

Dialogues of City and Country II

by Ishida Baigan

Akira MATSUO

前号の紀要に於いて、「都鄙問答」の概略、巻一の要約、及び、私の意企について記述した。今回は巻二の要約のみにとどめる。

梅岩はまず神道と仏教に対する自己の見解を開陳し、それが儒教の教えと矛盾するものではないと説く。つまり神・儒・仏の三教一致を説くのである。

次には、抽象論より一転して、親孝行の仕方を極めて具体的に述べるのである。ある親不幸者を設定し、彼の言い分に逐一反論するという方法である。

最後に「或学者商人ノ学問ヲ譏ノ段」という段を設け、梅岩の思想を熱っぽく語りかけてくる。士農工商の最下位に置かれた商人達は、道德的にも低い階層と見做されていた。つまり、相手をだますことによって社会生活を営んでいるという俗説が、当時の社会には根強かったのである。梅岩はこの俗説に反論し、商人の存在は士農工と同様不可欠なものであると説き、商人のあるべき姿を具体的に論じている。「是マデー貫目ノ入用ヲ七百目ニテ賄、是迄一貫目有リシ利ヲ九百目アルヤウニスベシ」即ち、倏約と薄利のすすめである。同時に商人は志を高く持つべきであると唱え「心ハ士ニモ劣ルマジ」と教える。そして「士農工商トモニ天ノ一物ナリ。天ニ二ツノ道有ランヤ」と言って巻二を締めくくるのである。

商家に二十年以上奉公しながら、道を探し求めた梅岩の考えが生き生きと伝わってくる。この商人への愛が、以後、町人道德として広く社会的に発展して行った心学運動の基礎となったのであろう。

尚、英文の検証については、M. Hood 氏、D. Jones 女史のお世話になった。本誌上を借りて、あらためて御礼を述べる。

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CHAPTER II

What is Keeping a Proper Distance from the Gods and Spirits?

A man asked: Shinto in our country differs from Confucianism in China. Confucius said to Fan Chih, "If you revere the gods and spirits and keep a proper distance from them, then you will be called a man of wisdom." The Shinto of our country is not like this. When the gods and spirits of China and Japan are the same in name, how can they differ so?

Answer: And how do you esteem the gods of this country?

Question: First of all we must acquaint ourselves with our gods and then approach them. To keep at a distance from them is to fail in reverence towards them. Thus, if you have a wish, you subscribe a vow to it and pray. If your prayer is granted, you may have to set up a torii or to make repairs to the shrine according to the terms of the prayer. In this way, our gods will favour our supplications. On the other hand, the Sage says that we should keep a proper distance from the gods. How great a difference! Given this, it might be said that those who tend towards Confucianism offend against our Shinto.

Answer: To keep a proper distance from the gods is not as you say. In the worship of the gods other than our ancestors, we must study above all to hold them in awe. Accordingly we should purge impure wishes from our prayers. But to worship ancestors is to be filial, not to keep them at a distance. "Keeping a proper distance from the gods" has been greatly misinterpreted. "The gods will not brook impropriety."¹ It is disrespectful, therefore, to approach a god with a profane supplication. Confucius does not mean that we should keep reverence at a distance. According to you, we set up a torii or repair the shrine in obeisance to a god when our prayer has been answered, do we not?

Question: Yes, I said so.

Answer: So, if a certain man said to you, "I wish my son to marry the daughter of your next door neighbour. Would you make the match? Of course, I will recompense you for your trouble.", then would you still arrange the marriage despite his insult?

Question: His attitude is somewhat patronising. How can I possibly accept his proposal unless blinded by greed for reward?

Answer: For shame you refuse to lower yourself: still less could you say when you ask some favour of a nobleman, "If you work this successfully to my advantage, I will reward you with such and such a sum of money."?

Question: This would be to disparage the nobleman. How could I affront him with that?

Answer: And when you pray to the pure gods thus, "Answer my prayer, and I donate a torii or patch up your shrine.", the manner of your asking would be offensive even if addressed to a mere nobleman. Do you expect the gods to be so mean as to be swayed by your offer of a torii or shrine repairs? Yet, if you offend the gods by discourteous and self-righteous offerings, you will invite divine retribution. This is truly awe-inspiring. I hear there is a

hymn to a shrine² which runs, "If your heart only accords with the true Way, whether you pray or not, divine aid will be granted." When Confucius fell gravely ill, Tsu Lu³ asked leave to pray for him. The Master rejoined, "I have long been praying and so you need not." "Praying" here signified that he had long followed the true Way. If a man follows the true Way, why need he pray? Still, you say if we fail to supplicate our gods and offer up prayers, we trespass against Shinto. Why? All the works of the sages are directed to awakening you from such delusions. If books mislead you, then it would be better if the books had never been. You know that from antiquity, the Imperial Court has adopted Confucianism as an aid for this land of the gods. How can you expect to placate our gods with bribes which flout propriety and righteousness? The essence of our gods is perfect integrity and so we call them 神明 shinmei(deity). We find faith in gods to purify our heart. There are some, however, who visit the shrines day after day with improper and unrighteous wishes in mind and offer up bribes even as they pray. In a word, they stain the spotless integrity of the gods; they are sinners and will infallibly call down divine punishment. The Master said, "When you offend against Heaven, there is no longer any god to pray to.", meaning that to will anything other than Heaven's will is to transgress. Men's hopes are usually for themselves but selfishness troubles others and troubling others is a grave offence. How can such an offender find favour with the gods? The gods never treat men unequally. If, in accepting one man's prayer, a god caused another man loss, it would seem that the god showed bias to one side. The fulfilment of a prayer is not unlike the inheritance of an estate. A son need not claim the rights to an estate but rather they will come down to him of themselves, if he only conducts himself well. But if he misconducts himself, they will not come to him. Whether a prayer is answered or not is like this: we should know that Heaven's will is within ourselves. The gods' heart is like a mirror, reflecting all; impartial to all. Yet some men, when their desires are fulfilled, claim that their prayers have been answered. Hearing this, other men say so-and-so's wish has come true because he made this or that offering. Such hearsay will have men profane deity by approaching the gods as bribe takers. This is a deplorable state of affairs which stems from ignorance of Heaven's will.

Question: The Master said, "To worship the spirit of an ancestor other than your own is to be obsequious." That is, you should worship only your ancestors. In our country, however, we play sacred music and offer the first harvest of rice in thanksgiving for the good offices of our local gods and those of the Great Shrine.⁴ In this, we differ from China. But you say that all gods are the same: why?

Answer: *The Doctrine of the Mean* says, "The power of the god of creation is truly great, giving all things, excepting none, their form." The god of creation here means the god of the entire

universe, the twin principles of the cosmos. "Giving all things, excepting none, their true form" means that the god created heaven and earth and governs all. The gods of Japan who inherit the power of Izanaginomikoto⁵ and Izanaminomikoto⁶ also rule the sun, the moon, the stars and all things, excepting none. Therefore, this country is said to be the only land of the gods. You should weigh this point. And in our country, as not in Croma, the line of the Great Shrine succeeds to the Imperial throne from generation to generation. Hence the emperor worships at the Great Shrine as the memorial to his ancestors and even commoners pay homage there. There is no such custom in China. In Japan sacred music is performed and the first harvest of rice is offered because the emperor worships his ancestors at their memorial. In effect, millions of people offer tribute to the emperor, even though those who offer tribute may not hold ceremonies themselves. Even the governor of the country is not permitted to perform those Shinto rites reserved for the emperor. "Only a man of answerable rank⁷ may hold certain rites." In this respect, Japan is no different from China. *The Analects* say, "The Three Families⁸ played the *yung*⁹ while the offerings were being cleared away. The Master said, 'In attendance were the great lords, The Emperor in august dignity.' What relation has this to the mausoleum of The Three Families?" Although they were only high stewards, The Three Families in the state of Lu performed memorial rites in honour of their ancestors by playing the *yung* which only the emperor might use to sing requiem for the repose of the souls of his forefathers. Not only this, they held rites for the god of Mt. T'ai,¹⁰ which again, none but the emperor might do. Overreaching our station in this way is against reason and forbidden; therefore the Master said, "To worship the spirit of an ancestor not your own is to be obsequious." Mencius also said, "The spirits of the land and the crops are feted for the benefit of the people." Hence, there are those in China too who offer up the first harvest to their gods. In Japan, too, we do not call the performance of sacred music or the offering of the first harvest a festival. For example, Gion-e¹¹ and Goryo-matsuri¹² are both celebrations for the local spirits, held so that all may live peacefully under the protection of the local spirits. And they are observed even if men are in mourning. From this, it is clear that they are not held for the repose of the souls of only one man's ancestors. You should free yourself from conventional views and go to the root of things.

