CLASSICAL CONFUCIAN IDEAS OF MUSIC

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Classical Confucian Ideas of Music

by

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I examine the importance of music in Classical Confucian thought. The study of Confucian musical philosophy has often been either ignored or trivialized in favour of the ethical or political philosophy of the Confucians. I argue that, rather than being in a secondary category and separate from the Confucians' political philosophy, music and its partner ritual were actually at the core of their political system.

I begin with a look at the pre-Confucian uses of music in ancient China. In the second chapter, I examine the classical Confucian philosophical claims about music, especially their belief that, in their proper balance, music and ritual would work together to maintain order between the world of nature and human society. In the third chapter, I discuss what the Daoists and Moists thought about the Confucian philosophy of music. I show that, even though one would expect the Moists to focus their criticisms on the Confucians' political theories, what they actually attack is the Confucian emphasis on music and ritual as a waste of both time and resources. This shows that the Moists realized how central music and ritual were to the Confucian system of thought.

In the final chapter, I discuss the theories of Herbert Fingarette and Robert Eno, and deal with the recent emphasis upon *li* as the central point of

Confucian philosophy. Fingarette and Eno claim to have rediscovered *li* as the essence of Confucian philosophy, arguing that, because the Confucian notion of ritual as the centre of philosophy is foreign to us, it has been ignored by Western scholars. I argue, however, that Eno and Fingarette also misinterpret the true nature of Confucian philosophy when they ignore an idea that is even more foreign to Western assumptions than the notion of ritual; that is, the fact that music was an equal partner with ritual in the smooth running of society and the universe as a whole. I believe that, in missing the Confucian's point about music, Eno and Fingarette misinterpret Confucian philosophy and do not see its essentially political nature.

In loving memory of

my father,

whose belief in me taught me to believe in myself;

and in thanksgiving for

my mother,

whose strength and support taught me to carry on.

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INTRODUCTION

Confucians maintained that ritual established one's character and music, so often coupled with ritual, completed it. The *Analects* claims, for example, "The Master said, 'Begin with poetry, build upon the rites, finish with music.'"[1] As we can see from this passage, Confucius himself based his thought on ritual and music. Unfortunately, despite the importance attributed to music, it is an area in the study of Confucian thought that has been neglected; usually attention is focused on either Confucian political or moral philosophy. Recently there has been a renewed interest in the place of *li* (禮), or ritual, in Confucian philosophy, but the importance of music is still either down-played or even completely ignored.

For example, sayings such as the one from the *Analects* that tells us to "build upon the rites" and "finish with music", seem to give music a prominent place in Confucian philosophy, but are often considered quaint, trivial or meaningless. Even Walter Kaufmann, who has compiled all the references to music in the Confucian classics, divides Confucian sayings about music into two categories: philosophical and factual, the latter dealing

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[1] *Lun Yu* (*The Analects*), in *Si Shu* (*The Four Books*), ed. Xie Pingying (Taibei: Sanmin Publishing, 1976), 123. The translation of this passage is my own.

with concrete musical theory, information about instruments, and so on.[2] He suggests, quite correctly, that the philosophical references "may provoke some skepticism in the modern reader".[3] He is right in saying that today's reader will not agree with all of the Confucian claims about music, but Kaufmann then draws an unsubstantiated conclusion, arguing that the factual references "show a good deal of common sense and can be considered to be more reliable than those of the first [philosophical] category."[4] It seems Kaufmann would have us assume that, because the more philosophical references to music in the Chinese classics sound foreign and strange to us, they therefore lack common sense. How can we claim to be studying Confucian philosophy if we simply ignore the parts of their beliefs with which we do not agree or do not understand? I intend to show instead that the Confucian position should not be dismissed so lightly.

Most of the material available on Confucian ideas of music focus on the more technical aspects of music, what Kaufmann would call "factual". Similarly, many of the commentaries on Confucian thought ignore what could be called the Confucian philosophy of music. There are, however, a

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[2] Walter Kaufmann, *Musical References in the Chinese Classics* (Detroit: Information Coordinators, 1976), 10.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

host of comments on music and its effect in the Confucian classics, that would not fit under the "factual" category. There was, in fact, a Confucian *Classic of Music* that is no longer extant; in the material that remains, not only is there a whole chapter in the *Book of Rites* devoted to the philosophy of music, but there are also many passages scattered throughout the rest of the Confucian classics that philosophize on music and assign to it a significant role in the workings of the universe. Given, then, that the idea of music figures so prominently in Confucian texts and yet has been largely ignored by modern scholarship, I propose to examine the place and importance of music in classical Confucian philosophy.

I will show that, not only was music an essential component of Confucian philosophy, but, in fact, the Confucians used music politically. By this I mean that music, coupled with ritual, provided the basis for the Confucian political philosophy. According to Confucians, music and ritual were the necessary tools of any political leader. This means that, on the one hand, those who would suggest that the Confucians were simply politicians whose claims about music and ritual are meant to be merely "poetical" rather than practical, are missing the Confucians' point about music and its effects. On the other hand, those who would suggest that Confucians were completely apolitical, and that they were instead hermits obsessed only with ritual are equally misguided. I will show that, in

Confucian philosophy, music and // were not outside the realm of politics, but rather, for the Confucians, music and ritual were politics.

In order to see how this works, we need to begin by investigating the pre-Confucian uses of music in China, examining the etymology of the character for "music," the importance attributed to music in ancient China, and finally the use of music by the *wu* (巫), shamans, who were the original Chinese masters of music. The second chapter will, through a study of the references to music in the Confucian philosophical texts, show that music was an essential component of classical Confucian philosophy. We will see that music, and its partner ritual, were thought to represent the harmony and principles of the universe. Confucians believed that the "right" music and rituals, in their proper balance, would work together to maintain the order of the universe, peace within society, and moral virtue within individual lives.

In this connection, however, there is some question as to how much the views of the classical Confucian school can be recovered. The Confucian classics, upon which I will rely as a source of Confucian philosophy, are in some ways problematic as a basis for the thought of the *Ru*-ist(儒), or Confucian, school. This school has definitely been connected to the classics, even though the dating and authorship of many of the texts is debated. Though the classics were written over a long span of time,

some of them even before Confucius, they can still be seen as authoritative in the search for the thoughts of the classical Confucians. Some of the earlier texts, like the *Book of Poetry* and the *Book of History*, were quoted by Confucius and Mencius themselves. Some of the later texts, including the *Mencius* (named after its author) were written by those associated with the school of Confucianism. Later Confucians who tried to remain faithful to the ideas of Confucius believed these texts to be authoritative and accepted them as a canon. In fact, it was traditionally believed that Confucius himself edited the classics, and, while modern scholarship has proven this false, the classics were edited by the *Ru*-ist school. In addition, other philosophers, outside of the Confucian school, also associated these texts with Confucianism. For example, Zhuangzi tells a story about Confucius going to see Laozi and complaining that, even though he has studied the "six classics" and knows them thoroughly, no ruler will listen to him.[5] Zhuangzi lists these six classics as "the *Odes*, the *Documents*, the *Ritual*, the *Music*, the *Changes*, and the *Spring and Autumn*."[6] The classics, then, can be considered a relatively reliable source for discovering the thought of the early *Ru*-ist school. We shall see that this is especially true on the subject of

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[5] Zhuangzi, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 165-66.

