

### III. TE, VIRTUE

#### 1. Te of a Ruler

Te appears in the Confucian Analects 39 times. It has been regarded as an important Confucian key-term.<sup>129</sup> The appearances of Te in the Analects can be divided into three classes: of a ruler; of the people; of Confucius. The first is Te as an attribute of a ruler used in ruling: "The Master said, He who rules by moral force (*te*) is like the pole-star, which remains in its place while all the lesser stars do homage to it." This statement does not explicitly express the cosmic implications of the ruler's ability to rule. The ruler being compared with the stable pole-star resembles the Taoist idea of acting through inactivity, *wu wei*.<sup>130</sup>

<sup>129</sup> See BOODBERG 1964, p. 323. EGEROD 1964, p. 318. FINGARETTE 1972, pp. 7,27,23. CH'EN Ta-ch'i 1967, pp. 71,72.

<sup>130</sup> AN. 2:1, p. 88. Dawson explains this as follows: "The... quotation seems to suggest that Confucius himself believed that the virtuous ruler had a kind of cosmic role. This idea is not fully set out in the *Analects*, but later theory held that the ruler, governing by means of virtue, secured harmony not only in the human world, but also in the cosmos. Throughout imperial Chinese history it was the belief that the virtuous conduct of the emperor at the apex of human society was necessary in order to ensure the smooth operation of nature. If he contravened the dictates of ritual and neglected the requirements of virtuous government, natural calamities were bound to ensue. The comparison with the pole-star also contains a flavour of the idea of rule by inactivity, the belief that, if a ruler's *te* or moral power were sufficiently great, government would run so smoothly that he would not need to take any action. But this is a fundamentally Taoist notion, which occurs in more blatant form in A 15.4, where the legendary sage-emperor Shun is said to have ruled by the Taoist principle of non-action, merely placing himself reverently with his face to the south and doing nothing. Such a concept is alien to the philosophy of the *Analects* and of Confucianism in general and should therefore be discounted in evaluations of Confucius's thought. According to the Confucian teachings, activity meant to benefit others is an essential part of virtue." DAWSON 1981, p. 75. DAWSON 1986, pp. 162,163. See also CHEN, David H.H. 1981, p. 214.

The theory of the ruler securing harmony in the human world and in the cosmos was established during Chou before Confucius's time. See NIKKILÄ 1982, p. 133. This similarity with the traditional Chou thought is possible, but it does not arise very clearly from the text. The similarity with Taoist thought can be seen in Chu Hsi's interpretation of the passage; the polar star is steady or not moving, whereas the other stars surrounding it are revolving. CHU Hsi (1130-1200 A.D.) 1952, p. 6. Traditionally the polar star has been understood as the heart of heaven in the north which controls the four seasons. LIU Pao-nan 1973, p. 20. KÖSTER 1958, p. 46. This does not imply that the ruler who governs by moral force, controls the seasons or cosmos.

Thiel explains: "Hier klingt noch ein älterer Begriff des *te* durch, eine wirkende Kraft, die andere zwingen kann. Das ist gerade typisch für den Schamanen, er zwingt das Heil herbei, wehrt Unheil bannend ab." THIEL 1969, p. 175. Staiger translates: *Te* "die Ausstrahlungskraft". STAIGER 1969, p. 13. Wilhelm explains: "Wie die Sonne nur durch die Überlegenheit ihrer Anziehungskraft die Planeten in ihre Bahnen zwingt, so herrscht der Genius nur durch die Immanente Schwerkraft seiner Persönlichkeit ohne alle Vielgeschäftigkeit." WILHELM 1914, p. 8. See also REID 1923, pp. 189,190. KÖSTER 1958, p. 46.

"When Chinese astronomers speak explicitly about the structure of the world, they use the common-sense geocentric language which satisfied our ancestors too." SIVIN 1969, p. 3. On the development of astronomy in China, see NEEDHAM 1959, p. 459, EBERHARD 1933, p. 252, FORKE 1925, pp. 4-118. Wu Wei, 無為, see AN. 15:4, p. 193, WATTS 1975, pp. 77, 78.

This statement forms a pair with the following passage:

"The Master said, Govern the people by regulations, keep order among them by chastisements, and they will flee from you, and lose all self-respect. Govern them by moral force, (te), keep order among them by ritual (li) and they will keep their self-respect and come to you of their own accord."<sup>131</sup>

This 'Te of governing' is more effective than law. Te is the primary solution in government. This becomes even clearer in the following:

"If all in the state is well-apportioned, there will be no poverty. If the people are not divided against one another, there will be no lack of men. If such a state of affairs exists, yet the people of far off lands still do not submit, then the ruler must attract them by enhancing the prestige (té) of his culture; and when they have been duly attracted, he contents them. And where there is contentment there will be no upheavals."

Waley suggests an interpretation in which Wen, culture, denotes the arts of peace like music, dancing and literature, as opposed to those of war. The arts of peace, however, have a Te that is useful for offensive purposes. The arts mentioned attract the inhabitants of neighboring states.<sup>132</sup>

Te above has a harmonizing or peace-making effect in the state. However, the effect on the cosmic harmony in nature is not mentioned here.

Te probably works as a uniting power: "The Master said, Moral force (te) never dwells in solitude; it will always bring neighbours."<sup>133</sup>

When rejecting the idea of slaying those who do not have the Way in order to assist those who have the Way, Confucius added: "The essence of the gentleman is that of wind; the essence of small people is that of grass. And when a wind passes over the

<sup>131</sup> AN. 2:3, p. 88. LEGGE I 1969, p. 146. "Te is realized in concrete acts of human intercourse, the acts being of a pattern. These patterns have certain general features, features common to all such patterns of *li*: they are all expressive of 'man-to-man-ness,' of reciprocal loyalty and respect." FINGARETTE 1972, p. 7. This "contrasts ritual with law, and argues that punishment inflicted in accordance with the law do not have the capacity to give people the conscience and sense of morality which will make them obedient to the ruler's wishes. It also contrasts 'regulations' with the word *te*, which I have translated as 'virtue.'" DAWSON 1981, p. 73. See also AN. 4:11, p. 104.

Chen explains in connection with AN. 2:3 that "In Confucian philosophy, harmony is the essential law of the universe, it is also the underlying law of the ethical society. Although there are many elements, such as geographic advantages, good climate etc., in the maintenance of social stability and development of an advanced civilized nation, the most important factor is the harmonious spirit of the people. It is for such a purpose that the 'Mandate of Heaven' is given to men of virtue, benevolence who are able to organize government. A good government would encourage the cultivation of virtue and propriety among the people because virtue and propriety are harmonious with the very nature of society and the universe." CHEN 1981, p. 214.

Chen's explanation follows the Chou ideology recorded in Shu Ching rather than the Confucian Analects. To call this view Confucian is defensible, because Confucius valued Shu Ching. However, in the strict sense this view is better called a Chou ideology to distinguish it from the Confucianism proper recorded in the Confucian Analects.

<sup>132</sup> AN. 16:1;10,11, p. 203. LEGGE I 1969, pp. 308,309. WALEY 1964, pp. 39-41.

<sup>133</sup> AN. 4:25, p. 106. LEGGE I 1969, p. 172.