A Zen Priest Criticizes the Layman's Destruction of Life.

A Zen priest came to me and said, "Today I visited a certain man's house where they served fishes, breaking the Buddhist precept against killing, all because it was the son's wedding day. They kill living creatures at a festival. What shamefully heartless things the laity will do at a time of celebration!"

Answer: It is sad, that although you have studied Buddhism, you know only Hinayana, not Buddha's Mahayana.

Question: It is not that I do not know. According to the Buddhist creed, you must first follow the five commandments¹³ and, of these five, the commandment against murder is the gravest. It may be compared to Benevolence among the five cardinal virtues of Confucianism. How could a Confucian approve a lapse in benevolence? If you do not know the meaning of benevolence yet, you are unlikely to understand the true heart of the sages, despite your Confucian preaching.

Answer: Benevolence is to be full of selfless love. It is impossible for you to know benevolence because you are not free from yourself. You seem, further, to be ignorant of the truths of Zen, even if you have studied them. The bonze Nanchuan¹⁴ killed a cat and the bonze Chien-tzu¹⁵ caught and ate shrimps. Should we condemn them for these acts? You also kill numberless creatures daily. To begin with, do you know how many grains of rice you eat a day?

Question: That is not killing. Grain has no heart.

Answer: Did the tenets of Mahayana ever discriminate between sentient and insentient beings? Were there such a distinction, we should have to say that neither soil nor plant life has the Buddha-nature. According to a chapter of *The Age of the Gods*,¹⁶ Izanaminomikoto says, "I'll strangle a thousand of your people," to which Izanaginomikoto answers, "I'll have my people bear a thousand five hundred children." These two gods represent the dual forces of the cosmos, the two dynamics of nature between heaven and earth, one fostering life, the other destroying it. We obey this principle in all things, indeed, everything obeys one and the same principle, although each to its own degree. It is by virtue that these degrees are ordered. You should understand that the workings of the Universe accord with this description. The prevailing of the stronger is such a working of nature: look at the birds and the beasts, for example: the eagle catches and eats other birds and beasts; the heron and the coal goose catch and eat fishes; the sparrow and other small birds eat spiders and grubs, while the dog and the wolf hunt deer and monkeys. Do you deem such killing cruel or else natural? You ought to know how not even precepts can be observed if they are against nature. If you leave rice for a few days after hulling it in the height of summer, bran worms begin to breed. The worms are too minute to see, but if you put your hand in the rice, it itches. Then again, if you pour the rice into a black-lacquer bowl, empty it out again, then look at the bowl carefully in the sun, you will see the worms moving. It is true that grain has no heart but eating rice with bran worms is itself a violation of the Buddhist precept forbidding the destruction of animal life. A priest who would abide by the commandment

could not eat any grain in summer, but no one can live without eating: we all know that only those who eat survive. If you wish to observe the precepts stemming from the teachings of the Buddha, the first thing to learn is detachment from the self. If you once recognize that your body as it stands is allied to earth, water, fire, wind and sky, you will become part of the Universe. Then, which is the more precious, man or bran worm? You cannot kill inestimable man in your tenderness to lowly bran worms. The substance of Buddha is detached and altogether beyond ratiocination. Shakyamuni himself must have eaten grains with bran worms. Therefore, we cannot avoid killing humble creatures for the sake of more precious beings. Originally, the Buddhist precept against killing would seem to have been founded on this principle and it would be easier to observe such precepts if you knew the laws of nature. Gods, Buddha and Confucius are neither teachers nor pupils. Act as they will, all conforms to the laws of nature. If you are ignorant of natural laws, you will attain to naught. Meditate upon this. All things are created in accordance with the laws of nature and some are doomed to sacrifice themselves for others, some are destined to be eaten by others. The laws of Heaven are for all things essentially the same, yet all things, high and low, each has its own form. It is the Heaven's rule that higher beings eat the lower. According to Buddhism, life on land, in plants and in all other things will infallibly reach Buddhahood. In other words, all things are Buddha, although having their diverse forms, exalted or humble. Precious men-Buddhas eat lowborn corn-Buddhas, fruit-Buddhas, water and fire Buddhas, in this way goes the world in peace. For those who know this law, it is natural that the sages distinguished the noble from the low on the scale of propriety. The sages would use the low for the noble. To give an example as evidence, sovereigns are noble and subjects are low. Subjects have sacrificed themselves for their noble lords but I have never heard of any lord dying for his lowly subjects. It is natural law that the lowly save the noble's life at the cost of their own, yet this does not prove the sovereign is blinded by selfinterest. Here is why the sages value propriety in all actions. A subject who deserts his sovereign, then, is called a traitor. You too have killed and eaten myriads of corn-Buddhas and fruit-Buddhas since this morning and still you do not know this law. You live, however, in harmony with that same law of the noble surviving at the expense of the low. If you insisted on adhering to the Hinayana, sparing animals by eating only insentient things, would it follow that the Buddhist teaching, "life on land, in plants and in all other things are Buddhas" is false? If this is false, tear up and fling away all the Scriptures. But if you will still follow them, then, necessarily, greater Buddhas eat smaller Buddhas and you too must kill animals. You carp at a layman's destruction of animal life at a celebration while you yourself survive only by such killing. To defame others without knowing the heart of Buddha is a grave offence.

As there are many priests, like yourself, ill-versed in Buddhism, *Reflections in Hours of Idleness*¹⁷ reads, "Some priests are ruined by Buddhism, just as some men of virtue are corrupted by benevolence and righteousness." Men of virtue are called "virtuous" because of their benevolence and righteousness but if you consider why some are ruined by just those virtues, you will clearly understand what Mencius said of Shun, "He walked the path of the benevolence and righteousness that suffused his character; he had no need to seek those virtues." He needed no formulas of benevolence and righteousness; he realized only the truth of the fountain-head of the Universe. What need had Shun, who was already free of himself, to pursue benevolence and righteousness as an aim? If you could perceive that the Way for a sage to follow is a harmonious whole summed up in the sole absolute truth and that Buddhism too should teach no lessons limited to the concrete, you would not be censured by Kenko.¹⁸ Although you study Zen, you have not yet comprehended its essence. Thus, you say that a layman's destruction of animal life at a celebration is shameful. Know your own nature, and you will certainly be able to keep the five, even one, two hundred commandments. Do not belittle this. First you must understand, that not until you know yourself, can you understand how monks should observe the Buddhist precept and yet, how laymen may eat fish or birds at a celebration. What I say is neither dubious nor unfamiliar: you must simply distinguish between the clergy and the laity. Here is a parable to help you understand: you have only one body, topped by the head which cannot serve as the feet. No more may the feet serve as hands, nor the mouth, the gate of nourishment, as eyes, nor yet the ears as the sense of smell, the nose. In this universe, everything has its proper form and obeys a special law according to its form: to everything, a proper law. How, then, can you apply the Buddhist law to the laity? To purify your heart, Buddhism may be helpful. To order your life and your family and to administer the affairs of state well, Confucianism may answer. We use boats to cross the sea and the river, horses and palanquins to go overland. The enforcement of Buddhism on the secular world is no less a folly than crossing river or sea by horse or palanquin. Are those who should observe the five commandments allowed to participate in government and execute criminals? Government will not prosper without the death penalty. How can the affairs of state be administered without punishment? You speak as if to plunge fire into water. Mix them, and the water will boil away, dousing the fire. How can fire and water serve us unless they are kept apart? What do you think of these ideas?