[6] Ibid., 165; see also, ibid., 363.

music because rival schools criticized the same Confucian theories that we find in the Confucian Classics.

Indeed, the claims of the Confucian's rivals are often useful in studying Confucian thought, and so the third chapter will look at the musical theories of other classical Chinese schools in an attempt to better understand the Confucians' notion of music. The reaction of these other schools to the ideas put forth by the Confucians will prove quite helpful in interpreting Confucian thought. Like the Confucians, the Daoists believed in the power of music to affect both the workings of the universe and the course of each individual's life. The Moists, however, rejected absolutely any notion of the power of music and claimed that music had no use or purpose in society, acting actually as a detriment to a country's well-being.

In the final chapter, I will look at the recent emphasis on *li* among those who study Confucian thought. I will argue that, contrary to some recent claims, the Confucians were indeed political. Confucians wanted to use music and ritual in a way that would control people's thoughts, feelings, and actions in the interest of a well-run state. This chapter concludes with several basic points: first, the Confucians were very interested in music; second, those who down-play the role of music in Confucian philosophy have misunderstood the Confucian agenda; third, the Confucian program of music and ritual was actually a political policy for a very effective type of

government; and finally, music and ritual are the very core of the Confucian system of thought.

CHAPTER ONE: MUSIC IN ANCIENT CHINA

In order to understand the Confucian philosophy of music, it is necessary to begin with a background sketch of music in pre-Confucian China. The Confucians relied heavily on their predecessors for many of their ideas about music, as well as for their musical skills and instruments. Confucians also seem to have inherited their notion of the great importance of music from the past. For these reasons, then, we need to examine the general background of ancient Chinese music, starting with the etymology of the character for "music", and concluding with a look at the original masters of music in China, the *wu* (巫) or shamans.

ETYMOLOGY OF THE CHARACTER *YUE*

The Chinese language is a system of characters that may have begun by representing pictorially the objects to which they referred. The etymology of a character often provides insight into the original meaning of the character and how much, if at all, the character's meaning has changed over the years. In fact, ever since the Han dynasty, scholars have studied the character *yue* (樂) in an effort to learn something of the origins of music.[1]

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[1] Kenneth J. DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two: Music and the Concept of Art in Early China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1982), 57.

The Character's Components

This character has gone through many alterations in becoming the modern Chinese character *yue*. Today's character has three components. The bottom radical literally refers to a tree and is usually thought to indicate some sort of wooden stand.[2] The center top component is usually thought to represent a drum mounted upon this wooden stand.[3] Finally the two sides on top of the character represent silk and thus may symbolize something suspended by silk, such as hanging bells or chimes.[4]

There have been variants of the character found that lack one of the three modern components; most particularly, some variants in oracle-bone scripts lack the center "drum-like" component. This difference has caused much speculation. Some scholars say that without the "drum," the silk over the wood symbolizes strings.[5] If this is so, then when the center component appears added later, it means to strum or press the strings and is not meant to represent a drum at all. Some claim that this might suggest a

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[2] Ibid., 58; R.H. Van Gulik, *The Lore of the Chinese Lute* (revised; 1940) (Tokyo: Sophia University and Charles E. Tuttle: Tokyo, 1969), 6.

[3] DeWoskin, 58; Van Gulik, 6.

[4] DeWoskin, 58.

[5] Ibid.

stringed instrument before the *qin* (琴) and *se* (瑟) called a *yue*.[6] There is a problem with this theory, however, in that no stringed instruments are mentioned in the oracle bone writings.[7]

The Character's Meaning

Speculation about its etymology aside, we are still left with the unanswered question of what the character *yue* meant. Today, the same character, with different pronunciations, is used to mean both "music" and "joy." In the traditional context of music, it refers to "performed music," including dances, mimes, and, perhaps, other ritual and festival activities as well.[8] Historically, however, up until its use in the *Book of Music*, (and with the exception of the *Xunzi* and the *Zhuangzi*) the character was used more commonly as the feeling "joy."[9] Kenneth Robinson has suggested that perhaps this means the character originally meant a "cheerful noise" and included a whole range of percussion sounds, dances and gestures.[10]

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., 59.

[8] Ibid., 19.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Kenneth G. Robinson, "New Thoughts On Ancient Chinese Music," *Annual of the China Society of Singapore* (1954): 31; quoted in DeWoskin, 19, n.1.

IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC IN ANCIENT CHINA

Why Was Music Important?

Whatever the character *yue* specifically meant, one thing is certain: music itself was thought to be of great importance in ancient China. Perhaps this is partly a result of the link, in Chinese culture, between sharpness in auditory senses and sharpness of intellect.[11] A parallel to this idea in Western culture is the link we sometimes draw between sight and understanding; we claim, "Yes, I see", but mean, "Yes, I understand." In ancient China there was the same sort of connection between hearing and understanding or knowledge in general. Music, then as perhaps the greatest achievement of hearing, was thought to be a highly intellectual endeavour, only understood properly by the wisest of people.

Furthermore, music was employed in so many different areas of life that it seemed to be central to life itself; music was never isolated, but always contextual.[12] It was related to banquets, dances, community events, and religious rituals, invariably having a specific purpose that was essential to human life. It is not hard to understand, therefore, why music was traditionally thought to be very important.

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[11] DeWoskin, 7.

[12] Liang Mingyue, *Music of the Billion: An Introduction to Chinese Musical Culture* (New York: Heinrichshofen Edition, 1985), 11.