Waley explicates as follows: "Whenever one individual or one country substitutes *te* for physical compulsion, other individuals or other countries inevitably follow suit." WALEY 1964, p. 106. Legge translates the sentence as: "Virtue is not left to stand alone. He who practices it will have neighbours." LEGGE I 1969, p. 172. According to Munro this is one of the passages which are often quoted to demonstrate that *te* meant a *mana*-like power. The passage above, An. 2:1 is another such passage. Munro says that "descriptions of 'magnetic attraction' are not restricted to *te*; they are abundant in the early texts whenever the topic is the reaction of people to virtue." "If the proponents of the '*mana*' thesis were consistent, one would expect them to explain *jen* as another magical force." MUNRO 1969, p. 103. Liu gives an entirely different interpretation: "If tao leads the way, *teh* (= *te*) follows with a host of virtues." This means that Te appears together with other virtues. LIU 1955, p. 153.

grass, the latter cannot choose but bend." (Modified) 君子之德風，小人之德草，草上之風，必偃。In this, Te has been interpreted in several ways.<sup>134</sup>

It is suggested here that one exclusive interpretation may often be too one-sided or narrow. It is possible that at such an early state of the philosophy as the time of the Confucian Analects, the different concepts were not very strictly defined and distinguished from each other. One term, here Te, may contain several dimensions and all the different

<sup>134</sup> AN. 12:19, p. 168. Literally: "Gentleman's Te wind, small man's Te grass," etc. LEGGE I 1969, pp. 258, 259.

As can be seen in his translations, Te as 'moral power', Waley understands Te as a dynamic attribute of the ruler.

Smith interprets Te as a mana-like power. "He (= king) possessed within himself a latent quality or power, which was, in a measure, latent in all men, but in him to a superlative degree. This mana-like quality of te 德 was continually reinforced as he drew into himself the rich influence from the whole territory over which he exercised suzerainty, and as he held frequent and intimate communion with the spiritual forces which pervaded the universe. Through this power or virtue which the king possessed to an unique degree he extended his influence throughout the whole land, and, in so far as the influence was good, it was productive of a beneficent state of harmony and well-being." SMITH 1957, p. 192.

Mana could be possessed by any animate or inanimate thing. There are only two applications of the term (te) to non-humans in sources prior to the very late Chou. According to Munro in both of these cases te can be explained as having a meaning extended from its basic sense of a consistent attitude and conduct toward the Heavenly standards. MUNRO, 1969, pp. 107, 108, 226.

In AN. 14:35, p. 189, te is applied to a horse: "The Master said, The horse Chi (a famous horse of ancient times) was not famed for its strength but for its inner qualities (te)." This may be the only passage where Te is applied to an animal without allegory and thus may strengthen the 'mana-thesis' of Te.

Hsu thinks that the aristocracy was endowed with a superior charisma by its ancestors. This charisma is Te which made the overlordship legitimate and inevitable. HSU, Cho-yun 1965, pp. 14, 20.

According to Thiel the Heavenly ordinance, ming, was important for kings and shamans. Ming is directed according to Te. In reference to AN. 12:19 about wind and grass Thiel says: "Hier klingt noch ei älterer Begriff des te durch, eine wirkende Kraft, die andere zwingen kann. Das ist gerade typisch für den Schamanen, er zwingt das Heil herbei, wehrt Unheil bannend ab." THIEL 1969, p. 175.

Munro refutes the mana-thesis and understands te in terms of model emulation. This means that people are attracted to and seek to emulate virtuous models, i.e., they imitate the positive attitude of a model toward the Heavenly norms, as well as his behavior, which accords with the norms. "According to the early Chinese assumptions about model emulation, two consequences automatically result from the presentation of a virtuous model to people: first, they seek to emulate his virtue; second, their loyalty and affection are focused on him. Neither of these attitudes is caused by any magical magnetic attraction. Instead, the effect to te or jen on others can be explained in part as a natural response to philanthropic activity and compassion."

"In the West Chou and later, te often referred to conduct that took the concrete form of a bestowal of bounties on the people to insure (sic) their well-being"... "The sense of a ruler's bestowal of kindness increasingly came to dominate the meaning of te when the term was used in the East Chou. The result was that te seemed to become a political method for controlling the people"... "In sum, the philanthropic activity (te) was believed to arouse a perfectly understandable feeling of gratitude and willing obedience. This is the source of the 'magnetic attraction.'" Munro brings many quotations from literature to support the argument of "model emulation" and to refute the "mana-thesis". Some of the passages can be interpreted according to the "Mana-thesis" and as well according to "model-emulation" or in some other ways. MUNRO 1969, pp. 102, 103, 107.

Creel says that for Confucius it was not by magical compulsion but by the power of virtuous example that rulers influenced their people for good. Creel refutes his former theory that the virtue was almost a kind of magical compulsion. CREEL 1951, p. 86.

See also CREEL 1970, p. 65. Waley interprets An. 12:18: as "the ruler's moral force operates directly on the people, as a magic, not merely as an example." WALEY 1964, p. 167. See also ROWLEY 1956, p. 38.

interpretations based on some seemingly real facts, may throw some light onto the concept. The possibility of different interpretations may have its roots in these multi-dimensional qualities of the term.

Te of a ruler used in ruling seems to be one application of the term which includes, in this usage, several features or dimensions characterized by theories of "model-emulation" "Mana-thesis", and inherited special royal characteristics. This versatility apparently contributed to the development of the philosophy.

The Confucian Te of a ruler exposes the Confucian political philosophy. Max Weber has divided authority into three types. To compare Confucius with these will illuminate his conception of authority. The three types are rational-legal, traditional and charismatic.

"Rational-legal authority is to give orders and to have them obeyed, in virtue of an office held within a system of deliberately framed rules setting out rights and duties. Traditional authority exists where a person such as a King or a tribal chief holds a superior position of command in accordance with long tradition, and is obeyed because everyone accepts the sanctity of the tradition. The charismatic authority is an extension of the meaning of the Greek word 'charisma' (the gift of grace) in The New Testament. As Weber uses the term, it means authority resting on the possession of exceptional personal qualities that cause a person to be accepted as a leader. They may be qualities of saintly virtue, giving their holder religious authority; or they may be qualities of outstanding heroism, intellect, or oratory that bring a following of loyal devotion in war, politics, or other kinds of enterprise." Raphael continues: "One who exercises coercive power is able to make others do as he wills, not because they acknowledge a right, still less because he has a right, but because they fear the consequences of disobedience. They are obliged or 'forced' to obey, in the sense in which a driver is obliged by a landslide to make a detour."<sup>135</sup>

By refusing to condone the slaying of those who do not have the Way and by not valuing governing by regulations and keeping order by chastisements, Confucius supports the non-coercive method of governing. His ruler, who has Te, is a charismatic ruler. In Confucius's mind the ruler has a traditional authority, but should be charismatic as well.

The ideal of antiquity is also included in this Te of ruling. T'ai Po "attained to the very highest pitch of moral power (te). No less than three times he renounced the sovereignty of all things under Heaven, without the people getting a chance to praise him for it"<sup>136</sup> The last mentioned also includes the ideal of humility.

Te may also be applied as a characteristic of a dynasty: "The moral power (*te*) of Chou may, indeed, be called an absolutely perfect moral power." Dawson says: "Referring to the days of King Wen, Confucius said that the *te* of Chou could be described as perfect. This stock of *te* would decline as the dynasty deteriorated from its early excellence and lost the moral qualities which has won it the Mandate."<sup>137</sup>

Te of governing in the above passages appears as a universal charismatic regulating personal attribute of the king in governing and uniting the country successfully in peace and harmony, without the king himself emphasizing his own superiority.

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<sup>135</sup> RAPHAEL 1970, pp. 72,73. Raphael uses Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans. A.M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons, London 1947, chap. 3. See also WEBER 1989, pp. 174-179.

<sup>136</sup> AN. 8:1, p. 132. See also AN. 14, 6, pp. 180, 181. This implies that the old legendary heroes were virtuous.

<sup>137</sup> AN. 8:20, p. 136. DAWSON 1981, p. 74.

