. This is the first clear-cut space concept we know in all human thinking. As we will find in this book -- I am happy about (Before Philosophy) because they say they have discovered now that there is an inability in the mythical mind to relate to space and time. This abso-



lute inability of the mythical thinking as to time and space is that they are unable to get an abstract concept of time and space. They cannot think about time and space in the abstract and they prove it point by point in the Mesopotamian, Egyptian thinking, mythical thinking. It can be proven also, as we will do when we come to the Buddha in Indian mythical thinking and in Chinese mythical thinking, that time and space concepts are concretely: that means space is only the addition of bodies seen by the senses. If we add body to body to body to body then we have infinite space. That is their concept of space. Time is concrete, too. If we add life to life to life to life then we have infinite time.

The abstract which makes science possible, philosophy possible is to understand that things are in time and in space and that therefore time and space are not concrete things, that they transcend being, that they are what Lao-tse calls the empty -- emptiness or as he says also void ; hollowness. He means the abstract and this analysis of his shows that he is the first one who has an abstract concept of space, or the other way around as I would interpret it -- the moment the human being showed that it could make an abstract concept of time and space, this very moment the human being showed that I am right when I said that we are above time and space because otherwise we couldn't have made it. The pre-condition is the ontological condition of man, his on-

tic condition, his condition in being that he is a being that is above time and space because only such a being can make a concept of abstract time and space. That is the philosophical side of it, but the scientific one is that without that abstract concept of time and space science as well as free art, as we will see in Homer, who also makes his own concept of time and space, and it is an abstract one, would never have been possible -- let alone philosophy -- without this step out of the myth.

In that sense all the personalities we consider here are outstanding personalities, outstanding in a very profound meaning -- namely, they stand out of the myth and they stand as single figures. They were not related, as we have seen, in their time, and everywhere they have showed up they have remained singular solitary figures. It is a very strange that the people that finally as a people became the only outstanding people of history -- namely, the Greeks, -- the only people that stand alone among all peoples in history, that they chose and invented a style of art that made the symbol of those figures -- namely, the Greek column -- which is the symbol of the free-standing man, as the Greek statue is. All statues before Greek art are related like in the myth to all being. A Greek statue stands in itself; it is a free-standing statue. In that sense they were all free and free-standing and outstanding men, the first persona-

lities and the greatest ones because they were forced to be the greatest ones. They wouldn't have survived against that opposition if they had not had the courage to stand absolutely alone in themselves. That accounts for the hidden Lao-tse, for the hidden Heraclitus; it accounts for Jesus of Nazareth and Socrates having been murdered -- because they were so outstanding and standing in themselves and upon themselves. They were forced to draw all the conclusions. That is what makes their concepts so fundamental.

So this analysis of Lao-tse's of space, which is an abstract concept of space and enables us to handle space, that is what he means by nothingness and he means only what we cannot perceive by ourselves but have to recognize as existant by out thoughts. Empty space, space itself. Now as to time. There is a strange, and in Chinese before Lao-tse not even known, term, an expression which recurs always in Lao-tse's writing. That is to do things at the right time -- at the right time. Timing. A later, not very much later, pupil of Lao-tse, Lieh-tse, has understood it the best and has put it in the form of an anecdote which has a funny ending. The funny ending is due to the fact, Lin Yu Tang says here in his introduction, that all artists and writers in China since then have been Taoists, followers of Lao-tse, and that all officials have been followers of Confucius and he says very nicely and ironically "and when the writers and the artists,



which they had to do in China, became officials then they were officially Confucians and secretly Taoists. This fact that Taoism played this role in Chinese history shows that they had to hide, so Lieh-tse gave this story which is partly Lao-tsean with a Confucian ending in order to bow before the emperor.

He tells the story about an old man and he calls him from the beginning Old Man Fool, but this Old Man Fool has a double meaning. It is Lao-tsean and Confucian. You can say he is a fool in the sense that Socrates said he was a fool -- namely a layman, somebody who is not a scholar, somebody who is not a learned man, but just has real wisdom -- or you can think, "Oh, he is just a fool. Old men have such foolishness, such foolish ideas." The Old Man Fool was met by Lieh-tse, the philosopher, on a mountain and Old Man Fool was about to load some stones into a chariot and Lieh-tse says to him, "What are you doing here, Old Man Fool" "Oh, I am just starting to dismantle this mountain." "But how can you, an old man of 80 stand here and start to dismantle this mountain and what for anyhow?" So he says, "See, my acres are down here on this side of the mountain. The well we need in order to water those acres is on the other side of the mountain. So this is a tremendous labor always to go over this mountain to fetch the water so I decided to dismantle this mountain." "But Old Man Fool, how can you do that -- I mean you are 80." And he said, "Don't worry about

that. You see I have seven sons. My seven sons have at least three or four sons already. You have no idea -- my family will get rid of this mountain in a jiffy." So now this story ends in the Confucian way, because now it goes to a Greek myth -- namely to God about whom Lao-tse never talks, who hears that and says to the ghost of the mountain, "What can we do with Old Man Fool if he has such a kind of a faith?" So do it for him as a grace."

But here is contained a new and abstract concept of time: namely, man is in time in all myth and we are thrown back into time as we have seen in our time because we have no concept of eternity any more -- that means we have no real human concept of time; we have lost the abstract concept of time which had enabled us to make mathematics, so we might even lose mathematics if we continue that way, let alone philosophy. This concept is concrete and abstract. Here an absolute turn is made: namely, man is not in time here; he is above time because time he has, he has time; the fact that he can have children and so on means that if he can create a common will among them then the time in which this mountain stands and is contained cannot prevail against man because man can get rid of this natural power of time by his own having time. He puts his own time against natural time, given time, the time of being, or we can say the time of meaning, which is the time of will, of human will,

which exists in nothing but thought, which cannot exist in any given being; it exists only in thought and thinking but when this thinking will to dismantle this mountain can be conveyed from generation to generation and they stick to it then this time of man will have gotten rid of the time of being and the time that meaning had is the transcendent time because this is the concept of transcendence.

Transcendent space means abstract space. We say only abstract space because we use it scientifically but the concept of abstract space and abstract time have only become possible because could think of transcending space and time and did so and those thoughts of Lao-tse are the first that transcend time and space and therefore enable man to handle time and space, to get rid, to a certain degree, of time and space and to create in the world. There is more necessary in order to liberate the human mind for the first time as in Lao-tse from the conditions of myth and we are not through with Lao-tse. We will have to consider those points too -- namely, what man is in his sense, how man is apart from being and what the meaning of man might be, the only being that has relation to meaning.

In the meantime I recommend to you to read again the Tao Teh King and for those who are interested, it might be easier to find out for themselves how many times Lao-tse tries to describe this nothingness, this abstract, this



transcendence in space and time in those 81 sayings, to find that out yourself and to enumerate them would be most helpful for our course. Also, I would like if you read it again that you would come forth with questions because Lao-tse is full of paradoxes. We will have to analyze next time what doing and acting really means with him and what passive resistance in that sense means, that it is a tremendous force, and this great symbol of water that he uses always we will have to analyze before we understand his thoughts fully and see how modern they are and how much Whitman is a Lao-tsean when he says, "I water the roots of everything that grows." And how much Emerson is a Lao-tsean if one goes in for his own circular speculation --.that means we still have to do with Lao-tse.