Results of Music's Importance

Because music was such an important aspect of life in ancient China, the idea of the Music Master developed. The importance of music necessitated professionals to organise the music for different ceremonies, decide on the right kinds of music for different occasions, keep the pitches correct and look after the instruments. Not just anyone could become a Music Master because this tradition seems to have been passed down through one family in particular, the Gui family.[13] Eventually, however, as an aid to various Music Masters, departments of music were set up. For example, the *Yue Fu* (樂 府), or Music Ministry, was established in 125 B.C.E., but much earlier than this there were less elaborate departments doing the same sorts of things.[14] The duties of the *Yue Fu* were several: maintaining the pitch of the *huang zhong* (黃鐘), the first note; collecting songs; supervising musical education; and restoration, when necessary, of proper ritual music.[15] The original establishment, and continuance by later governments, of the department of music and family of Music Masters seems then to be evidence of the great importance attached to music in ancient China.

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[13] Kaufmann, 150.

[14] Ibid., 150-51.

[15] Ibid., 151.

HISTORY OF MUSIC IN ANCIENT CHINA

Origins of Music

Despite the importance attributed to music, however, the history of its origins in China is vague. The ancient Chinese did not believe that music was invented at any time. They believed instead that the sage discovered music in the natural world, he did not create it. The sage merely designed a system to describe and make use of what he had found.[16] As the Chinese scholar Tang Hua writes, "Music is the external appearance of the universe's form...."[17] Music was considered natural and inherent within the workings of the universe itself. This idea is seen in the myth about the Emperor Yao who ordered Chi, one of his officials, to make music that imitated the sound of the hills, mountains, and forests.[18] By imitating the sounds using a deer-skin drum and beating on stones, Chi made the animals dance, the birds stop flying, and the fish come out of the water.

There are other myths about the institution of civilisation and the establishment of the Chinese empire that include stories about the origins of

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[16] DeWoskin, 60.

[17] Tang Hua, *Kongzi Zhexue Sixiang Yuanlin* [The origins of Confucian thought] (Taibei: Chengzhong, 1971), 792.

[18] Bliss Wiant, *The Music of China* (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1965), 83; quotes this as "Ancient Music" Chap. Five in *Spring and Autumn Annals*, but it is not in Legge's translation of the *Annals*.

music. In fact, music was thought in ancient China to be one of the tools used to establish civilisation. For example, the *qin* zither served as an important part of the founding acts of civilisation by the Yellow Emperor, Shen Nong, Fu Xi, Yao, Shun, and so on.[19] Furthermore, the discovery and mastery of the *qin* was often seen as what separated the Chinese from the surrounding "barbarian" tribes and from the animals.

According to tradition, the early legendary emperor Fu Xi, traditionally dated in the fifth or third millenniums B.C.E., was supposed to be the founder of music.[20] He was said to have created the *qin* and *se* zithers, the flute, and other early musical instruments. Another of the early emperors associated with music is Huang Di, the Yellow Emperor, also often dated at about the third millennium B.C.E. There are at least two versions of how he discovered the first note in the musical scale and then developed the rest of the scale from it. According to the first story, concerned with the maintenance of correct pitch for his music, the Huang Di sent Ling Long to the west, past the Kunlun mountains.[21] There Ling Long cut a bamboo and blew into it. The sound it made was the pitch of the *huang zhong* (yellow bell), the first note of the scale. This note is the same sound as the pitch of

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[19] De Woskin, 57.

[20] Kaufmann, 74.

[21] Rita Aero, *Things Chinese* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 168.

a person's voice without passion. Ling Long then cut more pipes in sizes proportional to the first and created the rest of the scale.

In a second version of the story, the emperor's messenger was named Ling Lun, and was sent to the most northern part of the kingdom.[22] When he cut a bamboo pole and blew into it, creating the *huang zhong*, there were two birds close by who imitated the sound he made. Then the first bird sang six notes and the second sang six more. Ling Lun then cut eleven more bamboos to imitate the sounds that the birds made, and this was the discovery of the twelve semi-tones of the chromatic scale.

Development of Musical Instruments

Just as our information about the origins of music in ancient China is based mostly on legend, so is our information about the development of musical instruments. Conclusions about what instruments were developed when, and by whom, are often debated. There does seem to be some consensus among scholars, however, on a very vague sketch of the evolution of musical instruments. For example, most would agree that the earliest music was made solely by percussion instruments, such as bells,

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[22] Chao Mei-pa, *The Yellow Bell* (Baldwin: Barberry Hill, 1934), 13.

drums and, sonorous stones.[23] The next stage then seems to have been the development of woodwind instruments such as the flute.[24] Stringed instruments are generally thought to be later than these other types, but still the lute was an important instrument very early in Chinese history. This leads to differences in opinion among scholars as to the date of the lute's origin.

Chao Mei-pa claims that the lute was in use by 3000 B.C.E.[25] Though such dating is not always reliable, he believes that, in the year 2352, the Yellow Emperor had the lute, the lyre, tambourines and a variety of stringed instruments with different numbers of strings. R.H. Van Gulik, however, disagrees with this position, claiming that we cannot reliably date the lute until 1400 B.C.E.[26] Though he believes that the lute's origins lie hidden forever in China's ancient past, he suggests that there may have been a primordial instrument that was a combination of the lute and zither and that had an exclusively sacred usage.[27]

Van Gulik emphasizes the magical powers associated with the lute

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[23] Van Gulik, 6.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Chao Mei-pa, 27.

[26] Van Gulik, 11.

[27] Ibid., 163-64.

that gave the lute its priority over other ancient Chinese musical instruments. He retells a story from the *Shi Ji (Records of the Historian)* where a lute was played at a banquet to amuse the guests.[28] Magical powers, embedded in the instrument since its use in ancient ceremonies, were released and manifested in sinister omens. Van Gulik claims that it was through beliefs such as this that in ancient China the lute became set apart as an instrument with sacred authority. The instrument still retained its special status, when, in the Han, the Confucian literati took the lute as their instrument.[29] The lute and the zither then parted ways and the lute began to be described as a means of prolonging life and an aid to meditation.

USE OF MUSIC IN ANCIENT CHINA

Music used in Rituals

From early in China's history, music played a major role in religious rituals. It accompanied most ceremonies but was used especially at the commencement of sacrifices to the ancestors in order to attract the

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[28] Ibid., 164.

[29] Ibid.

ancestral spirits and assure their presence during the ritual.[30] Music was then continued during the sacrifice and accompanied the food and drink that was offered to entertain and please the ancestors. It was believed that unless the ancestral spirits were fed and venerated by the family, they would roam the earth as "hungry ghosts" and wreak havoc in their search for food. If, however, the family continued to remember their ancestors, offering them food in acts of respect and honour, the ancestral spirits would work to bring good luck and fortune to their descendants.