## 2. Te of the People

Te may also be an attribute of common people according to the Analects. "Master Tseng said, when proper respect towards the dead is shown at the End and continued after they are far away the moral force (te) of a people has reached its highest point." According to Munro the references to Te of the common people refute the theory that Te is a kind of "charisma" possessed exclusively by the royal family or by members of the nobility, which they receive from ancestors.<sup>138</sup>

Te of the people 民德 is also related to "middle use" 中庸 and is rare. "The Master said, How transcendent is the moral power (te) of the Middle Use. That it is but rarely found among the common people is a fact long admitted." The rarity of Te seems also to apply more generally: "The Master said, Yu, Those who understand moral force (Te) are few."<sup>139</sup>

Besides "middle use", Te of the people also refers to the "proper respect to the dead." However, the people easily spoil the virtue, since their conduct is not good, because they go with the tide to gain favor from other people. Tu explicates AN 17:13, 鄉原, 德之賊也 "The Master said, The 'honest villager' (shiang yüan) spoils true virtue (te)."

"The 'good villager', who, though he acted as if he was following the Confucian norms, was actually following only the convention without being consciously engaged in moral practice at all. Confucius called this type of person 'the thief of virtue', because the magic touch, self-cultivation, the conscious effort to bring oneself in line with *li*, is absent."

Tu explains further that "'The thief of virtue' is a widely used but loose translation of *te chih ts'e* 德之賊 which literally means to inflict damage on virtue."<sup>140</sup>

## 3. Te of Confucius

Confucius himself received Te from Heaven. Because of this, the Holy man, Confucius, is always fortunate wherever he goes. Thus, he can comfort his disciples with the thought that they do not need to fear.<sup>141</sup> In this context Te is something more than just

<sup>138</sup> AN. 1:9, p. 85. MUNRO 1969, p. 108.

<sup>139</sup> AN. 6:27, pp. 121,122.

The translation of the term "Middle use" 中庸 is problematic. See LEGGE I 1969, The Doctrine of the Mean, p. 382. CH'ENG Shu-te 1974, p. 371., LIU Pao-nan 1973, p. 132.

AN. 15:3. It is admitted that some of the disciples of Confucius worked by Te. AN. 11:2, p. 152. Legge I 1969, p. 237. This is not a statement by Confucius himself. See Waley 1964, p. 153, footnote 3. The term 德行 is used here, and is placed in front of other good qualities. This means that 德行 is regarded as important.

AN. 9:17 also refers to the rarity of Te. "The Master said, I have never yet seen anyone whose desire to build up his moral power (te) was as strong as sexual desire." An almost identical statement is in AN. 15:12, p. 196. The term 色 is used, "sexual desire" Legge translates it as "beauty", LEGGE I 1969, p. 198. See also AN. 1:7, 84, and LEGGE I 1969, p. 140.

<sup>140</sup> AN. 1:9, p. 85, 17:13, 14, p. 213. CHU Hsi 1952, p. 122. TU, Wei-ming 1968, p. 38.

<sup>141</sup> AN. 7:22, p. 127: "The Master said, Heaven begat the power *te* that is in me. What have I to fear from such a one as Huan T'ui?" Huan T'ui was a minister of War in Sung. See WALEY 1964, p. 127, LEGGE V. 1969, pp. 383, 839, Tso Chuan, AI, 14th year. See also CH'ENG Shu-te 1974, p. 419, LIU Pao-nan 1973, 147. YAO Tsung-i 1978a, p. 125. Wang Pang-hsiung regards this as referring to the Heavenly Mandate given to Confucius. WANG Pang-hsiung 1982, pp. 16,17. The text itself does



moral behavior. It is a protecting force originated by Heaven, which also includes the moral behavior.

The Virtue originated by Heaven rises the question of, whether virtue is an innate quality. Williams says:

"But the fact that this particular sense of heavenly production is consistent with the innateness of morality does not establish that it is implied by it. It is also consistent with the non-innateness of morality... Confucius' view is that the virtue-producing mechanism is innate in Man, or even that this is Heaven. But, to claim that the ability to be virtuous is innate does not entail that virtue itself is innate."

It follows from this proposal of Williams's that since the ability to be virtuous is innate, but not the virtue itself, one can choose virtue or non virtue. There is also one further possibility: neither virtue nor the virtue producing mechanism needs necessarily to be innate. Still, Heaven can produce virtue. Heaven can produce this through a transcendental mystical connection or communication with a human being. The virtue comes from Heaven as a supernatural influence like the healing power of the shamans. This, however, is outside the scope of pure rational philosophy, but may in fact reflect the reality in which Confucius lived, although he has been regarded as rationalist.<sup>142</sup>

Generally, Te required some activity on the part of the ethical agent; Te should be "enlarged" 弘<sup>143</sup> However, Confucius realized that he had left his Te untended or without proper cultivation 不脩. All this reflects the fact that Confucius had to exercise his virtue-producing mechanism, but has chosen not to do so.<sup>144</sup> Yet, Confucius relied on his Te when in danger, as mentioned above. This may be because the ultimate basis of Te was not in Confucius himself, but in Heaven. Despite his own negligence Te had its effect. Here the shamanistic, transcendental, religious and mystical element of Te is manifested.<sup>145</sup> In the opinion of an outsider the Te of Confucius had dwindled.<sup>146</sup>

The discussion above shows that Te of Confucius consisted of two main elements: Te produced by Heaven, a mysterious Te, which despite Confucius's personal negligence was active. Secondly, there was Te which should have been cultivated by Confucius and for which he had the productive ability in himself. However, these are not two different concepts of Te, but rather they are still one and the same thing, however logically inconsistent this may sound. This may be explained by the fact that in Te two realms or existential levels meet each other: the rational and ethical level, according to which Te is cultivated by personal effort; and the Heavenly, or religious and transcendental level, in which Te is infused from outside into the human being, in this case into Confucius. This resembles the theological concept "Gratia infusa". Also, an important notion philosophically is that if Te as a virtue is not innate, as seems to be the case, then not refer to the Heavenly mandate.

<sup>142</sup> WILLIAMS 1988, pp. 164,165.

<sup>143</sup> AN. 19:2, LEGGE I 1969, pp. 339, 340. WILHELM 1914, p. 207.

<sup>144</sup> AN. 7:3, p. 123. See also LEGGE I 1969, p. 195. and CHIEN Mu 1958, p. 11.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. Mote: "Within that set of intellectual concerns, the element that counts for the most is no doubt the ethical one. Confucius was convinced that the cosmos is a moral order and than man's affairs can prosper only when they are in harmony with the moral nature of the world. The remarkable feature of this, of course, is that the foundations of Confucius' ethical system are secular; his moral principles derive no authority from supernatural revelation, but are simply the self-justifying, obviously reasonable discoveries of sages and worthies of the historical past." MOTE 1971, p. 44.

<sup>146</sup> AN. 18:5, p. 219.

there must have been also the freedom of choice of Te. This applies to both main elements of Te, because although Heaven produced Te, this does not imply that Heaven did this using force, but rather in conjunction with using the recipients' will, or even on his own initiative.