A Man Asks How to Serve his Parents.

A man asked: A clerk who once worked for my grandfather has now become a Buddhist priest. He is always calling me an undutiful son, urges me to be filial, yet I cannot think

myself unfilial. Would you teach us, above all, how to serve our parents?

Answer: In filial piety, above all strive to please your parents and avoid hurting their feelings. In ancient times, a man called Tsang Shan¹⁹ was always sure to offer wine and meat for the repast of his father. When they were being removed, he would ask his father, "To whom should I give what is left?" and whenever his father asked, "Is there anything left?", replying, "Yes, there is.", he tried to find out to whom his father wanted it given. To serve your parents in this way, regarding their feelings highly, is filial piety.

Question: My parents never complain about the food and clothes I provide. I do not think, therefore, I hurt their feelings.

Answer: Thinking it filial piety to nourish just the mouth and body, you misinterpret the loyal words of the clerk who has entered the priesthood. I say, rather, nourish the will. By the way, I would like to enquire about something I have just remembered. I heard that you sometimes go out until late at night to indulge in pleasures. Is this true?

Question: I often used to go out for amusement but my parents were not happy with this and forbade it. I was bewildered and said I could not obey them. Then the priest I spoke of mediated between us and said that they might as well let me go out once or twice a month for I was young. They agreed to his proposal and so I sometimes go out with their understanding. About my coming home late, I rarely go out and so, when I do, I take my time enjoying myself. I never hurt their feelings however. They are small-hearted by nature and do not like to keep our servants sitting up until late. My parents have waited up for me until about two o'clock in the morning to keep me from knocking on the gates. This kind of thing does not happen often, only once or twice a month. They can stay in bed the following day as long as they like, instead. So, I don't think I put them to any trouble.

Answer: You say you are allowed to keep your parents waiting up until the small hours of the morning because you seldom go out to amuse yourself. But, for a start, those who would serve their parents should go to bed late at night, get up early in the morning and then ask them how they are. And have you never gone out for amusement and left your parents waiting up until midnight regardless of how cold or hot it was? Not only is it usually tedious to wait up, but until you return, your parents will worry that you may drink too much, lurch into a brawl, get chilled and catch a cold. Besides, they worry that the family or their servants may think it strange if the parents cannot scold the son for being out so late or, further, if they happen to overhear the servants say after a tedious wait, "It is already past two in the morning.", it is sure to wring their hearts. To say that your parents can sleep late into the following morning if they wish to, without understanding the pain in their hearts is foolish and truly unfilial. And how do you approach your trade?

Question: I do not yet care much for my business. As I have a good number of friends, I must learn Noh chanting, the hand drum, the tea ceremony and so on in order to keep good company. I am quite taken up with these lessons and thus know little about my trade at the moment. That is my clerks' concern and I need not trouble myself. But the clerk in Buddhist orders I mentioned tells my parents again and again that they should have taught me the business routine of the shop from my boyhood. Out of consideration, my father tells me in front of him that I will be instructed in the trade but my mother is angry at heart with the clerk's words and says, "He has no respect for the master's son and meddles in our affairs as if he were speaking to his own heirs. How long he lives! Weeds never die." My father, however, will not answer the clerk back and merely listen obediently as though he owed him respect.

Answer: You say you are kept busy with the polite accomplishments and leave your trade to your clerks, but is it not your trade that allows you to live in ease? Those who ignore their duty to their trades are lower than beasts. Even the dog keeps the gate and the cock announces the dawn. Samurai of high enough rank to keep a horse must also be able to master a horse. Another may write his letters but no samurai can let his groom mount the horse in place of himself. If a merchant neglects his duties in his business, the estate inherited from his ancestors will soon be lost. This is what the clerk in orders was saying. Your mother's annoyance at the clerk shows that the proverb, "Unpleasant advice is strong medicine." is much to the point. The true sovereign is one who accepts his subjects' remonstrances. But to resent a loyal subject's longevity is to desire his death. This brings to mind Chieh²⁰ and Chau²¹. If all who remain are disloyal, the dynasty is on the road to its fall. *The Great Learning* says, "Let a small man govern a country, and misfortunes come one after another and no one can help it, no matter how many good men there are." It is quite wrong of you to think that your father's advice that you receive training in your family trade has come of the Buddhist clerk's suggestion. What the clerk says accords with reason and so your father is only obeying his conscience. Mencius said, "Outsiders destroy a family only after it has destroyed itself." You forget your trade and indulge yourself. Will you first understand this; or you will be forced to sell your house. I hear, by the way, that your parents trouble themselves over your shortness of temper. What have you to say to this?

Question: I am irascible by nature. I want to correct it but I cannot, for it is my nature. However, my temper has caused my parents trouble only once, when I struck a negligent shop-boy. He was hurt and cried out with the pain. I calmed him but he said he wanted to go home despite of his unhealed wound. That caused my parents and the clerks a great trouble but, since then, I have done nothing wrong.

Answer: You said that you were quick-tempered by nature, but nobody is quick-tempered by nature. Self-love is the cause of anger. As you may not act wilfully before your superiors, you can certainly mend the fault if you try to. When you hit the shop-boy, he would surely have felt anger and resentment against you. And yet, though he was angry, he controlled himself because you were his master. If some other man had struck him, would he still have restrained his wrath as he did? He was prudent; he did not lift his hand against his master. Look at him: be prudent, and you too can correct your hastiness. If you are rash in front of your parents, you are no more than a beast. You say you have troubled your parents just once, but even once is no small matter. Think how your parents felt as the shop-boy was bleeding after your blow. They feared not only for his injury but for you too, lest you be executed if the worst happened to him. When, during his reign, Wen ti of Wei built the palace of Ling yun, he ordered his men to hoist a certain Wei Tuan²² aloft in a palanquin²³ so that he could with his brush inscribe a tablet no less than two hundred and fifty feet above the ground. It is said, that, when the palanquin was lowered, his black hair had turned grey. Momentary fear alone made it grey. Your parents too must have suffered as if pierced by a nail, perhaps to the extent of aging five years all at once. Aging is a cause of death: not only swords kill men. If the shop-boy had died on the spot, you might have received a death sentence. Therefore, *The Analects* say, "He who forgets himself in a fit of anger forgets the safety of his parents." Nothing is more unfilial.

Question: As I said, I do not approve of a short temper and I should correct it but I do not think it so very culpable to trouble my parents. I did not know how worried they would be over the boy's accidental injury and so it could not be helped. I try, however, to be as kind to them as possible whenever I can. My father likes his sake and sometimes drinks it to excess. When he does, he maunders on tediously and has no sense of when to retire. This pains my mother. Further, he suffers from the after-effects sometimes. When I remonstrated with him for this drinking, I did it out of consideration for him. Was this too unfilial?

Answer: What you have said strays from the path a son should follow. *The Book of Changes* reads, "Father is sovereign in the household." The master of a family is as a sovereign to his wife and children. Therefore, both you and your mother are only retainers who may by no means urge their master to stop his drinking merely because he is tedious. To say that your mother is pained not only errs from the Way you should follow but also leads astray your mother from the duties of womanhood. Thus, your impiety to your parents is redoubled. Unless you lead a virtuous life, you cannot advise others, certainly not your parents. And, to pass on, where does your living allowance come from?

Question: I get my allowance from my father but I usually spend it before the month is up and so I ask the clerks to make up the difference. They concoct excuses, however, and give me less than I want. Therefore, I importune my mother for more and get three or four ryo²⁴ each time. If I need yet more, I borrow five or ten ryo from others. But my father will retire from business in a few years and then I will repay this money at once. As others understand this well, I can easily borrow even fifty or a hundred ryo.