There are many examples in the *Book of Poetry* of music being used in this way to entice the ancestors to a sacrifice. One example is from the "You Gu":

> There are the blind musicians; there are the blind musicians;
> In the court of (the temple of) Chou [Zhou].
>
> There are (the music frames) with their face-boards and posts,
> The high toothed-edge [of the former], and the feathers stuck (in the latter);
> With the drums, large and small, suspended from them;
> And the hand-drums and sounding-stones, the instrument to give the signal for commencing, and the stopper.
> These being all complete, the music is struck up.
> The pan-pipe and the double-flute begin at the same time.
>
> Harmoniously blend their sounds
> In solemn unison they give forth their notes.

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[30] Commentary by Legge in James Legge, trans., *The She King (The Book of Poetry)*, vol. 4, *The Chinese Classics* (reprint; 1885) (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), 632.

Our ancestors will give ear;
Our visitors will be there;-
Long to witness the complete performance.[31]

Another is from an ode called the "Na":

How admirable! how complete!
Here are set our hand-drums and drums.
The drums resound harmonious and loud,
To delight our meritorious ancestor.

The descendant of T'ang [Tang] invites him with this music,
That he may soothe us with the realization of our thoughts.
Deep is the sound of the hand-drums and drums;
Shrilly sound the flutes;
All harmonious and blending together,
According to the notes of the sonorous gem.
Oh! majestic is the descendant of T'ang [Tang];
Very admirable is his music.

The large bells and drums fill the ear;
The various dances are grandly performed.
We have admirable visitors,
Who are pleased and delighted.

From of old, before our time,
The former men set us the example;-
How to be mild and humble from morning to night,
And to be reverent in discharging the service.

May he regard our sacrifices in summer and autumn,
(Thus) offered by the descendant of T'ang [Tang]![32]

Music, then, was used not only to entice the ancestors but to appease them and assure their continued help and favour.

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[31] Legge, *The She King*, 587-88.

[32] Ibid., 631-33.

Music seems to have been used in ancient China mainly for sacred purposes. As a result, those who were in charge of the rituals would also have been in charge of the music used in them. There were a group of people called *wu* (巫), or shamans, who officiated at the various ceremonies that linked the human world to the world of the spirits. In the following section we will see that it was these shamans who first used music and dancing in sacred ways to attract the ancestors.

Use of Music by the *Wu*

The connections between the *wu* and music are many. For example, the Chinese character *wu* goes back to the same oracle-bone character as *wu* (舞), to dance.[33] More to the point, the *wu* shamans had many functions in ancient Chinese society, but most of these functions related in some way to their connection to the spiritual world, and music was an essential part of maintaining that connection. As well, the association between *wu* and music is evident when shamans are mentioned in several ancient texts. For example, the derogatory phrase "shaman customs" even emphasizes their use of music. In this regard, the *Book of History* states, "Dare to have constant dancing in the palace and drunken singing in their

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[33] Joseph Needham, ed., *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 134.

rooms, this is called the customs of the shamans."[34] Furthermore, the *Shuowen Jiezi*,[35] in the following passage, defines a *wu* as one who invokes the gods by dance,

> *Wu* is a *chu*[36] (invoker or priest), a woman [some versions do not have this word] who is able to render [herself] invisible, and with dance to invoke the gods to come down. The character symbolizes the appearance of a person dancing with two sleeves.[37]

The defining characteristic of a shaman, then, was his or her ability to summon the gods or spirits, and that ability depended on proficiency in dancing and music.

The *wu* performed many different functions based on their connections with the spirit world. Usually at the top of any list of these functions was their divination and fortune-telling abilities. The *Zhuangzi* tells a story involving a shaman and describes him mainly in terms of his prophetic abilities,

> In Cheng there was a shaman of the gods named Chi Hsien [Ji

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[34] Yang Yinliu, *Zhongguo Yinyue Shigang* [An Outline of Chinese Musical History] (Shanghai: Wanye Shudian, 1953), 29.

[35] The *Shuowen Jiezi* is an ancient Chinese dictionary dating back to the Han dynasty.

[36] *zhu* (祝)

[37] *Shuowen Jiezi*; quoted in Chow Tse-tsung, "The Childbirth Myth and Ancient Chinese Medicine: A Study of Aspects of the *Wu* Tradition," in *Ancient China: Studies in Early Civilisation*, ed. David T. Roy and Tsuen-hsuin Tsien (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1978), 66.

> Xian]... He could tell whether men would live or die, survive or perish, be fortunate or unfortunate, live a long time or die young, and he would predict the year, month, week, and day as though he were a god himself.[38]

In addition, there is the story of Liu Xu, one of Emperor Chao's officials in the first century B.C.E., who held hopes of becoming emperor himself once the elderly reigning emperor died. He summoned a shaman named Li Nuxu, ordering her to "call down the spirits and utter curses and imprecations."[39] Then, when the spirit of Emperor Wu descended upon her she told Liu Xu that he would indeed become the new emperor.

Probably the most important job of the *wu* in rural, village life, however, would have been that of healing. One method sometimes employed by the *wu* for healing purposes was exorcism. It was believed that sickness was caused by evil spirits and that the *wu* had the power to expel such demons.[40] Another method of healing also relied on the *wu*'s connections to the spirit world. Arthur Waley reports that one of their abilities was that of going to the spirit world to find out how to propitiate

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[38] Zhuangzi, 94-95.

[39] Ban Gu, *Courtier and Commoner in Ancient China: Selections from the History of the Former Han by Pan Ku*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 66.

[40] J.J.M. De Groot, "The Priesthood of Animism," chap. in *The Religious System of China*, vol. 6 (New York: Paragon Book Gallery, 1892), 1203.

the powers of death.[41] The *wu* shamans would put themselves in a trance through chants and dancing and travel to the spirit world. They were also involved in match-making, such as "The Dance Under the Full Moon" used for choosing mates; their religious role was especially important in praying for fertility after marriage by means of chants and dance.[42]

Related to the healing powers of the *wu* was their role in recalling the souls of the sick and the dead. Two of the poems in the *Chu Ci* (楚辭),[43] the *Chao Hun* (超魂), "The Summons of the Soul," and the *Da Chao* (大 超), "The Great Summons," were songs used in the rituals for recalling souls. These poems were probably originally sung and accompanied as well by some sort of instrumental music. It was believed that a person's soul, while the person was still actually alive, could leave the body and wander away causing sickness, madness, and eventually death if it did not return.[44] During an illness or immediately following a person's death, the *wu* would attempt to persuada the wandering soul to return to the body. The recalling

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[41] Arthur Waley, trans., *The Nine Songs: A Study of Shamanism in Ancient China* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1955), 9.

[42] Chow, 65-66.

[43] The *Chu Ci*, or *Songs of the South*, are a group of poems or songs that originally were used as the texts to shamans' rituals.