#### 4. The definitive Characteristics of Te

Some definitive attributes of Te are also mentioned in the Analects:

Confucius gives a general recommendation to Te: "Set your heart upon the Way 道 (Tao), support yourself by its power 德 (Te), lean upon Goodness 仁 (Jen), seek distraction in the arts (Music, archery etc.)."<sup>147</sup>

There are also references to the way Te should be respected as an object. The term 崇德 is used. Legge has translated this as "to exalt virtue" and Waley as "to pile up moral force".<sup>148</sup> However, a better translation is probably "to respect" or "to venerate". According to Munro, Ch'ung 崇 was a term commonly used to convey the idea of venerating something used with reference to several virtues.<sup>149</sup> One venerates Te by "taking loyalty 忠 and good faith 信 as one's guiding principles, and migrating to places where right 義 prevails", and by "The work first, the reward afterwards."<sup>150</sup> To esteem or revere virtue 尚德 means to esteem the deeds of the old legendary heroes. This apparently implies that the heroes were virtuous themselves.<sup>151</sup>

Confucius also gives some other definite attributes to Te:

"Clever talk can confound the workings of Te, just as small impatiences can confound great projects." 巧言亂德，小不忍大謀。<sup>152</sup> Swiftiness to speak is incompatible with Te. What has been heard, should be practiced first.<sup>153</sup> One's Te should be real or genuine and not semblance.<sup>154</sup>

But, whoever has Te has also words, but by having words one does not necessary have Te 有德者，必有言，有言者，不必有德。<sup>155</sup>

It may be that skilful words 巧言<sup>156</sup> are just smart, clever quick words, but to "have words" may not be smart words, but powerful words, which have authority caused by Te, which are also compatible with Te.

A reciprocal attitude is related to Te. One should meet, pao 報, resentment, with upright dealing and Te with Te. Nivison says:

<sup>147</sup> AN. 7:6, pp. 123, 124.

<sup>148</sup> AN. 12:10, 21, pp. 165, 169, LEGGE I 1969, pp. 156, 272.

<sup>149</sup> HSIEH 1976, p. 162. See also MUNRO 1969, p. 228.

<sup>150</sup> AN. 12:10, 21, pp. 165, 178, 169.

<sup>151</sup> AN. 14:6, pp. 180, 181.

<sup>152</sup> AN. 15:26, p. 198. LEGGE I 1969, p. 302.

<sup>153</sup> AN. 17:14, p. 213: "To tell in the lane what you have heard in the highroad is to throw merit (*te*) away." See also LEGGE I 1969, p. 324.

<sup>154</sup> AN. 17:13, p. 213. See the interpretation in Mencius 7:37. Legge says that these are sayings of Confucius which are found only here. Such a string of them is not the sage's style. LEGGE II 1969, pp. 500, 501.

<sup>155</sup> AN. 14:5, p. 181. LEGGE I 1969, p. 276.

<sup>156</sup> KARLGREN 1972, p. 271.

"Te 德 is, as Chinese philosophical philology has known since the Chou period, semantically (as well as phonetically) connected with *te* 得 'get'. It probably derives its philosophical meaning from usage reflected in the idiom 'A 有德於 B,' i.e., (enabling B to get) something; and so is due something in return from B.' This idiom gives expression to a universal social-psychological compulsion to 'return,' *pao* 報, a favor. The felt force of the compulsion, in the receiver of the favor, is psychologically transferred to the giver, and perceived as a psychic power in the giver to elicit response. This power is his *te* 德."<sup>157</sup>

To have wealth does not necessarily mean one possesses Te: "The duke Ching of Ch'i had a thousand teams each of four horses, but on the day of his death, the people did not praise him for a single virtue (Te)."<sup>158</sup>

According to the following passage one should be constant or stable in Te :

"The Master said, The men of the south have a saying, 'Without stability a man will not even make a good *shaman* or witch-doctor.' 巫醫 Well said! Of the maxim: if you do not stabilize an act to *te*, you will get evil by it (instead of good), the Master said, They (i.e. soothsayers) do not simply read the omens 占"<sup>159</sup> The wu 巫 should read the omens.<sup>160</sup> The passage apparently implies that one must not leave the essential or necessary thing undone, even though this might not be realized by outsiders: the soothsayers did not read the omens, although it should have been done. Another passage in this same spirit is one stressing that in undertakings of great moral import one should be absolute, but in lesser matters a certain latitude is allowed.<sup>161</sup>

## 5. Early Confucian Te and Te in Shu Ching

### a. Te of Ruling

The Analects and Shu Ching both use Te as an important key term, as can be seen not only in the number of occurrences, but also with respect to the contents of the term. The common main characteristics of Te are the Te connected with ruling, as the Te of

<sup>157</sup> AN. 14:36, p. 189. Pao, see NIKKILÄ 1982, p. 178.

Creel says: "Waley almost always interprets *te* as meaning 'inner power'; this seem to me, however, to be a conception more common in a period much later than that of Confucius. This translation seems clearly to break down when applied to An. 14.26." CREEL 1951, p. 139.

Waley translates: "Someone said, What about the saying 'Meet resentment with inner power (*te*)'? The Master said, In that case, how is one to meet inner power? Rather, meet resentment with upright dealing and meet inner power with inner power." WALEY 1964, p. 189. Cf. LEGGE I 1969, p. 288. NIVISON 1978, 1979. p. 53.

<sup>158</sup> AN. 16:12. LEGGE I 1969, p. 315.

<sup>159</sup> AN. 13:22, p. 177. KREMSMAYER 1956, pp. 66-77, THIEL 1969, pp. 149-204.

<sup>160</sup> MURAMATSU 1969, pp. 249, 355. NIKKILÄ 1982, pp. 44, 45, 53, 54.

This has also been interpreted as "Since such small people (shamans and doctors) must have constancy, how much more ought others to have it." LEGGE I 1969, p. 272.

The statement on Te is a quotation from the Yi-ching, THE I CHING, 1963, 32,3, the Hang Hexagram. See also CHU Hsi 1952, p. 92.

<sup>161</sup> AN. 19:11, p. 226. Undertakings of great moral import are matters such as loyalty, keeping promises, obedience to parents, the laws which govern conduct. WALEY 1964, p. 226. This interpretation follows Chu Hsi, who interprets 大德 as big things and 小德 as small things. CHU Hsi 1952, p. 133. These have also been interpreted as good people and less good people CH'ENG Shu-te 1974, p. 1141.



the rulers, king and the officials. Another common theme of Te is the Te of the people.

Antiquity appears in both sources in connection with ruling, but in Shu Ching the idea is more sophisticated, whereas the Analects plays down the idea by mentioning it only a few times and concentrates in the Te of ruling, not connected with the ideal past, and in the Te of Confucius. Although the Analects is more present-time oriented than Shu Ching, it is still apparent that Confucius shared the opinion that the good and ideal rulers of the remote golden past were essentially virtuous. Confucius includes here humility as an aspect of Te, whereas Shu Ching describes this retrospective Te as referring to its heavenly or divine characteristic, its relation to harmony, as a principle in punishments, and to the notion of criticism. Aside from these qualitative features Te has also a quantitative dimension which is included in its protective effect.<sup>162</sup>

The protective effect is in Confucius's personal Te, which also includes its divine characteristic, because the origin is Heaven and not Confucius's own efforts only.

Both Shu Ching and the Analects presents Te as a quality of the ruler's authority. In this respect the Shu Ching has two different lines of thought. First, the more severe line of thought where the punishments are underlined, the juridical virtue of the king is concerned with punishing the unfilial and the unbrotherly. A second line of thought is milder: the ruler should be cautious about punishing and concerned to treat the people respectfully.<sup>163</sup> The difference between the more severe and the milder line of thought can partly be explained away by remarking that Shu Ching stresses the importance of filiality: the crimes in this area are unpardonable and the punishments follow the severe line of thought. The people in miserable situation, like the widows and widowers should not be ill-treated and one should examine the case before punishing the offender the punishments of these people should follow the milder line of thought. Despite this, these two emphases can be discerned in Shu Ching and the explanation removes the tension between these two lines of thought only partially. These two lines of thought provide a starting point to Confucius. He has clearly selected the milder line of thought, which Shu Ching gives as one of Wen Wang's principles. This is a non-coercive method of governing: one must not slay those who do not have the Way.