Answer: This tale presages the doom of your family. For the allowance given you by your parents is like a grant from heaven. You say this allowance covers less than one tenth of your expenditures, which proves you live in luxury, heedless of reason. Heaven forgives none who live in luxury. You also said that you asked the clerks to make up the balance. Is that money theirs or yours? To ask the clerks to bring you your own money with which you cannot make free is unjustifiable. Properly speaking, if you order them to bring you as much as you need, they should do so. But, in reality, you are reversely asking a favour of the clerks. This foreshadows that you will eventually lose your fortune until you have to be fed by those same clerks. You said, that when you wanted more money than they could give you, you importuned your mother for her secret savings, but it is you who should be providing for and feeding her. So far from this, you pester her for loans. Women in general have not much savings. Almost certainly, your mother has to borrow from her parents and brothers to satisfy you. It is shameful to put her to such trouble without reason. You also said that you borrowed from other men when you needed more. In other words, you are forced to have some regard for your creditors, even though you are in possession of an adequate estate. This shows your authority is in decline. Other men loan you money, counting upon your house and land as security and the estate will eventually fall into their hands. Already a sign that Heaven is preparing to cast down your fortune is manifesting itself. *The Book of Songs* says, "When Heaven is about to overthrow Chau, be ye not so much at your ease." This poem describes you well. And why, in any case, do you spend so much money in merrymaking only once or twice a month?

Question: The question is fair. As an example; when the annual play is staged with a famous cast, I always reserve a few boxes, which costs a good sum if the sundry expenses are counted in. I need not go into detail, but it costs more than you think to go to the theatre. It is hard for an unworldly scholar like you to grasp these circumstances.

Answer: You said you reserved as many as two or three boxes for the annual show. You must be paying not only the reception expenses but the fees for the services of geishas, not to mention the gratuities paid to them for every guest invited. It is natural that you cannot cover your outgoings with the fixed sum you receive from your parents, if your extravagant

guests fill two or three boxes. You are, sir, a worthless scoundrel. In squandering the money the clerks earn by the sweat of their brows, you suck their blood. This is no different from the story of Chau, sovereign of Yin, who flayed Pikan's chest because he had remonstrated with the lord for his own good. And you injure the clerks who are always taking pains for the success of your trade. In hurting loyal retainers, you are as evil as Chau. This is reprehensible. If you want to follow the Way, you should give as much as you squander in a day to those who work under you. They will then hold you in great respect for your thoughtfulness which they will esteem almost as Godly. If you were regarded as partaking something of divinity, you would have become a model of what a master ought to be. But, on the contrary, a man like you must be mean to those servants at home. Seeing you so close-fisted, your parents may not realise that you waste their revenue. But is it not pitiful to imagine how your parents will lose their whole estate as if struck by a tidal wave? And do your shop-boys and the servants who go with you refrain from talking about your pleasures with the other members of the household?

Question: I politicly give them tips to keep them quiet. Nobody knows anything.

Answer: It is foolish to assume no one of your household knows about your merrymaking because you tell the servants to keep silence. Your deeds are notorious long before you reveal them yourself. *The Doctrine of the Mean* says, "A secret shows itself more clearly." Before it can take shape, something must be acted and once it is acted, it is manifest. Even if you suppose that other men know nothing of your deeds, you yourself know what you do is evil. Because you know your deeds for evil, you tell your attendants to keep them secret. Why don't you stop them instantly if you know they are wrong? The Master said, "If you are faced with what is righteous and yet leave it undone, you are deficient in courage." Moreover, your shop-boys will learn from you how to spend money in the licensed quarters and how to tell lies and will finally be such wastrel clerks as to steal your money. As you mislead them, you cannot complain of such clerks, yet, should a clerk embezzle your money, you will still hand him over to his guarantor to be tortured. If master and employees both lead a dissipated life in this way, the family estate will be lost presently. "When the Master spoke of the total lack of moral principle on the part of Duke Ling of Wei, K'ang Tzu²⁵ commented, 'That being the case, how is it he did not lose his state?' Confucius said, 'Chung-shu Yu was responsible for foreign visitors, Priest T'uo²⁶ for the ancestral temple and Wang-sun Chia for military affairs. That being the case, what question could there have been of his losing his state?'"²⁷ Duke Ling strayed from the Way but he was able to maintain his state because he relied on those three subjects. The clerk who has entered the priesthood is to your family as the three ministers were to the state of Wei. Yet your mother seems to wish for the

death of the clerk in priestly orders. If he dies, however, all the members of the household will obey only your orders and the family will eventually destroy itself. But the heart can be changed. If you are convinced of your errors and amend them, you can immediately transform yourself into a good and filial man. *The Analects* say, "If a man does not prove his virtue constantly, he will probably suffer shame. The Master said, 'This simply means that there is no point in consulting the oracle in such a case.'" What you will become depends on this. If you foresee the future, judging from what you have been, and change your conduct accordingly, then you will escape the shame brought on you by others and will follow the Way as a son should and your family will prosper long.

A Scholar Criticizes the Merchant's Learning.

A scholar enquired thus: I too love learning. You are spreading your teachings abroad under the name of learning. The path to learning is the Way a sage must follow. Therefore, you and I should both take the same path in the pursuit of learning. Yet Sung ju (宋儒), in²⁸ giving due weight to reason, cleaves rather closer to the philosophy of Lao-tze and Chung-tze²⁹ and to that of the Zen sect than to the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. This I do not understand. You depend upon Sung ju's annotation, yet you certainly claim to be teaching the pure dogma of Confucius and Mencius. Would you be good enough to tell me what you are teaching? I will question whatever I do not understand. I can learn much from your answers. First, what do you hold most in teaching others?

Answer: The essence of learning is to devote your heart (心 kokoro) utterly to realising your nature. Knowing your nature, you know heaven. Heaven is the "heart" of Confucius and Mencius. This heart and that of the Sung Confucians are one and the same. Therefore, the annotation is naturally correct. In knowing your heart, you find the rule of Heaven (天理 tenri). Above all, you should obey Heaven's decrees (天命 tenmei).

Question: You conflate "rule" (理 ri, literally 'reason') with "decree" (命 mei). This is a grave error. "Rule" is external design, coherent perhaps, but inanimate, whereas a "decree" is a command from Heaven, animate as *The Scripture of Documents*³⁰ testifies: "Heaven's decrees change." This shows "rule" is one thing and "decree" quite another. So, how can you insist that inanimate and animate are the same?

Answer: You are particular about trivial details. This is bookish disputation and wide of the essential point. *The Analects* read, "The virtuous man concentrates his efforts on the roots." This extends to all. One who starts on learning must first be able to tell the roots from the branches. Branches proliferate beyond understanding. First, Heaven and Earth came into existence; there followed all other things. Then everything was named, and when