[44] *Ch'u Tz'u (Songs of the South)*, trans. David Hawkes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 101.

of the soul was very simple; it did not involve incantations or drugs of any kind. Rather the *wu* technique was simply one of persuasion.[45] The *wu* shamans would try to frighten the soul with songs that described the dangers and supernatural phenomena awaiting it if it travelled away from home. They also tried to coax it back into the person's body with promises of delights and joys on its return. Gifts of food and drink and the promise of music and dancing upon its return were also used to entice the soul to return to the body. The following excerpt from the *Chao Hun* is one such example:

> O soul, come back! Here you shall have respect and nothing to harm you.
> Before the dainties have left the tables, girl musicians take up their places.
> They set up the bells and fasten the drums and sing the latest songs:
> "Crossing the River," "Gathering Caltrops," and "The Sunny Bank"....
> Two rows of eight, in perfect time, perform a dance of Cheng;
> Their *hsi-pi* [xibi] buckles of Chin [Qin] workmanship glitter like bright suns.
> Bells clash in their swaying frames; the catalpa zither's strings are swept.
> Their sleeves rise like crossed bamboo stems, then they bring them shimmering downwards.
> Pipes and zithers rise in wild harmonies, the sounding drums thunderously roll;
> And the courts of the palace quake and tremble as they throw themselves into the Whirling Ch'u [Chu].
> Then they sing songs of Wu and ballads of Ts'ai [Zai] and play the Ta [Da] Lu music...[46]

If, after the *wu*'s efforts, the dead or sick person did not come back to life,

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[45] Ibid., 41.

[46] Ibid., 107-8.

then he or she was declared dead and the funeral rites began.

Rain-making was another of the *wu*'s most important functions. Needham tells us that the oracle bones called this ability *chi* (赤).[47] The *Shuowen Jiezi* gives another character, *ling* (靈), as synonymous with *wu*. Part of this character consists of the rain element above three mouths, perhaps representing the *wu* in one of their chief functions, that of calling for rain.[48] Chanting and dancing were especially used in these prayers for rain. Often dances were performed in the field under the hot sun, with the *wu* dancing to the point of exhaustion and sun-stroke. In times of a particularly bad drought, a *hunwu* ritual was often performed.[49] In this ritual a *wu* was placed on a pile of burning wood and he or she prayed, danced, and chanted for rain. If the *wu* did not succeed and the rain did not come immediately, he or she was doomed. The *Li Ji* contains a similar story about Duke Mu, who, in a year of drought, suggested to one of his advisors that exposing a *wu* to the sun might cause Heaven to send down rain out of pity for the *wu*.[50] Apparently he did not proceed with his plan, however,

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[47] Needham, 135.

[48] Zhou, 69.

[49] Cheng Te-kun, *Shang China*, volume 2, *Archaeology in China* (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1963), 224.

[50] James Legge, trans., *Li Ki: Book of Rites*, vol. 1 (reprint; 1885) (New York: University Books, 1967), 201.

as his advisor replied, "...would it not be wide of the mark to hope anything from (the suffering of) a foolish woman, and by means of that to seek for rain?"[51]

All of these abilities of the *wu* in prophecy, exorcism and medicine, recalling the souls of the sick and dead and rain-making stem from their connections to the spiritual world. Their relations to, and control over, the spirits of the dead and the deities of the heaven and earth were the sources of their power for all other functions. Usually the *wu* shamans are defined by scholars precisely by this aspect of their profession. For example, De Groot defines the *wu* as "....persons of both sexes who wielded, with respect to the world of the spirits, capacities and powers which were not possessed by the rest of man(*sic*)."[52] Wolfram Eberhard also defines a *wu* in a similar way and brings out the importance of music in their endeavours. He describes a *wu* as one who "...can establish direct contact with ghosts, spirits, souls, deities and, by means of trance, dancing or other physical exercise, bring these beings into his(*sic*) presence or into his body,".[53] The role of invocator and impersonator of these spirits, then, was a *wu*'s most

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[51] Legge, *Li Ki*, 1:201.

[52] De Groot, 1187.

[53] Wolfram Eberhard, *The Local Cultures of South and East China*, trans. Alide Eberhard (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), 77.

fundamental duty, depending heavily on his or her skills as a musician, a singer, and a dancer.

SUMMARY

Through this background sketch of music in pre-Confucian China, we see that the Chinese character for "music" includes not only music in a specific sense, but a whole range of musical activities such as dances, mimes, and religious rituals and festivals. We also see that, because of its use in so many varied aspects of life, music was considered to be very important. This importance then led to the development of Music Masters and of a government department of music. The origins of music, largely hidden in China's ancient past, are available to us only through different myths about the establishment of Chinese civilisation and the discovery of music in the workings of the universe. However, we do know that the earliest use of music in China was in rituals and that its first masters were the *wu* shamans, the conductors of these rituals. This leads us to the next chapter, which deals with the development of Confucian thought and the Confucian adoption of some of the traditional ideas of music.

CHAPTER TWO: MUSIC IN CLASSICAL CONFUCIAN THOUGHT

According to the *Zhou Li (The Rituals of the Zhou Dynasty)*, Confucians believed there were six "arts" or areas of specialisation in which a cultivated gentleman had to be skilled.[1] These six types of learning were *li* (the rites); *yue* (music); *she* (archery); *yu* (charioteering); *shu* (literature, history, and calligraphy); and *shu* (mathematics). These six arts were all supposed to be of equal importance. By the time of the Han dynasty (approximately 206 B.C.E.), they became subscribed under six types of learning, and, with the exception of music, each had a text associated with it.[2] Traditionally, these texts became known as the Confucian "Classics."[3] Music, then, is unique in the list of the six arts because it had no extant text after the Qin dynasty (approximately 221 B.C.E.) and the "burning of books" by Qin Shi Huangdi, the first Emperor of the Qin dynasty.

SOURCES FOR THE CLASSICAL CONFUCIAN PHILOSOPHY OF MUSIC

This does not mean, however, that there never had been a *Classic of*

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[1] *Zhouli*; quoted in DeWoskin, 7, n. 5; Wiant, 8.

[2] DeWoskin gives these "genres of classical learning" as the *Book of Changes*, the *Book of Odes*, the *Book of Documents*, the *Programs of Zhou*, the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and music; DeWoskin, 7, n. 5.

[3] See the Introduction, pp. 4-5 for details on the association of these classics with Confucianism.