In Confucius's mind Te was an attractive and uniting power of the ruler in itself without using the compulsive outer methods. Confucius selected the less compulsive tradition of Te and developed it into a cosmic, attractive, naturally persuading quality of the ruler. This attractive Te is present especially in the more reliable parts of the Analects.

Confucius combined the ethical qualities of Te with the divine ones. These characteristics can also be seen in the concept of Te in Shu Ching, especially in the Te of man pleasing Heaven in order to arouse Heavenly favor. Confucius's Te starts from Heaven and is exercised by man as a feed back to Heaven. "Gratia infusa" is followed by human response to Heaven; Confucius pays attention to the cultivation of virtue. This notion, Heaven as an originator of Te, is not totally absent from Shu Ching: Heaven has adjusted or determined the virtue of the people.

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<sup>162</sup> NIKKILÄ 1982, pp. 118-123.

<sup>163</sup> NIKKILÄ 1982, pp. 122,126.

## b. Te of the People

Both Shu Ching and the Analects mention Te connected with the people 民, but in both sources this characteristic is not very strongly investigated. Both express some dissatisfaction about the people's virtue. The stability or reliability of it is especially problematic. However, Shu Ching values it as a fine example to all, even to the rulers and officials.

Shu Ching refers to the goodwill between the ruler and the people. The Analects omit this people-ruler relationship in this context. It describes the ideal Te of people instead: proper respect to the dead. Ideally, the people's Te is a religious Te. As a contrast to this, Shu Ching connects the People's Te with the material needs of the people. The Te of Confucius, which is originated by Heaven, somewhat resembles the Te of the people in Shu Ching, because the latter is determined by heaven. Here Confucius places himself closer to the people than to the king, whose virtue in Shu Ching was originally from the king himself. Another resemblance is that Confucius had left his Te untended and that therefore it had dwindled. This corresponds to the uncertain characteristic of the Te of the people in Shu Ching. Confucius's Te was different from the royal Te in Shu Ching, coming closer to the people's virtue in Shu Ching. If the royal Te in Shu Ching was faulty, the heavenly anger arose. This was not the case in Confucius's Te and not in the people's the in Shu Ching.<sup>164</sup> Quantitatively and qualitatively the virtue of the people in Shu Ching and the Analects is far less important than the virtue connected with the rulers.

## c. Te and Other Concepts

Shu Ching related Te directly only to Chi, reaching to the highest point. The Analects show much richer lines of thought in this respect by giving definitive descriptions and by relating it to some other concepts, thus developing the term in a logical direction. Confucius developed the "Embryonic form of rationalist thought"<sup>165</sup> of Shu Ching. However, these definitive characteristics of Te are concentrated into the less reliable parts of the Analects as shown by the list in the summary. Thus, the rationalist thought in connection with Te of the Analects, may have been formulated by the Confucianists after Confucius at least to some extent.

The Chou ideology in Shu Ching presents Te in a form of antique reasoning, whereas the Analects mostly ignores this and has a more rationalistic element in it. These definitive characteristics of Te can be said to be a more philosophical approach than that to be found in Shu Ching. It is noteworthy that these more philosophical and logical, innovative relations appear mostly in those parts of the Analects which have more materials from the time after Confucius. It seems that Confucius's Te was closer to the preceding tradition than what the totality of the Analects leads one to conclude. If

<sup>164</sup> NIKKILÄ 1982, pp. 131,132.

<sup>165</sup> SHIGEZAWA 1961, pp. 79-82. NIKKILÄ 1982, pp. 132,133.

we look only at his concept of Te, Confucius can hardly be recognized as a philosopher compared with Shu Ching. The step from the "Embryonic form of rationalist thought" from Shu Ching to the Analects using Te as a vehicle is so small. We do find, however, some vestiges of certain principles of government in Confucius, but these are not taken much further than those which can be found in Shu Ching, although they are removed from the framework of Chou ideology. When we examine the philosophical concept of Te, this seems to be the essential step forward: it opened an area for discussing Te without the framework of a closed ideological system. The question of whether this type of "free thinking" can be found in Shih Ching as well, is important from the Confucian point of view: was he the advocate of this freedom of Te, or did it exist already in Shih Ching, and if it existed, was it developed as far as the Confucian view. If Confucius is the winner, in other words, if he shows a greater tendency for rational thinking than Shih Ching, then also the concept of Te is a small advance in philosophy, if not alone, at least with other terms.

## 7. Early Confucian Te and Te in Shih Ching

### a. The Characteristics of Te

Shih Ching also makes reference to the ancient kings when speaking about Te. Quantitatively this is closer to the Analects than the corresponding emphasis in Shu Ching.

The Confucian non coercive method in governing closely resembles the Shih Ching tradition which does not speak directly about punishments in connection with Te, but regards taking care of the people, filiality and sacrifices and being a good model as important. However, in Shih Ching Te refers also to the reforms in law enforcement and the prevention of crime. This may indicate severer methods of dealing with crime.

Te as a uniting power is also present in Shih Ching, but not to do with governing as in the Analects, but rather concerns the relation between husband and wife.

The reciprocal attitude or paying back aspect of Te can be found in both sources.

Upon the change of the dynasty, God, Ti 帝, transferred Te from Yin to Chou. This denotes the divine origin of Te in Shih Ching. The Analects is on similar lines, as was seen above. But Shih Ching lets one understand that the king needs Te in order to get Heavenly blessing. Another detail which the Analects and Shih Ching share is that the Analects have Te of the people where the dead are respected. This respect belongs to the royal Te in Shih Ching.

Shih Ching has some themes of Te not discussed in the Analects connected with Te. These themes are filiality and sacrifice, the importance of the outer behavior of the king and the gentleman, Te in the relationship between man and woman, the Te of woman, the idea of not getting drunk. Shih Ching also expresses Te as a type of original virtue of man in connection with creation. Also, the difficulty of gaining Te is expressed.

## b. General Assessment

In general, Shih Ching does not place Te into a strict ideological context. It apparently represents a more common usage of the term and uses it more freely than Shu Ching. The Analects follow this freedom. Shih Ching applies Te more widely and expresses several applications of Te which do not appear in the Analects. In the logical relations the Analects shows a more rational tendency, and more complex thinking about what is Te and what is not. For example, in the logical idea that one who has Te has also words, but by having words one does not necessarily have Te.<sup>166</sup> In this respect the Analects show a greater tendency toward philosophical thinking, trying also to formulate Te more clearly than it is formulated in the common usage. However, the difference is so small that Te cannot be regarded as a term in which Confucius's philosophy is concentrated. We should also note again that the rationalism of Te appears mostly in the less reliable parts of the Analects. If Te would be accepted as a main concentration area of Confucian philosophy, then Shih Ching should also be regarded as a philosophical work, at least to some extent. However, Te in Confucius can contain parts of his philosophy if the main concentration of his philosophy is elsewhere and shows greater independent formation of thinking as compared with the traditions in Shu Ching and Shih Ching.

If we try to identify Confucius as a philosopher using only Te, and comparing this concept in Confucius and in Shih ching, we cannot find a philosopher, but a rather a traditional thinker who may have changed Te towards a somewhat more rational direction.

## 8. A Comparison with Lao Tzu's Concept of Te

### a. Tao Superior to Te in Lao Tzu

Te 德 appears in the Tao Te Ching 44 times. Of these 35 appearances are in book two, chapters 38-81.