characters had been made, those names were written down. Is it not said that characters were invented by Ts'ang chi after the Fu-i era? The Way of Heaven, though even its name was allotted by man, existed before things were named and characters made. Listen to me and ignore the mere names of things. Confucius said that benevolence was the root of all things; Lao-tzu,³¹ that the great Way was the root of benevolence. The Way and benevolence each have their own names but we cannot tell by the characters representing those names which is the true root. Arbitrarily, we call the root of all things which is voiceless and odourless "sky" (乾 ken), "heaven" (天 ten), "Way" (道 michi), "reason" (理 ri), "decree" (命 mei), "nature" (性 sei) or "benevolence" (仁 jin). These are all one and the same. "Sky" (乾 ken) is the heavenly rule (元亨利貞 gen ko ri tei). These four characters can be interpreted as benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom in terms of human nature. "Sky" (乾 ken) is "rule" (理 ri). Gen ko ri tei (元亨利貞) are its workings; therefore, they are "decrees" (命 mei). Disregard the characters, and you will see that "rule" (理 ri) and "decrees" (命 mei) are one and the same, though taking diverse names. They can be compared to a stream and a pool. Water flowing is called a stream and standing water, a pool. This is "rule" (理 ri) and that is "decree" (命 mei). Motion and repose are two aspects of water. When Confucius was told that Kung-po Liao³² had spoken ill of Tzu-lu before Chisun,³³ he said, "It is destiny whether the Way prevails or not." Mencius also said, "There is an appointment for everything." Both Confucius and Mencius said, "It is destiny whether the Way prevails or not and the administration of the state, whether good or bad, is also a matter of destiny." Therefore, "decree" (命 mei) is a general term for all the works of heaven and "rule" (理 ri) is their substance. *The Book of Changes* reads as follows, "Sages of old invented divination so that they might observe the rule of natural decrees. Divination divided the way of Heaven into light and shade, the way of earth into hardness and softness, and the way of man into benevolence and righteousness. Hence, the principle of the dual forces of the cosmos as manifested in the three orders of heaven, earth and man was established." Although divided between shade and light, hardness and softness, and benevolence and righteousness, heaven, earth and man are ultimately ruled by one principle only. This is the "rule" (理 ri) of natural decrees; those who enact this rule are sages. Accordingly, it is said that "the state is well governed when no special measures are needed."³⁴ This is the Way of heaven. The Master also said, "Shun ruled his state well, yet took no special action." Surely, there can be no other way than to follow the rule of heaven. *The Scripture of Documents* too teaches that if we flout "rule" (理 ri), Heaven will turn its decrees against us and the state will be overthrown. From this, it follows that, if we obey "rule" (理 ri), even today we can act in harmony with Heaven's decrees. The essence of the Way as it touches everything, Heaven, earth, man, beast, even

as far as tree and plant is arbitrarily termed "rule" (理 ri). Characters were invented only recently, several billion years after the creation of the earth, and they represent only a ten-thousandth of the infinity of the heavens. Mark this. To be particular about characters is like lapping up the dregs of wine. Try as you may, you cannot express everything in writing. In the beginning the fabric of heaven and earth had nothing to do with characters, nor yet with life and death; it is unchanging through all ages. "Decree" (命 mei) signifies the operations of that fabric of heaven and earth and so it is in constant flux and motion. "Rule" (理 ri), however, is the fabric itself: therefore it is eternally fixed. We named the unchanging, "rule" (理 ri). Although characters are the instruments of discourse in this world, "rule" (理 ri) is their master. Confucius said, "Standard weights and measures must be laid down." When they are universal, the balance and the measure are highly esteemed in the world. Similarly, the Way of learning will be esteemed when it attains to the summit of "rule" (理 ri) and gives currency to the rule of heaven and the heart of the sages throughout the world. *The Book of Changes* also reads, "Sages of old came to understand the rules of natural decree by attaining the summit of "rule" (理 ri) and knowing thoroughly the nature of things." On reading this, you may see that the text of this book is even now a treasure and current for all ages. You should know that this is the root of learning. If the root is elucidated, all else become clear too.

Question: You say that we can solve problems naturally if only we know the principle of nature, but in reality, things are more difficult. When you tell us they are easy, does "solve naturally" mean "solving" for yourself or "solving" for other men?

Answer: It means solving for all of us.

Question: Surely, it is impossible to solve matters in favour of all concerned. An example: suppose you and I buy a bolt of cotton about one piki³⁵ in length and are about to divide it equally between ourselves. We would covet the better woven half. We think like this at all times, not only when dividing cloth. When you employ servants for a task and two men come to work on the same day, you give one of them more responsibility than the other. Then he will be happy with his duties but not so his companion. Hence it is impossible to decide matters to the mutual satisfaction of both parties.

Answer: That depends on circumstance. Each issue has its own solution.

Question: What do you mean by that?

Answer: If the two servants are equally competent, the one who knocked on your gate first should be given the greater responsibility. They may well not arrive at your gate at the same time. Of course, if one should be more competent than the other, then he should be preferred above the other. Or if two servants have done the same work on the same day,

prefer the one who has done more work. All these are judgements passed by Heaven, not by men. Therefore, I say that each issue has its own solution.

Question: The example of cloth I gave you is trivial. However, you did not answer my question. Is this because you do not understand it yourself?

Answer: I did not answer because the answer is too obvious.

Question: And what should "obvious" mean?

Answer: Confucius said, "Do not do to others what you would not have done to you." What you dislike is naturally disliked by others too. If it is I who divides the cloth between us, I will give you the better half; if it is you, you will surely give the better half to me. But if you happen to take the more closely woven part and give me the coarser, I will not argue because I have troubled you to divide the cloth yourself. If we take things like this, all will be well. If I give you the better part, you will be happy and I shall have cherished benevolence with righteousness. What of this?

Question: Though you incur a loss, you are pleased enough to call it righteousness. Why?

Answer: Because it is far from loss. It is a great profit.

Question: Why do you call an obvious loss "profit"?

Answer: Mencius said, "I will choose righteousness at the cost of my life." The virtuous man prefers righteousness to his own life. The cotton cloth is a small thing, but how could we act against righteousness even if we should be able to conquer a whole nation or win an immense fortune? You may suffer a loss but gain from cultivating benevolence. What could be better than this?

Question: You say you value righteousness above wealth. Then do you never go against righteousness, however great the profit involved?

Answer: Go against righteousness, and your conscience will hurt you. If it is to be free from the qualms of conscience that we pursue learning, how can we act against righteousness only to suffer the qualms of conscience?

Question: Merchants are always striving to make profits by deceiving other men. Certainly, they attain nothing by learning. Yet I hear that many of your followers are merchants. As you teach here and there, you compromise with them, and so you become "a thief of virtue" as the *Analects* say. You are no scholar but a small man swimming with the tide, in thrall to the corrupt world, pandering to vulgar taste, misleading others and deceiving yourself. When your students are all unaware of this, is it not shameful that you are still regarded as a scholar?

Answer: Confucius also said, "A man of virtue keeps silence when he does not know." When you are ignorant of a matter, you should pass it by. It is ignoble to flout this truth

and say whatever comes into your head. Indeed, people are dubious about what you are saying. In the first place, the Way is one. But each of the classes of warriors, farmers, artisans and merchants has its own Way. Merchants and all others, even beggars have their several Ways.

Question: Even beggars have their Way?

Answer: I once heard a story like this: a man went to the province of Oumi³⁶ where there was a community of beggars. As the man watched the people celebrate the completion of a bridge in the community, they went up in turn to the elder sitting on a straw cushion to present him with ceremonial gifts. Among them was a man with a pallid face who came forward to present the elder with three eggplants. The elder looked at him and said, "I hear you are sick, but why then have you brought me these eggplants?" He answered, "True, I have been long sick, but the reeve told me I should give you something to celebrate the inauguration of the bridge, so last night I lifted these from another man's plot." Then the elder said, "Rather than steal, we became beggars. If we steal, we are no longer beggars and so you are hereby expelled from this community." And he called the reeve and told him, "Care for this man while he is sick, then, when he recovers, drive him out." This is the tale I heard. The beggar's Way is not to steal even if he starves. The Master said, "A man of virtue finding himself beset by troubles can hold fast to his resolve. A small man in difficulty will be perturbed." If one in extreme poverty yet adheres to the Way, he is a man of virtue. If that man, however, is led aside from the Way, he is base. To descend to baseness from the state of beggary is shameful.

Question: The merchant is greedy and his trade is covetousness. Teaching merchants to be free from avarice is setting the cat to guard the fish. To exhort the merchant to learning is also inconsistent. Are you not an impostor in teaching them while knowing that is futile?

Answer: Merchants ignorant of the Way ruin their families by trying to make excessive profits. If they knew the merchant's Way, they would strive to be unselfish and benevolent; thus then they would be in harmony with the Way and prosper. Learning can bring all this about.

Question: Then do you teach them to avoid gain when they sell, to sell at the buying price? If you teach your students not to profit and they go on making profits nonetheless, your teachings are then not truths but mere hypocrisy. Because you urge them to do the impossible, your doctrine becomes incoherent. I have never heard of a merchant who could trade well without eagerness for gain.

Answer: What I teach is true. I will tell you why. Imagine a man serving his sovereign. Can you expect him to serve without a stipend?