Music. In fact, there has been much speculation about this lost classic. Liu Xian of the Han dynasty reported that the *Classic of Music* had contained twenty-three chapters.[4] Much later, Liang Chichao, a nineteenth-century scholar, claimed that some of the chapters of this work were called "performance practice, musical instruments, composition, the beginning of (musical) ideas, the seriousness of music, scales....the path of music, the meaning of music..." and so on.[5] As well, many Han scholars argued that the *Yue Jing* (*Classic of Music*), had indeed existed and that it had been of equal importance with the *Li Jing* (*Classic of Rites*). When the *Li Ji*, then, was compiled during the first century A.D., one chapter, the *Yue Ji* (*Book of Music*), was drawn up by a scholar named Ma Yung.[6] This text is probably a compilation of pieces of earlier texts, perhaps including parts of the missing classic.[7] In addition, much of the *Yue Ji* is similar to the "Discussion of Music" chapter of the *Xunzi* (being almost word for word in places), suggesting that, though it may not be a direct copy of that text, it was certainly written by someone from Xunzi's school of thought. The *Yue Ji* was compiled in this manner, from pieces of other texts and by individual

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[4] Kaufmann, 31.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.; DeWoskin, 190.

[7] DeWoskin, 16; Hsu Wen-ying, *Origin of Music in China* (Wen Ying Studio, 1973), 4-5.

editors with their own agendas. We must remember, therefore, that it does not necessarily represent accurately Zhou musical theory, but rather what Han scholars thought that theory to be or even what they wanted that theory to be.[8] In fact, we can be certain that it was Han or Qin Confucians who wrote or edited this chapter because of the strong presence of *yin-yang* and five-element theories in it.

Aside from the *Yue Ji* there ere very few complete sources for the classical Confucian philosophy of music. The *Analects* contains only several brief, and often cryptic, references to music.[9] In the *Mencius*, as well, there are very few places where music is discussed in any detail.[10] The *Book of History*,[11] the *Book of Poetry*,[12] and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and *Zuo Zhuan*[13] mention music only in practice; that is, they do

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[8] DeWoskin, 190.

[9] Confucius, *The Analects*, trans. D.C. Lau (New York: Penguin Books, 1979), 67, 71, 87, 93, 94, 98, 143, 145, 146, 151.

[10] D.C. Lau, trans., *Mencius*, (Baltimore Maryland: Penguin Books, 1970), 60-61, 80, 127.

[11] For example, James Legge, trans., *The Shoo King (The Book of Historical Documents)*, vol. 3, *The Chinese Classics* (reprint; 1885) (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), 40, 47-9, 81-3, 87-9, 165.

[12] For example, Legge, *She King*, 366-67, 587-88, 631-33.

[13] For example, James Legge, trans., *Ch'un Ts'ew, with the Tso Chuen* [The Spring and Autumn Annals with the Zuo commentary], vol. 5, *The Chinese Classics* (reprint; 1885) (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), 658-59.

not give a philosophy of music. Actually, the *Xunzi* is the most important source for the Confucian theory of music, but most of it is repeated in the *Book of Music*.[14] While the *Yue Ji* is obviously heavily influenced by the Xunzi school and by Han Confucians thought, it is not out of line with discussions of music in the *Analects* and the *Mencius*.[15] Basically then, our main source for the classical Confucian philosophy of music is the *Yue Ji*, the *Book of Music*, where the key concept is harmony (*he* 和).

"HARMONY": THE KEY CONCEPT IN THE CONFUCIAN PHILOSOPHY OF MUSIC

It is easy to see how, in the world in which the early Confucians lived, the idea of harmony would be very appealing. Chinese society in the Warring States Period was in chaos. The world seemed to be suffering from

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[14] Xunzi, "A Discussion of Music," in *Hsun Tzu: Basic Writings*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 112-20; also titled "On Music" in *The Works of HsunTze*, trans. Homer H. Dubs (Taibei: Chengwen Publishing Company, 1966), 247-58.

[15] There are many similarities in the philosophy of music expounded in all the Confucian Classics. Both the *Analects* and the *Yue Ji*, are united in their dislike of the "wrong" type of music (for example, the music of the people of Cheng and Wei). Moreover, the purpose of music in both the *Yue Ji* and the *Analects* is the same: music is never used solely for entertainment but for the cultivation of the proper moral virtues through its use in religious rituals, and so on. (Compare, for instance, the philosophy of music in Lau, *Analects*, p. 145 and *Yue Ji*, p. 611.)

a lack of harmony. There was no harmony in individual lives. The general public was suffering from unemployment, famine, dislocation, war, death and destruction. There was no harmony between the individuals that made up society. The central government had broken down and each state with its own ruler fought with the next for land, powar, and independence. There seemed to be no harmony even between the human world and the universe as a whole. The idea of a benevolent Heaven, protecting the emperor and causing the country to prosper, had broken down and people no longer knew where to turn for help and reassurance.[16] This social, economic and philosophical situation led to the beginning of the "One Hundred Schools of Philosophy," of which Confucianism was one of the first. Each of these schools had its own solution to society's problems, and Confucians focused their answer around the notion of harmony and how to establish and maintain it.[17]

The Confucian philosophy of music was based on a comparison between harmony in the world, when different parts of society work together in a peaceful and mutually beneficial way, and harmony in music,

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[16] Robert Eno, *The Confucian Creation of Heaven: Philosophy and the Defense of Ritual Mastery* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 26-27.

[17] Huang Siu-chi, "Musical Art in Early Confucian Philosophy," *Philosophy East and West* 13.1 (April 1963): 58.

when all parts of a musical performance blend together to create a pleasing effect. Social harmony and musical harmony seemed to the early Confucians to be inherent in the universe. They believed that music had been discovered, not created. The harmonious music that human beings could maintain was thought to be a representation of the harmony of the workings of the universe. The *Yue Ji*, for example, says, "Great music has the same harmony as heaven and earth..."[18]. Unless, therefore, a piece of music was inspired by the harmony of the universe, it could not be a great work of art.[19]

Music also has the power to bring physically different entities together in harmony. It acts as a means of communication between things that would normally have nothing in common. As the harmony of the universe, music brings together the two different entities of heaven and earth. The *Yue Ji* claims, for example, that, "Music is the harmony of heaven and earth."[20] Sacred music is the link between the ruler and his people and the

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[18] *Yue Ji*, chap. in *Li Ji Jin Chu Jin Yi* (The *Li Ji* with Modern Notes and Translations), ed. Wang Yunwu, (Taibei: Commercial Press, 1981), 616. The translations of the *Yue Ji* are my own; for other more difficult or obscure texts, for example, the *Zhuangzi*, I have relied on the translations of others.

[19] Huang, 54-55.