Te in Lao Tzu has a strong relationship with Tao 道. Béky says: "Das erste auffallende Merkmal am Te ist, dass ihm Eigenschaften zugeschrieben werden, Attribute beigegeben werden, die sonst dem Tao zukommen." Béky refers to the following similarities with Tao: Te is mysterious and profound; and it enables one to return to original childhood, to the first simpleness. Te and Tao have contradictory features, for example: "The way, Tao, that is bright seems dull" and "Plain Te seems soiled." Another similarity can be seen in the saying, "The way gives them life; virtue rears them." Tao and Te are honored by all.<sup>167</sup>

Although Tao and Te have been described in similar terms, there is a hierarchy between them. In this hierarchy Tao is superior to Te. In the following most of the

<sup>166</sup> AN. 14:5, p. 181. LEGGE I 1969, p. 276. About Te in Shih Ching, see NIKKILÄ 1982, pp. 175-184.

<sup>167</sup> BÉKY 1972, p. 95, LAO TZU 51 and 65, p. 112,127, 55:125, p. 116, 41, p. 102, 21.48, p. 78, 51, p. 112.

main concepts discussed in this study are put in order according to their value in Taoism: "Hence when the way, Tao, was lost there was virtue, Te; when the virtue was lost there was benevolence, Jen; when benevolence was lost there was rectitude, Yi; when rectitude was lost there were the rites, Li."<sup>168</sup> In the origins of life Tao is primary, but Te is the sustaining or preserving force.<sup>169</sup> In this context Tao and Te are more in the ontological sense. In addition, even in the ethical sense Tao is primary. Lao Tzu says: "In his every movement a man of great virtue 孔德, Follows the way 道 and the way only." The concept K'ung Te 孔德 has been interpreted in two ways. Most translators seem to understand it to mean great or 大. Others, like Wang Pi, explain it as "empty", 孔空也.<sup>170</sup> Chang explains Te in this context in an entirely different way. He says: "Here, Te means the attainment of preontological experience. In this sense Te has nothing to do with ethical values, as it does in the Confucian interpretation." He translates the passage: "That which is inherent in the great attainment (void) is the echo of Tao."<sup>171</sup> From this we can understand that the distinction between the ontological and ethical meanings of Te is not sharply drawn. The ontology and ethics may be inside each other. However, the literary meanings of K'ung Te, great or empty virtue, apparently do not exclude each other, but the great virtue is empty.

In the ruling of the country, Tao has been regarded as being primary to Te. In this context virtue, Te, is a consequence of following the way. This type of Te functions as a tool which starts the process leading to possessing a state.<sup>172</sup>

The primacy of Tao compared to Te implies that it is possible to obtain Te through Tao.<sup>173</sup> Te also has a strengthening feedback to Te: "A man of the way conforms to the way; a man of virtue conforms to virtue." The "constant virtue" 常德 is established when one has a correct attitude towards phenomena which are opposite to each other, if one is able in a way to balance between two different phenomena, to find a type of mean. Te can also be gained by treating as good those who are good and also those who are not good.<sup>174</sup>

The ideal of Te is to be found in infancy, returning to being a baby. In this state a

<sup>168</sup> LAO TZU 38:83, p. 99. See also KARLGREN 1975, p. 7. LIN, Paul J. 1977, pp. 69-71.

Wang Pi discusses the relationship between Te and Tao, saying that Virtue means gain, and further that "To constantly gain without loss, and to have benefit without harmfulness, then it is called virtue. How is virtue gained? Through Tao." WANG PI 1975, p. 76. A translation of Wang Pi, see LIN Paul J. 1977, p. 70.

<sup>169</sup> LAO TZU 51:114, p. 112.

<sup>170</sup> LAO TZU 21:48, p. 78. KARLGREN 1975, p. 4. CH'U Ta-kaio 1972, p. 33. YÜ Pei-lin 1973, p. 47. CHAN Wing-tsit 1963, p. 137. WANG Pi 1975, p. 42. HSÜ Fu-kuan 1975, p. 340. This is the only occurrence of K'ung in Tao Te Ching, see KONKORDANZ ZUM LAO-TZU 1968, p. 40. Because of this, one cannot get any help elsewhere in Tao Te Ching in understanding the literary meaning of the term. Generally it has the following meanings: very, greatly, empty, peacock, KARLGREN 1972, pp. 302,303.

<sup>171</sup> CHANG Chung-yuan 1975, p. 61.

<sup>172</sup> LAO TZU 59:137, p. 120.

<sup>173</sup> LAO TZU 38, 51, pp. 99, 112. Wang Pi suggests that one obtains Te through Tao. WANG PI 1975, pp. 76,105. LIN, Paul J. 1977, pp. 70,96.

<sup>174</sup> LAO TZU 23, p. 80,49, p. 110 and 38, p. 85.



person will be protected against dangers and suffering, will have strength, virility and harmony.<sup>175</sup> Although there is the ideal of being an infant, nevertheless still it is described how the way gives life to the myriad creatures and Te rears them and finally Te brings them to fruition and maturity.<sup>176</sup> Confucius, too, recognized the protective function of Te.

In early Confucianism Te is a more independent entity than in Taoism, where Te is closely related with Tao. The Confucian Te does not imply any "preontological experience" and does not have to that extent an ontological meaning. However, in Confucianism there is a reference to this direction, because Confucius's own Te was from the Heavenly origin, whereas the Taoist Te originates from Tao.

## b. Non Action of Lao Tzu and the Heavenly Virtue of Confucius

Te is related to the Taoist idea of non-action:

"A man of the highest virtue, 上德, does not keep to virtue and that is why he has virtue. A man of the lowest virtue, 下德, never strays from virtue and that is why he is without virtue. The former never acts yet leaves nothing undone. The latter acts but there are things left undone."

Hsü explains that according to Lao Tzu a man ought to have Te of emptiness, which is the virtue of man's original nature. When one is born, one becomes a form, starts to know things and uses the senses to have desire, which is against the original virtue of emptiness. When one gets free from knowing and desire, one returns to the original Te of life.<sup>177</sup> Although in the Analects the Te of a ruler has some resemblance to this idea of non-action, Confucius stresses activity in connection with Te. Confucius should enlarge and cultivate his virtue. Despite his negligence to cultivate it, Confucius's Te was still effective presumably because his Te was of heavenly origin. In a way Confucius is between two philosophical attitudes. One is Te which depends purely on man, but man, Confucius himself, cannot fulfil the requirements of Te. The second attitude is the transcendental Te, a virtue which depends on Heaven, or in Taoism on Tao. Confucius cannot overlook this, because it functions despite human negligence. Pragmatically, this Te should be taken into account. If this Te were overlooked by Confucius, the result would have been a failure of Te in Confucius's life.

In terms the history of ideas it is noteworthy here that the heavenly origin of Confucius's Te is not rooted back in the Shu Ching tradition, but Te as grace in Shih Ching is from Heaven. However, the transcendental characteristic of Confucian Te is closer to that of

<sup>175</sup> LAO TZU 28:63, p. 85, 55:125, p. 116. WALEY 1958, p. 121, HSU Sung-peng 1976, p. 308. See also LAO TZU 60:139, p. 121. COLEGRAVE 1979, pp. 13,28.

<sup>176</sup> LAO TZU 51, p. 112. Lau omits one Te from the text and so offers this translation: "Thus the way gives them life and rears them; Brings them up and nurses them;" From the first instance of the same sentence Lau does not omit Te. See LAU D.C. 1974, pp. 112, 190. Wang Pi's text contains Te and results in the translation: "Virtue nurtures them, grows them and rears them," WANG PI 1975, p. 105, LIN Paul J. 1977, p. 51. To omit Te from here may not be very defensible, because Tao is the primary cause of life, but the function of Te is the practical upkeeping or caretaking of life, as seen in the beginning of chapter 51.