Question: No, you cannot. Both Confucius and Mencius said that service without receiving a stipend was improper. This is only reasonable. It is the Way to accept a stipend. This cannot be called avarice.

Answer: Just so. The merchant's Way is to profit by selling. Nobody has ever said it was the Way to sell at buying prices. If selling for profit were avarice and against the Way, then why did Confucius take Tzu-kung as one of his disciples? Tzu-kung applied the Confucian Way to buying and selling but if he had not sought a margin, he could never have become rich. The merchant's profit is the same as the samurai's stipend and a merchant with no profit is like a samurai with no stipend. Once, there were two purveyors to a daimyo. Another merchant aspired to become a purveyor, then. The clerk in charge of purchases asked him to present some silks for comparison by saying that the present purveyors' prices were too high. When the clerk compared them, he was surprised to find a great discrepancy in the prices and was greatly angered. He called the two purveyors separately and said, "As the draperies you supply us are very costly, I compared them with another merchant's and found that there was an inexcusably large difference in prices." To this, the reply from one of the purveyors: "I have never done anything for you halfheartedly. Any merchant who needs your patronage would be ready to lose money in the first transaction but he cannot continue selling you things below cost." The clerk had him write out what he had said and let him go home. Then the clerk called the other purveyor and told him about the unpardonable difference in price. In answer to this, he said, "You are right. My father did well enough to have the honour of providing you with supplies until last year, and since his death, you have favoured me with your orders. I am not very competent, however, and I have had some financial trouble. This has made it harder to fulfil your orders. As I am short of cash, I am obliged to buy supplies at high cost. This troubles me. The draperies I supplied you prove my story true. Offering you costly merchandise might mean a lack of my gratitude for the favour of my lord. For a while, then, I will live on a stipend from the lord. I will clear all my debts in a few years by selling my estates and chattels. After that, I would like to receive your orders again." Hearing this, the clerk asked him to write it out. Taking his written statement, the clerk let him go. After a while, he discussed the matter with other clerks and banned the first merchant from supplying goods to the lord because he made his profits too high, following the example of the second merchant who was in real need. Moreover, he had tried to conceal the fact with ingratiating words to the clerk. By contrast, the second merchant's statement was honest and, further, his poverty came from his father's extravagance, not by his own fault. Yet he was a good enough son to take the blame due to his deceased father upon himself and he remained loyal to the lord. In many

ways, he proved himself well. Thus the lord decided to ask him how much he owed, to loan him the money to clear his debts and to keep him as a purveyor. Here is an example to show how honesty brings you happiness. The purveyor attained happiness by virtue of three things: first, his gratitude for his lord's favour and his sincerity in trying to avoid selling overly expensive wares, secondly, his filial piety in concealing his father's extravagance, and thirdly, his honesty in refraining from cheating the clerk. The other purveyor said, however, that he had never done anything for his lord halfheartedly, and that any merchant needing his patronage would be ready to lose money in the first transaction. This is a common excuse but could not be trusted because the variance in price was so great. Inevitably, the clerk suspected it to be something specious concocted for the occasion. The more skilfully you invent some such excuse, the more you will be despised. People, in general, put on sheen of cleverness but since they do not learn the true Way, they do not know that errors never come singly. Take this to heart, and you will understand that honesty is best. Even with a tobacco pouch or a pipe, it is quite obvious if it is of good or poor quality but some shopkeepers will still swear black is white, a tiresome habit. Better to tell the truth.' Too many men are unaware that their own sincerity is as easily suspected as they themselves suspect others. *The Great Learning* confirms that "Other men see into your heart." If you can understand this, you will be able to sell twice as much as other merchants because you will be approved as honest and well trusted too, for you will tell the truth as it stands, without embellishment. If you are held to be trustworthy and men's hearts are open to you, you will be a prosperous merchant. You cannot understand this subtlety without the aid of learning and so you cannot say that there is nothing in learning for merchants.

Question: And yet, the old saying goes, "Neither the merchant nor the folding screen can stand upright." What of this?

Answer: Many old sayings are rooted in this sort of error. First, if a screen is a little warped, it cannot be folded. Therefore, it won't stand unless the floor is flat. In this way, no one will be a successful merchant unless he is truly honest. This story shows that the merchant must be as upright as a good screen. The folding screen and the merchant are only of service if they are upright. If they are not upright, they are worthless. This truth is taken in the wrong way by the old saying you mentioned. Po-i³⁷ in antiquity was as upright as the folding screen.

Question: What do you mean when you say the merchant should be as upright as a folding screen?

Answer: It is said that selling is business. You must admit, then, that there is a stipend in selling goods. Accordingly, the merchant gains by the mere circulation of things. He does

not profit by dishonesty. Those merchants who act only as go-betweens are called wholesalers. Everybody knows that wholesalers charge a commission because they advertise their prices so that everybody may see them. They make all clear and open like a mirror reflecting everything: they conceal nothing, because they believe their profits are justified. They live by fair means. This is the Way merchants should follow. To lose is not the merchant's Way. Therefore, a righteous man will not buy a thing discounted at loss to the merchant. He will buy in order to assure you a profit. He will decline your help. Not to make a profit is not the Way for the merchant to follow.

Question: If so, why have they not set up a tariff of how much they should gain with respect to the price they paid. On the contrary, they tell lies in order to give you a discount. Why?

Answer: A selling price is affected by the market price. From this, it sometimes follows that a thing bought at the cost of a hundred momme of silver goes down to the price of ninety. This is a loss on the seller's part. But an article obtained at the first cost of a hundred momme can sometimes be sold at a hundred and twenty or thirty. When the market price goes up, the merchant becomes aggressive, but when the market shows a weak tendency, the merchant loses courage. This kind of fluctuation is Heaven's will, not the merchant's will. Prices other than those officially fixed go up and down. They are always changing. For example, you could buy one koku of rice at one ryo this morning, but now you only get nine³⁹ tenths for the same price. The value of a gold coin sometimes goes down and that of rice goes up, while the reverse also happens. Even the price of this indispensable merchandise constantly fluctuates. Besides, quotations for all things change daily. Ignoring this rule will not bring you anything fruitful. It is difficult for you alone to predetermine a buying cost and your margin unlike other merchants. This is not false. If you think it fictitious, purchase or sale cannot be realized. If there were no sales, it would put buyers to inconvenience and sellers could not sell. In such circumstances merchants could not live and they would become either farmers or artisans. If all merchants were to become farmers or artisans, there would be no distributors of goods and all the people would be in trouble. The classes of warriors, farmers, artisans and tradesmen are all indispensable to keep order in the world. Were it not for each one of them, the world would be left helpless. It is the role of sovereign that regulates the four classes. It is the duty of the four classes to help the sovereign. The warrior is fundamentally a subject of rank, the farmer is a subject in the fields and the merchant and the artisan are ones in town. It is the Way for the subject to help his sovereign. The merchant helps the world by buying and selling. What is paid to an artisan for his labour is his stipend. It is the warrior's stipend that the authorities

collect from farmers who make a profit by working on the farm. If each one did not engage himself in his own calling, the world would collapse in no time. The merchant's profit is also a stipend publicly approved. However, you maintain solely that the merchant's profit is a deliberate violation of the Way due to his avarice and try to destroy him out of rancour. Why do you despise and dislike the merchant alone? If you now refuse to pay a margin to the merchant, you will break the public law. You can obtain a profit even when you take orders from the daimyo. Therefore, the merchant's profit is something like a stipend officially recognized. But the profit made by engaging in farm work, the pay for the artisan's workmanship and the merchant's gains are all different from the samurai's stipend regularly fixed like several hundred koku of rice or several tens. Both in Japan and in China it is a rule to obtain a profit by buying and selling. It serves the world if you do your duties while securing a profit. The merchant cannot be diligent in his trade without gains. The merchant's stipend is a profit made on sale and so he earns something if there are any buyers. If he is summoned, he will go like a man who responds to his duties. This has nothing to do with avarice. Even a samurai cannot perform his functions without receiving a stipend from his lord. If you hold that receiving a stipend is against the Way because it is a manifestation of avarice, then anyone on earth, even Confucius or Mencius, could not know the Way. Yet you mark out the merchant from the other classes and maintain that receiving a stipend is the merchant's expression of avarice and that it is impossible for him to know the Way. How can you claim this? What I am teaching is that the merchant has his own Way. I am not teaching about the warrior, the farmer or the artisan.

