

And in the end, the Jwāngdž 8 group agreed. They recast their position:

**7:42** (JZ 8:1, excerpt, c0273). Joined toes, extra fingers – these come from Nature, but are contrary to Virtue. Growths and tumors – these come from Form, but are contrary to Nature. Excessive practice in Benevolence and Righteousness may be [said to be] as fundamental as the Five Organs, but they are against the Way and Virtue . . .

Such was the sparring back and forth between the rival schools.

This passage from the Jwāngdž mixes magic and ordinary caution:

**7:43** (JZ 17:1f, excerpt, c0270). A man of perfect virtue 德: fire cannot burn him, water cannot drown him, cold and heat cannot harm him, birds and beasts cannot injure him. Not that he makes light of these things, but that he distinguishes between safety and danger, is at peace with fortune or misfortune, and is careful about comings and goings – nothing can harm him.

**Deep Reality.** Here magic is rejected for something else. Lyèdž is distracted from his studies with his master Húdž by a shaman with magical powers, and winds up taking refuge in not making distinctions:

**7:44** (JZ 7:5, excerpt, c0253). In Jvng there was a shaman named Ji Syén, who could foretell the life or death of men, the survival or extinction of states, fortune or disaster, long life or short, down to year, month, week and day, as though he were divine. When the people of Jvng saw him, they would run to get out of his way. Lyèdž went to see him and his mind was intoxicated. Coming back, he reported to Húdž, I used to think that the Master's way was the last word. But now there is another . . .

Húdž said, I gave you the outline, but not the substance. You think you have gotten the Way? . . . Try bringing him, and showing me to him.

Next day, Lyèdž brought him to see Húdž. When they had gone out, he said to Lyèdž, Alas, your master is dying; he cannot recover; he will not last a week. I saw something very strange, like wet ashes. Lyèdž went back, weeping and drenching his collar with his tears, and reported this to Húdž. Húdž said, Just now I appeared to him with the Pattern of Earth – still and silent, nothing moving, nothing standing up. He probably saw in me the Workings of Virtue Closed Off. Try coming again with him.

Next day, he brought him again to see Húdž. When they had gone out, he said to Lyèdž, It is fortunate that your master has encountered me. He will get well; he is fully alive. I have seen signs of his revival. Lyèdž went in, and reported this to Húdž. Húdž said, Just now I showed him Heaven and Earth, without name or substance, but with the bodily mechanism working from the heels.<sup>25</sup> He has probably seen the Working of the Good. Try coming again with him.

<sup>25</sup>A special kind of breathing is said to come “from the heels.”

Next day, he brought him again to see Húdž. When they had gone out, he said to Lyèdž, Your master is unstable; I cannot examine him. Let him become stable, and I will examine him again. Lyèdž went in, and reported to Húdž. Húdž said, I showed him the Great Void Without Distinctions. He probably saw the Working of the Balanced Breaths. Where swirling waves gather, there is an abyss. Where still waters gather, there is an abyss. Where running waters gather, there is an abyss. The abyss has nine names,<sup>26</sup> and these are three of them. Try coming again with him.

The next day he brought him again to see Húdž, but before he had taken his place [as a guest], he broke and ran. Húdž said, Pursue him. Lyèdž did pursue him, but could not catch up with him. He returned and reported to Húdž, saying, He is vanished, he is gone; I couldn't catch up with him. Húdž said, Just now I showed him the Ancestor Who Was Before Anything Existed. I appeared to him empty<sup>27</sup> and compliant, not knowing Who or What, at once indistinct and fluid. Therefore he fled.

After this, Lyèdž considered that he had not yet even begun to study. So he went back home, and for three years did not leave his house. He did the cooking for his wife; he fed the pigs as though he were feeding people. He did not prefer one thing over another; from "fine carving" he reverted to "plain material." He took his place like a mere clod of earth. Amid confusion, he was secure. And in this Oneness he ended his days.

So Lyèdž ends, not in study of another, but in isolation and self-concentration. He singlemindedly pursues nondiscrimination. The highest art is to use no art, but simply to "take one's place" among things.

**Survival.** Of comparable importance, in dangerous times, was the question of how not to get killed before one's time. Against the sword, as we have seen, magic was invoked, but more to the taste of the Jwāngdž people was avoidance through inconspicuousness, like a useless tree. Consider (says a tree criticized by a carpenter as useless) what happens to the *useful* trees . . .

**7:45** (JZ 4:4b, excerpt, c0267) . . . As soon as their fruit is ripe, they are torn apart and abused. Their big limbs are torn off, their little limbs are pulled every whichway. Their usefulness makes their life bitter, and so they don't get to complete their Heaven-allotted years, but perish midway.

The Mencians agreed that an *allotted* lifespan is not a *guaranteed* lifespan:

**7:46** (MC 7A2, c0269). Mencius said, There is nothing that is not fated, but one accepts only what is a proper fate. Thus those who understand Fate do not stand under a tottering wall. Those who die for their principles (道) have met a proper fate, but to die in fetters is not a proper fate.

Courage is appropriate to the gentleman, but not recklessness.

<sup>26</sup>Ywān 淵 "abyss" is also the alternate personal name of Yén Hwéi.

<sup>27</sup>Again the quality "empty" (here syw 虛), associated with Yén Hwéi in #7:14.