<sup>177</sup> LAO TZU 38:82, p. 99, 68:166, p. 130. HSÜ Fu-kuan 1975, p. 341. See also WATTS 1975, pp. 107-109. SCHWARTZ 1985, p. 208.

Taoism than of the Shih Ching tradition. It remains an open question to what extent the transcendental characteristic of Te can be understood as Taoist or some other influence in Confucius's thought or just as a necessary and functional part of Confucius's system.

### c. Attitude to Malice

According to the Taoist ideal of Te, malice should be repaid by virtue. Waley says about this: "The author first appropriates the maxim 'Requite injuries with good deeds, etc.', and shows how perfectly it fits in with his own teaching." Waley remarks that "Confucius criticizes this proverb and says if you repay injuries with good deeds, how are you going to repay good deeds?" Rowley says about this passage:

"Taken out of its context this may seem a noble maxim, and the specific repudiation of it by Confucius is often held to put Confucius on a lower plane. But, in the light of its context and of the whole teaching of the Tao Te Ching it is clear that it really expressed a supreme indifference to others, and was vastly inferior to Confucius's profound interest in men."<sup>178</sup>

Welch explains Lao Tzu's motive for this repaying of malice with virtue: "Because that is the most effective technique of getting people to do what we want." The motive of this type of Te would then be just to persuade people to act according to one's will, and not Te for its own sake. Lao Tzu exposes the motive of goodness, 德, in treating people as good no matter whether they are good or not, because in this way one gains in goodness.<sup>179</sup> In the large state the spirits do not harm the people, and the sage does not harm them either. "As neither does any harm, each attributes the merit to the other," or as Lin puts it "When both will not hurt each other, All virtue will converge to them."<sup>180</sup> Here the good attitude is motivated by the fact that it spreads Te and helps in governing the state.

### d. Te in Governing and Life

Te appears also more directly as a tool of governing the state. Te can be in the place of the laws. Lao Tzu says: "Therefore, the Sage retains the left stub of the contract, And does not make claims on others. The man with virtue keeps the contract while the man without virtue collects the tax." Lin explains this:

"In ancient China, a contract was divided into two sides. The left side was kept by the creditor who had the right to collect the loan back, and the right side was kept by the debtor who had the responsibility of paying back the loan. But, Lao Tzu said the Sage (creditor) made no claims on others, i.e., was not too concerned whether the debtor paid back the money or not. Therefore, 'the man with virtue keeps the contract' (without making claims). But the man without virtue tracks the people down and taxes them

<sup>178</sup> LAO TZU 63:148, p. 124, LIN, Paul J. 1977, p. 63. WALEY 1858, p. 219. AN. 14:36, p. 189, where Waley translates it "Someone said, What about the saying 'Meet resentment with inner power (Te)'? The Master said, In that case, how is one to meet inner power? Rather, meet resentment with upright dealing and meet inner power with inner power." The proverb in Lao Tzu is: 大小多必報怨以德. WANG PI 1975, p. 131. ROWLEY 1956, p. 63. See also YÜ Pei-lin 1973, p. 100.

<sup>179</sup> WELCH 1965, p. 21. LAO TZU 49:111, p. 110. Here Te appears in the sense of "gain" See WANG PI 1975, p. 99. See also GIRARDOT 1983, pp. 70,71.

<sup>180</sup> LAO TZU 60, p. 121. LIN Paul J. 1977, p. 112.

for their mistakes, as stated in the commentary. This chapter illustrates that there is no point in governing a nation with rules and laws."<sup>181</sup>

This usage of Te resembles Confucianism. In Confucianism and Taoism Te appears as a substitute for law and as a coercive power to rule the country. However, in the Analects the Te of a ruler is more emphatic than in the Tao Te Ching.

Te in all spheres of life, including the Te of an individual person, family, community and the whole empire presupposes the preparing of a good foundation and the matching of one's capability. The same presupposition is also part of the sacrifice to the ancestors.<sup>182</sup>

Te in connection with ruling is described as a mysterious virtue 玄德. The maintaining and nurturing virtue is also mysterious because it demands nothing in return for its beneficial function. Hsü explains that the mysterious Te goes through Tao, where all things come out. That is why Tao is called a mother 母, and the mysterious virtue can also be called a mother.<sup>183</sup> It is noteworthy that this kind of cosmic Te functions in the ruling of the empire. This becomes even more apparent in the following:

"If you are ravine to the empire, Then the constant virtue 常德, will not desert you And you will again return to being a babe... If you are a model to the empire, Then the constant virtue will not be wanting And you will return to the infinite... If you are valley to the empire, Then the constant virtue will be sufficient And you will return to being the uncarved block."<sup>184</sup>

The mysterious Te is a clear and distinct Taoist concept. The idea of non-action has some vestiges in Confucianism, but Confucianism does not share the Taoist idea of mysterious Te. Presumably Confucianism has adapted some characteristics from the traditions close to Taoism and in this way also shares something of the cosmic nature of Te in the ruling of the country. But this is only a nuance, in no way a dominating feature as it is in Taoism.

Compared with Taoism, the Confucian Te is more practical and more "ethical". The Analects list certain kinds of ethical actions, which are included in Te, Lao Tzu leaves these out and only concentrates on the more ontological and "great" features of Te.

## 9. A Comparison with MoTzu's Concept of Te

### a. Rare Te in the Mohist System

The occurrences of Te in Mo Tzu's works are quite rare, a little over thirty altogether. When we consider that in the synoptic parts of Mo Tzu everything is repeated three times, and that some occurrences appear in the unreliable parts of the work, then the effective occurrences are less than ten.

Comparatively more occurrences of Te appear in three chapters of "Exaltation of the

<sup>181</sup> LAO TZU 79, LIN Paul J. 1977, p. 140, WANG PI 1975, pp. 155, 156.

<sup>182</sup> LAO TZU 54, LIN Paul J. 1977, p. 101, WANG PI 1975, pp. 110-112.

<sup>183</sup> LAO TZU 10, p. 66, 51, p. 112, 25, p. 82, 65, p. 127. SMULLYAN 1985, pp. 21-23. Hsü discusses further the relationships between the empty virtue, the upper virtue and the mysterious virtue HSÜ Fu-kuan 1975, p. 340. Tao and Te have been described in similar terms, as combinations of opposites or combinations of contradictions. LAO TZU 41, p. 102. On mysterious virtue, see JAO Tsung-i 1978, p. 509. CHENG, Chung-ying 1989, pp. 199,200.

<sup>184</sup> LAO TZU 28. p. 85.

Virtuous". Te appears in these chapters ten times. The "virtue" in the name of the chapter is Hsien, 賢. Mei says that this term includes more than virtue in its meaning. Wisdom and talent are also implied.<sup>185</sup>

In the beginning of the chapter "Exaltation of the Virtuous I" Te appears in the following context: The rulers want the provinces to be wealthy, people numerous and their jurisdiction to secure order. They do not achieve this, but rather the opposite, because the rulers have failed to exalt the virtuous and to employ capable people in the government. To encourage them to serve in the government the following kind of persons should be enriched, honored, respected and commended: "the virtuous and the excellent who are firm in morality, Te, versed in rhetoric, and experienced in statecraft - since these are the treasures of the nation and props of the state." The ancient sage kings

"Ranked the morally excellent king and exalted the virtuous, Te. If capable, even a farmer or an artisan would be employed - commissioned with high rank, trusted with important charges, and empowered to issue final orders. For, if his rank were not high, people would not respect him; if his emoluments were not liberal, people would not have confidence in him; if his orders were not final, people would not stand in awe before him. To place these three (honours) upon the virtuous is not so much to reward virtue, as to lead to success of the enterprise (of government). Therefore, ranks should be standardized according to virtue, Te, tasks assigned according to office, and rewards given according to labour spent."<sup>186</sup>

In the parallel chapters "Exaltation of the Virtuous" II and III Te does not appear in this context as a quality of a good state administrator. Thus, we cannot know whether Mo Tzu himself has used Te in this context, because we do not know which of the three versions is most reliable. However, Te is used here according to the Mohist tradition, if not according to the earliest Mohist tradition.