Question: If so, it is natural that the merchant should profit from sales. Then, apart from this, do you lay any blame on the merchant?

Answer: There are many errors and wrongs in this world. Therefore, there are teachings. As a matter of fact, some merchants stray from the Way. I will give you an example. When I was a boy, I was told a story as follows. Many years ago in a province were some paddy fields unusable because they had been in flood for a good while. However, the farmers still had to pay a part of the annual land tax imposed on them before the flood. Therefore they planted fruit trees there and began to reap a richer crop than rice, and so the previous lord decided to impose a duty on the fruit too. But his successor sympathized with the farmers over this matter and thought of abolishing this duty to relieve them of the burden. He hesitated, however, to annul it because it was started by his own father. He wished it would become invalid of itself. One day he called a retainer of his and said to him, "Some men have built two storied houses in the castle town. I will levy a tax on them." The retainer thought this irksome and after much discussion about it with other men, he said to

the lord, "The other day you told me that you would tax those who built two storied houses, but there is no precedent for such a tax. I wish you to abandon the idea." The lord accepted his request and said, "You say there is no precedent, but I only followed a precedent. From the first we have imposed a land tax on the flooded paddy fields and furthermore we put a tax on their fruit too. This is the same as the tax on the two storied houses. It is not an unprecedented matter." Then he stopped laying a tax on the fruit. As a result, what was left for the farmers to pay was only the land tax. And people praised the lord, saying, "How extensive his benevolent government is." He loves us as if we were his own children. What a mercy it is." Merchants should draw their model from this kind of thing. Taking double profits is like eating sweet poison and may lead you to your destruction. I will give you a couple of examples. Suppose there is a roll of silk and a sash, both of which are shorter than the standard length by one or two sun.⁴⁰ The draper will naturally buy them cheaply by pointing out that they are shorter. But they are not regarded as defective because they are too short only by a little. Therefore, he may sell them at normal prices. If so, he takes double profits by buying cheaply and selling normally. This is something like futamasu⁴¹ which is publicly forbidden. Talking about dyeing, if piece goods are not dyed as ordered, some merchants beat down the price they pay by exaggerating the small difference and give the dyer trouble, but they ask the buyer to pay the normal fee while they pocket the balance. This is a vice worse than taking double profits. Things of this sort often take place. Some merchants in straitened circumstances buy things on credit and pay only thirty or fifty percent of the bill, asking the sellers a thousand pardons. On the other hand, I hear that some crafty creditors or some of those who can claim a lot receive much money secretly from the debtors in reward for a pretence that they will also suffer a great loss. Those who steal in such elaborate ways are dishonest.

Question: Are those who try to appease other creditors in return for a recompense from the debtors asking a thousand apologies all merchants? I think there must be men like this who are not merchants.

Answer: There are many merchants of this kind because they do not know the Way. Those who know the Way and do business do not do wrong. Even the headman of a village under the direct control of the shogunate or the lord must not take any money as a reward from a peasant as long as the authorities entrust the administration of the village to him. If anyone who enjoys the samurai status receives a reward secretly from a commoner, he will show favouritism to him. Is he worthy of being called a samurai? He is not a samurai but a thief. How can you expect clean politics in a society where a man of position takes bribes from lowly people? Even though bribery passes unnoticed for some time, it will

eventually come out and incur the wrath of Heaven, for "Heaven knows and Earth knows, and the people will know."⁴² Such villains as fear not the punishment of Heaven should be purged from this peaceful world. But the merchant is not a samurai, and so some merchants do evil of this sort. If you have even the slightest intention to follow the Way, you cannot do this kind of thing.

Question: Which is bad, one who requests, offering money or the other who is solicited, receiving the money?

Answer: If it is the case that the one who requests is lower in social standing than the other, both parties are to blame, but seventy percent of the blame should be put on the higher status and the rest on the other. Mencius said, "Those who have knowledge govern others: those who are uneducated are governed by others and support them." Since olden times, it has been the Way for those who govern others to be untainted. It is dishonourable to stray from that Way and to receive an unclean reward in league with those seeking a favour, regarding it as your rightful income. No matter how low the petitioner's birth, a man is a man. Those who are financially troubled still offer a reward, though reluctantly. Needless to say, each creditor suffers a loss in proportion to his means. But if there is any creditor who receives money as a reward while pretending to go between the debtor and the creditors, he is neither more nor less than a thief. Doing such a thing is the same as killing yourself by eating poisoned sweets. There are many clerks who do this kind of evil: they tempt their masters to do the wrong things which they cannot think of by themselves. This amounts to the same thing as inviting the master to eat poisoned sweets and finally bringing ruin to his family. Mencius also said, "The crime to excite the wickedness of one's sovereign is great." However, the master thinks that such a clerk as excites his wickedness is faithful as long as he does not suffer a financial loss and, besides, he is pleased with his measures, being unaware that he will be ruined before long. The reason he thinks so is that he does not pursue learning on the grounds that a merchant does not need it and, moreover, he laughs at those who follow their studies. This is like a story in which a monkey with a nose is mocked to death by nine other monkeys with no noses. One who thinks himself smart, while doing something crafty, is not aware that he will finally bring misfortune upon his family. What a pity it is.' *The Book of Changes* says, "Do good things, and you will find your reward. Do bad things, and you will pay the penalty for them. Assassinate your sovereign, and you will be slain by your son." This is the main point of the teachings of the sage who wrote this book. You must ponder the sage's benevolent heart. In this way the sage hates evil. If you understand this meaning well, then you will feel it really forlorn "like drifting clouds"⁴³ to take double profits, use futamata or secretly receive rewards. You can refrain from

doing these things by virtue of learning. In this world there are some who look like merchants but are really thieves. The true merchant thinks not only of his own gains but always of reciprocal benefits. The false merchant deceives others to patch up his wrongs, therefore. You cannot generalize about people.

Question: Now, have we fully dealt with the Way of the merchant?

Answer: What we have discussed thus far is about the Way of buying and selling. Beyond this, there are so many things to discuss that we cannot cover them.

Question: Are there any other difficult teachings besides this?

Answer: Not difficult. But the five cardinal virtues⁴⁴ and the five cardinal principles of morality lead to success even in governing the whole country. Therefore, even a small family has its own precepts. An example: suppose there lives an old and feeble man in the country who hopes to see the great image of Buddha.⁴⁵ His son is filially devoted and consults a local carpenter saying, "Would you please make a model of the temple where the great image of Buddha rests? I would like to show it to my father." The carpenter answers, "I cannot make a model of the temple of the great image of Buddha." "I mean only a small one about four or five shaku high."⁴⁶ says the son. Then the carpenter probably replies, "In order to build a Buddhist sanctum, you must know the method of building: otherwise you cannot, as the way is the same whether it is big or small." To govern the state is as if to build the temple of the great image of Buddha. Ordering a small household is like making a tiny model of a Buddhist sanctum. In the household are the five relations of sovereign and subject, father and son, husband and wife, young and old, and friends. Without moral principles, even a small household could not be ordered. It is benevolence that orders not only a small household but also a whole country. And benevolence is always the same. Benevolence shown by the merchant is also of great service and so those merchants who gave their rice free of charge to help other people suffering from the famine last year were all rewarded. It is the Way for a man to save people from dying of hunger.

Question: Then, what should the merchant bear in mind?