[20] *Yue Ji*, 618.

powers of heaven.[21] Indeed, musical performances bring together the ruler and his subject, the rich and the poor, the old and the young. When different types and classes of people are united in their interest in a musical performance, they tend to forget about their differences and focus only on the music. In one of his few comments on music, Mencius explains to the king how he can use music to create good relations between himself and his people.[22] The *Yue Ji* also argues, "Music is meant to bring together...Coming together results in mutual love...once music and culture are established then the high and low are in harmony."[23] The Confucians believed, then, that music had a great ability to bring together people and things that would normally be quite different; people of different social classes (rich and poor) and even "people" of different worlds (human beings in the human world and the spirits of the spiritual world) could be united by the powers of music.

Because good music is a representation of the natural harmony inherent in heaven and earth, the Confucians then reasoned that the right kind of music should be able to influence society as a whole to be more harmonious. They saw that music was able to keep a group of dancers in

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[21] DeWoskin, 30.

[22] *Mencius*, 60-61.

[23] *Yue Ji*, 614.

harmonious movement and believed that it could do the same for society at large. When the rules for ritual dance music were learned properly, everyone moved in accord with no visible restraints, like a flock of geese or a school of fish. In music, correct timing and tonal quality and placement were necessary for harmony.[24] Likewise, in society, doing things in the proper time, place and way were considered necessary for harmony.

Society, then, could use harmonious music, imitate it, and become harmonious itself. If harmonious music was thus helpful to the harmony of the universe, then unharmonious music would similarly be detrimental to the harmony of the universe. Confucians believed that each of the five notes of the pentatonic scale represented a part of society. For example, the *Yue Ji* says,

> The note *gong* represents the ruler, the *shang* represents the ministers, the *jue* represents the people, the *zhi* represents the affairs of the state and the *yu* represents things. If these five notes and what they represent are well ordered, then music will be harmonious.[25]

Confucians reasoned that, if the note representing a thing was out of tune, then the thing symbolized would itself be chaotic. Again, the *Yue Ji* claims,

> If the note *gong* is out of tune then the music will be wild and the ruler too severe. If the note *shang* is out of tune then the music is

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[24] DeWoskin, 177.

[25] *Yue Ji*, 609. This passage may represent Qin or Han Confucian thought rather than that of the earliest Confucians.

> weak and the state's ministers are corrupt. If the note *jue* is out of tune then the music is anxious and the people are resentful. If the note *zhi* is out of tune then the music is sad and work in all affairs will be unsuccessful. If the note *yu* is out of tune then the music is dangerous and wealth will be gone. If these five are all out of tune and repeatedly interfere with each other then this is called dissonance. If this is the case then the country's doom is only a short time away.[26]

A complete breakdown in the harmony of music, then, would lead to a complete breakdown in all levels of society and the universe. Confucians therefore believed that music's power was so great that it had to be meticulously regulated and refined to prevent such disharmony. Music's role in Confucian philosophy, therefore, was to establish and maintain harmony in the life of each individual, between those individuals in society, and between human society and the workings of the universe.

THE LINK BETWEEN MUSIC AND *LI* IN CONFUCIAN THOUGHT

Music and harmony, however, could be emphasized too much. The Confucians believed that for this reason they also had to be regulated. The universe did indeed have an inherent harmony, but it also had certain natural distinctions that needed to be maintained. The *Yue Ji* says, "Music is meant to bring together....[but] If music is too strong then everything flows into

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[26] Ibid., 609-10.

one another...".[27] If the influence of music was too strong and there was too much harmony, then natural distinctions would be ignored. Confucians believed that the *li* (禮), or rites, were what made these natural principles of the universe accessible to human beings:

> Music is the harmony of heaven and earth. The rites are the order of heaven and earth. Because of this harmony all things are born; because of this order all things are differentiated. Music arises from heaven and the rites take [as their foundation] the earth's system.[28]

There was a need for something to balance the harmony that music created, and that need was filled through the distinctions created by the *li*. The *Yue Ji* explains this relationship between music and the rites,

> Heaven is above and earth below with the ten thousand things scattered [according to their] differences, and the rites established the [proper] actions among them. Things flow together without end, they combine together and change and music is founded in this....Music strengthens harmony and it acts in accordance with the spirits.[29] The rites make the proper distinctions; they occupy the *yin* world and come from earth. The ancient sages made music in order to accord with Heaven and they established the rites in order to match earth. [When] the rites and music are clear and perfect, then heaven and earth each have their proper position.
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> Just as heaven is above and the earth below, so too the roles of ruler and minister are fixed. Superior and inferior having been established, so too were the positions of the noble and humble.[30]

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[27] Ibid., 614.

[28] Ibid, 618.

[29] Or, "with the movements of heaven."

[30] Because of the difficult nature of this passage, my translation is based on the modern Chinese translation.

> Through movement and stillness, small and great are distinguished. Things can be grouped by characteristics and fall into groups by their separate characteristics. This led to the idea of different natures and fates for different things. Through heaven, outward appearances are achieved; through earth, forms are achieved. In this case, then, the rites are what distinguish heaven and earth.[31]

The purposes of music and *li*, then, are bound so closely that, in order to understand one, we must also look at the other.

What was *Li*?

Many Western translations of the Chinese concept of *li* have been offered, but no one translation adequately describes all that was meant by the one Chinese character. Some of the most common include the rites, rituals, ceremony, rules of conduct or propriety, *mores*, and so on. In fact, the notion of *li* has actually evolved over the years and has taken on new meanings at different periods in Chinese society.

Originally, *li* seems to have referred solely to the rites of sacrifice, either those offered to the ancestors or to other spirits and deities of agriculture, and so forth.[32] Later in the Zhou dynasty, it came to mean

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[31] *Yue Ji*, 620.

[32] Donald J. Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 26; Kwong-loi Shun, "*Jen* and *Li* in the *Analects*," *Philosophy East and West* 43.3 (July 1993): 457; Henry G. Schaja, "*Li* (Ceremonial) as a Primal Concept in Confucian Spiritual-Humanism," *Chinese Culture* 25.1 (March 1984): 3.

general procedures at court and also whatever was polite behaviour appropriate for the upper classes. Eventually, however, *li* came to indicate all standard customs, including trivial courtesies and general protocol. Confucius, however, took the usual notion of *li* as polite and usual behaviour and gave it an ethical significance.[33] He claims that what accords with *li* is morally good and what is moral is required by *li*. He also claims *li* should be a part of everyone's everyday life; that is, *li* is binding for all people, upper classes and lower classes alike.