In the Exaltation of the virtuous, Mo Tzu lets one understand that the lack of Te caused punishment to those who were related to the ruler. Te appears also as a ruling power of the ruler: "The virtuous might of the sovereign overawed the people; his virtuous enlightenment made them bright."<sup>187</sup>

The virtue of the three sages was blessed by Heaven, T'ien. The virtue of them implied care or caution in speech, vigilance in conduct, penetration in thought, studying and planning for every detail and being of benefit to the world.

"This way, Tao, when followed broadly to govern the world, will not be found to be too slender; when followed narrowly, will not be too unwieldy; when followed with discretion, will benefit the people beyond their lifetime.' Referring to it, the 'Eulogy of Chou' sings: 'The virtue, Te, of the sage shining upon the world is lofty as Heaven, wide as earth, high as the mountain, unbreakable and infallible; luminating as the sun, brilliant as the moon, eternal with Heaven and earth.' This is to describe how enlightening and all-embracing, deep-rooted and, therefore permanent is the virtue of the sage. Therefore, the virtue of the sage is really inclusive of Heaven and earth."

The virtue, Te, and righteousness, Yi, are necessary for the ruler.<sup>188</sup>

When the rulers enrich and favor their relatives without them having any specific merit (i.e. when they practice nepotism) this causes disorder in the country. Even if there are some virtuous, Te, this will not help, and the needs of the people are neglected.

<sup>185</sup> MEI 1974, MO TZU p. 30.

<sup>186</sup> MO TZU pp. 30-33.

<sup>187</sup> MO TZU, pp. 45, 46. The quotation follows Watson's translation, which seems more logical and less artificial in this context. WATSON 1963, p. 32. See also MO TZU p. 185.

<sup>188</sup> MO TZU pp. 46,47.

The term Te appears in the three chapters Exaltation of the Virtuous I to III only as single phenomena and not in parallel passages. We do not know which of the occurrences are originally from Mo Tzu, if any. However, in these chapters Te represents early Mohism, if not Mo Tzu himself.<sup>189</sup>

The next biggest group is in the chapter "Condemnation of Offensive War III". Here Te refers to the conduct of Hsia and Shang which deteriorated. This gave Chou the legitimation to overcome Yin.<sup>190</sup> In this chapter the motive of the attacking ruler is presented: "I want to have my name as a righteous, Yi, ruler established in the world and draw the other feudal lords to me with my virtue, Te." Mo Tzu does not approve of this motive, and condemns the offensive war.<sup>191</sup>

There are more occurrences of the term in a number of chapters, usually between one and three in each. In the chapter on "Economy and Expenditure" Mo Tzu's opinions reflect utilitarianism. Here the virtue of the people, 民德, refers to the resources or the strength of the people. Mo Tzu says that the sage never does anything without some useful purpose. Therefore, wealth is not wasted and people's resources are not exhausted, and many are the blessings procured.<sup>192</sup>

Te appears in the combination of "sound of virtue", 德音 which is translated by Mei as "good counsel". Mo Tzu wants to explain that the ruler does not act alone, but uses the good abilities of others as well. Mo Tzu says: "When there are many to help one's speech then one's good counsel can comfort many."<sup>193</sup> It is noteworthy that this combination does not appear either in the Analects or in Tao Te Ching. Secondly, in Mo Tzu's thought the royal Te is to a certain extent a social and cooperative attribute, and not just king's own virtue.

According to Mo Tzu, virtue, Te, is rewarded.<sup>194</sup> The love of the early kings was universal. The better equipped did not oppress the weak. Examples are given, such as large states did not attack the small ones; the strong did not plunder the weak; the clever did not deceive the stupid, etc. Mo Tzu continues: "Such a regime was agreeable to Heaven above, to the spirits in the middle sphere, and to the people below. Being helpful to these three, it was helpful to all. And this was Heavenly virtue." Tien Te. This appears in the chapter "Will of Heaven" II and III, but in the "Will of Heaven I" in this context the concept does not appear.<sup>195</sup>

When trying to prove that ghosts exist, Mo Tzu regards Bright Te, or intelligent Te,

<sup>189</sup> MO TZU pp. 52,53.

<sup>190</sup> MO TZU pp. 112,113.

<sup>191</sup> MO TZU Pp. 114-116.

<sup>192</sup> MO TZU pp. 117,118. WATSON 1963, Pp. 62,64. Te in MO TZU p. 5 is omitted, because this part of the work is spurious. MEI 1974, p. 5.

<sup>193</sup> MO TZU pp. 67,68. See the original text A CONCORDANCE TO MO TZU p. 18, row 67. This is the same combination of Te which appears in Shih Ching several times, see NIKKILÄ 1982, pp. 180-183.

<sup>194</sup> MO TZU p. 95. Here Mo Tzu quotes Shih Ching "No idea is not given its due value; no virtue, Te, is not rewarded. When a peach is thrown to us, we would return with a prune." Mei remarks that only the first two lines of this quotation appear in the ode 'Yi' LEGGE IV 1969, p. 514.

<sup>195</sup> MO TZU pp. 147,155,139.



明德, as a quality of Lord Mu of Ch'in to be cherished by the God, Ti.<sup>196</sup> One has to be careful or cautious about one's Te. If not, then the fate of Heaven, T'ien ming, 天命 will not protect one. Heaven blesses the virtuous.<sup>197</sup>

#### b. Te of Confucius and of Mo Tzu

Both Confucius and Mo Tzu regard Te as an important quality of the ruler. In both writers it appears as the power of the ruler over the ruled. Mohist method applies Te more closely to the ideal antiquity. The term itself in connection with the ruler is defined in a more sophisticated manner by Confucius than by Mo Tzu who takes the term as a given entity. Both mention the term in connection with peace, but Mo Tzu is clearer in this respect by opposing the offensive war. The social aspect of the term can be seen in both. In Confucius Te does not dwell in solitude, but brings neighbors. Te here is a static value and an end in itself. One has Te and neighbors, and it is good as such. Mo Tzu is not satisfied with this. According to him the social aspect of Te functions so that the king uses the good abilities, Te, of others. This royal team-work aspect is absent from Confucius's thinking. Both mention Te in connection with a dynasty. Mo Tzu is closer to the Chou ideology, legitimatizing a good, virtuous new dynasty to overcome the old. Both speak about the Te of the people, but Confucius says more about this. For Mo Tzu the virtuous people are a resource for the king to use; Confucius does not have such an instrumental overtone, but gives only some descriptions of the people's virtue. Mo Tzu does not consider the definitive characteristics of Te, but regards Te more as a given concept generally understood. For Confucius it seems to be quite important to define Te as an ethical concept, to discover what belongs to it and what does not. In this way Confucius is more "philosophical" because he sees problems in Te to be solved. The appearances of Te in Mo Tzu's works are quite random and unsystematic. Mostly they appear in only one of the three versions of the "synoptics". It is probable that most of the occurrences have been added later by the commentators, who have been to a certain extent under Confucian influence. Te in Mo Tzu's works is not a specific technical carrier of Mohist ideas and not a key term as it is in the Confucian Analects.

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<sup>196</sup> MO TZU p. 162. A CONCORDANCE TO MO TZU, p. 50, row 23.

<sup>197</sup> MO TZU pp. 196,197.