Answer: As I told you before, "Know the whole from a single bit of information." is the most important. I give you an example: a warrior cannot be called a samurai unless he is ready to sacrifice his life for his lord. If the merchant knows this spirit, then the path for him to follow is clear. If you are really honest and attentive to buyers who literally feed you, they will be satisfied in nine cases out of ten. If you endeavour to satisfy them, you need not worry about your livelihood. Furthermore, you must practise economy: you should reduce your expenditure by thirty percent and your net profit by ten percent. If you profit by ten percent less, no one will complain that your goods are expensive and so you are safe.

Besides, if you don't take double profits like the draper I mentioned, or make unfair profits from dealing in dyed goods by exaggerating the small differences in colour, or steal a portion of other creditors' claim by receiving a reward from the debtor with whom you secretly conspire: if you refrain from anything other than straight transactions and from indulging in luxury; if you do not devote yourself to elaborate things like antiques, pursue pleasures or take delight in altering your house, then you will easily be able to maintain your livelihood even though you reduce your net profit by ten percent. Now, if you decrease ten percent of your pure gain, then you will mostly rid yourself of unlawful trades. For instance, if you put a drop of oil into a sho⁴⁸ of water, it will spread across the surface of that water until it looks like oil: therefore, it will be useless. The profit in trade is like this. A little money gained through unfair transactions spoils all of your income. Many of those who soil all their money due to their little unfair gains like throwing away a whole sho of water because of a drop of oil in it do not know that their descendants will go to ruin. Even if they total up all unfair gains like double profits, a reward from the debtor and other income obtained by mean tricks, they cannot live on them. This truth applies to everything. However, blinded by love of gain, some men cannot give up a little profit or their efforts to earn unfair money, knowing not that their loving descendants will be ruined. What a pity it is! As I told you before, you should, anyway, model yourself after the clean samurai in everything. Mencius said, "Those who are able to maintain an unmoved heart, even though they have not a certain livelihood, are only virtuous samurai." Many years ago Kamakura Saimyoji⁴⁹ transferred all his regencies to Sagaminokami⁵⁰ and went about the country from place to place in order to remedy injustice, because he deplored the government for not being able to reflect popular complaint. Where the authorities are benevolent, the people are sure to be righteous. When Aoto Saemon no jo Sanekata⁵¹ held a court in Kamakura as the chief judge, what a hereditary vassal of Sagaminokami said stands to no reason in comparison with the case of some officials of a manor. The other judges, however, could not tell right from wrong for fear of the government authorities of the time. But Aoto Saemon clearly passed judgement in favour of the officials. Then the officials were very happy and that night pushed down⁵² three hundred kan of coins into Aoto's garden from the hill just behind his backyard. He was not pleased with the money. After returning it all, he said, "I should have received a reward from Sagaminokami. It was for the sake of Sagaminokami that I gave a fair decision on the case. He should be pleased with the fair judgement of right or wrong concerning all cases in the world." Such men as Aoto should be counted among the Samurai. Some men are not as intelligent as Aoto, but if they are not as good as he in refusing to receive an improper thing, they should not be called samurai. From this point of view, those who

should set an example to the world are samurai. The Master says, "There may be some men who do not have enough strength to do an act of benevolence, but I have never seen such a man." This is a large world and so there may be some samurai who receive improper things, turning their noses away as from an offensive smell. If there are such men, they appear to be samurai, but they are really robbers wearing swords. Those who take a bribe from a man asking a favour are no better than burglars breaking into another's house. Aoto decided fairly for the benefit of Sagaminokami. In order to be a loyal subject, you should lead a virtuous life, perform your duties and not do wrong. How can samurai be disloyal in this peaceful world? Merchants should know that taking double profits or receiving under-the-table money is undutiful and disloyal to their ancestors. They should set their aims high to prove themselves equal to samurai. The Way for the merchant to follow is the same as the Way for the other classes of samurai, farmers and artisans. Mencius too said, "The Way is one, only one." The classes of warriors, farmers, artisans and merchants were all created in Heaven. How can there be two Ways in Heaven?

NOTES

Chapter II

1. "The gods will not brook impropriety" : from the *Variorum of the Analects*.
2. a shrine : Kitano shrine in Osaka.
3. Tzu-lu : A disciple of Confucius.
4. the Great Shrine : Ise shrine in Japan.
5. Izanaginomikoto : A god, the consort of Izanaminomikoto. According to a Japanese myth, they created Japan.
6. Izanaminomikoto : A goddess, the consort of Izanaginomikoto.
7. "A man certain rituals." : taken from the *Analects*.
8. The Three Families : The three powerful families in the state of Lu, Meng-sun, Shu-sun and Chi-sun.
9. *ying* : Ode 282, from which the couplet quoted comes.
10. Mt. T'ai : A famous mountain in China.
11. Gion-e : A festival at the Yasaka shrine in Kyoto.
12. Goryo-matsuri : A festival to repose the departed souls at the Kami and Shimo Goryo shrines.
13. the five commandments : The Buddhist precepts against murder, theft, lust, lying and intemperance.
14. Nan-chuan : The common name of the Zen master of Mt. Nanchuan in China.
15. Chien-tzu : A Zen priest well-known for his eccentricities.
16. *The Age of the Gods* : A chapter of *The Chronicles of Japan*. (日本書紀)
17. *Reflections in Hours of Idleness* : (徒然草) A collection of essays by Kenko Hoshi written in the Kamakura period Japan.
18. Kenko : Kenko Hoshi.
19. Tsang Shang : The disciple of Confucius and philosopher.
20. Chich : The last sovereign of the Hsia dynasty and notorious for his tyranny.
21. Chau : The last sovereign of the Yin dynasty and also notorious for his tyranny.

22. Wen ti of Wei : Emperor Tsang P'ei was better known by the name of Wen ti of Wei.
23. Wei Tuan : A well-known calligrapher.
24. ryo : One ryo is approximately equivalent to one hundred U.S. dollars (1982).
25. Duke Ling of Wei : (543-493 B.C.) Succeeded his father at the age of seven and ruled Wei for forty-two years.
26. K'ang Tzu : Chi K'ang Tzu, Senior Minister in Lu and held power till his death in 468 B.C.
27. "When the Master spoke of losing his state?" : from the *Analects* translated by D.C.Lau.
28. Sung ju : (宋 儒) The Confucianism prosperous in the Sung age which placed emphasis on human obligations.
29. the philosophy of Lao-tze and Chung-tze : Lao-tze and Chung-tze thought that the fountainhead of the Universe was nihility, while Confucianism held practical ethics in high esteem.
30. *The Scripture of Documents* : (書 經) The oldest history book in China.
31. Lao-tze : Identity uncertain.
32. Kung-po Liao : A man from the state of Lu.
33. Chi-Sun : Tzu-lu's sovereign.
34. "the state is needed." : by Chuang-tzu.
35. piki : about twenty-four yards.
36. the province of Oumi ; The area around Lake Biwa, which now falls under the jurisdiction of the present Shiga prefecture of Japan.
37. Po-i : A famous worthy of the Shang dynasty, a model of honesty and cleanliness.
38. momme : One momme (0. 132 oz)
39. koku : One koku (47. 654 U.S. gallons)
40. sun : One sun (1. 193 in)
41. Futamasu : to use different measures for buying and selling.
42. "Heaven knows the people will know." : taken from *The Small Learning*.
43. "like drifting clouds" : taken from the *Analects* saying, "I feel it forlorn like drifting clouds to gain wealth and rank through unrighteous means."
44. the five cardinal virtues : Benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and fidelity.
45. the great image of Buddha : It is in Nara, the old capital of Japan in the 8th century.
46. shaku : One shaku (0.994 ft)
47. "Know the whole information" : A Japanese proverb.
48. sho : One sho (0.477 U.S. gallon)
49. Kamakura Saimyoji : Hojo Tokiyori's Buddhist name. Tokiyori(1227-63) was the regent of the Kamakura government, Japan.
50. Sagaminokami : Tokiyori's son. Hojo Tokimune (1251-84).
51. Aoto Saemon no jo Sanekata : introduced as Aoto Saemon in the first chapter. He hires a labourer at a fee of fifty sen to seek the ten sen coin he has dropped.
52. kan : One kan (3.75 kilograms).