According to Confucian thought, the *li* were based on the natural order of the universe. The Chinese scholar Tang Hua claims early Confucian belief was that, "The rites and music are originally spontaneous productions....The cycles of the universe move according to principles and the rites are these principles."[34] The fact that the universe worked according to certain principles was considered obvious. For example, there was both a right and a wrong way for one season to follow another (spring had to come before summer because plants had to grow before they could blossom and provide fruit).[35] As well, there was a right way for one natural body (mountain, river, planet, and so on) to be related to another and

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[33] Munro, 27.

[34] Tang Hua, 792.

[35] Munro, 33.

a wrong way. Confucians believed that, in the human world, the *li* were the manifestation of the natural, universal principles that determined the relationships between things. Confucians saw that, in the universe, certain phenomena stood in particular relationships with other phenomena and reasoned then, that, in the human world, the same was true. There were certain natural distinctions governing the interaction of people in the human world as well.[36] Most important, perhaps, noble and base were distinguished from each other. Some people were meant to obey and follow other people, and, in addition, male and female were meant to be distinguished from one another.

The power of *li*, however, like that of music, could also be emphasized too much. If people's distinctions were considered too important, it could cause one group of people to become alienated from another, and that was not the purpose of *li*. If only *li* were used, it could set up fences between people and preclude the possibility of cooperation and productive relationships between them.[37] This was where music became a necessary partner with *li* and vice versa. In the following passage, Anthony Cua explains the Confucian notion of music's ability to overcome alienation

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[36] Ibid.

[37] A.S. Cua, "*Li* and Moral Justification: A Study in the *Li Chi*," *Philosophy East and West* 33.1 (January 1983), 10.

between different groups of people,

> Regardless of social distinctions, music can be enjoyed in common....While enjoying musical performances together, we become oblivious to our differences; and the demeaning and other problematic emotions associated with these differences are less likely to be experienced. And when they do occur, they will gradually disappear as we become engrossed in musical performances.[38]

Both music and *li* were necessary for the smooth running of human society and the universe as a whole. Confucian theory held that music and *li* had to mutually restrict and supplement each other.[39]

Both music and *li* had their respective associations. Music was associated with unity, harmony, heaven, love, feeling, benevolence, growth, expanding *qi*, and what is high and inner.[40] On the other hand, *li* were associated with diversity, order, earth, reverence, undeviating principle, righteousness, ingathering and storing, retracting *qi*, and what is low and outer. This meant that *li* distinguished between people by promoting respect and courtesy but music brought people together by creating a "relaxed communal feeling"[41] as it promoted mutual concern. The *Yue Ji* says,

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[38] Cua, 9.

[39] Yang, 16.

[40] Alison H. Black, "Gender and Cosmology in Chinese Correlative Thinking," in *Gender and Religion: On the Complexity of Symbols*, ed. Carolyn W. Bynum, Steven Harrell and Paula Richman, (Boston: Beacon, 1986), 180.

[41] Sidney G. Mollard, "Confucius and Music," *East-West Center Review* 3:3 (Feb. 1967): 32-3.

[When] music reaches its greatest [limit] there is sorrow; when the rites are vulgar there is bias. The one who is able to reach that deep music without [producing] sorrow and the perfection of the rites without bias, then is this not the great sage alone?[42]

For the universe to be properly ordered, then, both music and *li* had to attain a balance or proper mean. Music and *li* in this proper balance would work together to maintain the order of the universe. The *Book of History* illustrates how the proper use of music and rites can create harmony in the human and animal worlds alike:

K'wei [Gui] said, "When the sounding-stone is tapped or strongly struck; when the lutes are swept or gently touched; to accompany the singing:-the imperial progenitors come to the service, the guest of Yu is in his place, and all the nobles show their virtue in giving place to one another. Below there are the flutes and drums and hand-drums, which join in at the sound of the rattle, and cease at the sound of the stopper; with the calabash organs and bells:-all filling up the intervals: when birds and beasts fall moving. When the nine parts of the service according to the emperor's arrangements have all been performed, the male and female phoenix come with their measured gambollings into the court."

K'wei [Gui] said, "Oh! when I strike the stone or tap the stone, all kinds of animals lead on one another to gambol, and all the chiefs of the officers become truly harmonious."[43]

Together *li* and music ideally portrayed the natural order of the universe, both its distinctions and its harmony. In portraying it, however, they also had the power to either maintain or destroy the universe's harmony.

The rites and music resemble the natures of heaven and earth,

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[42] *Yue Ji*, 619.

[43] Legge, *The Shoo King*, p. 87-9.

> reach the virtue of the spirits, lower and raise the spirits that are above and below, give physical form to essential and material *qi*, and guide the principles between fathers and sons, rulers and subjects. Therefore when the great man promotes rites and music, heaven and earth will joyfully come together, and *yin* and *yang* will blend together in equal parts in all things.[44] Then the grass and the trees will flourish, the little sprouts will expand, the birds will multiply, horns and antlers will be produced, hibernating insects will come back to life and come out, birds will breed, animals will conceive and bring up their young, mammals will not miscarry, and the eggs of those born in this way will not crack. All of this, then, rests in the *dao* of music.[45]

If proper attention was not given to the *li* and if the right kind of music was not used, then the harmony of the universe would be destroyed and chaos ensue:

> If the earth becomes worn out then grass and trees will not grow. If water is troubled then fish and turtles will not become big. If *qi* is weakening then living things will not prosper. In an age of disorder [like this] the rites are evil and music is licentious. For this reason sounds may indeed be sorrowful but not solemn, joyful but not peaceful. Dissolute music comes about by violating principles and indulgence by forgetting one's basis. So, when the music is slow it contains licentiousness and when it is fast it leads to thoughts of desires. When the *qi* of the emotions is untrammelled it runs contrary to the virtues of peace and harmony. Therefore the gentleman despises such [an age and its music].[46]

Just as the right kind of music and the proper rites had a harmonious effect upon the universe, the wrong kind of music and improper rites likewise would have a destructive influence upon the harmony of the universe.

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[44] Because of the difficult nature of this section, the modern Chinese version was used in translation.

[45] *Yue Ji*, 634.

[46] Ibid., 628.

What was the "Right" Kind of Music?

Confucius praised some, and despised other, types of music. For example, he called the music of the Shao, "...both perfectly beautiful and perfectly good."[47] The *Analects* contains an account of Confucius' visit to the state of Chi, when he heard the music of the Shao performed "...and for three months did not notice the taste of the meat he ate."[48] The *Book of Music* praises all the music of the Yin and Zhou periods,

> The Da Zhong[49] makes clear [its author's] virtue; the Xian Chi[50] makes clear [its author's] perfection; the Shao,[51] [how its author] passed on [what he received]; the Xia[52], [its author's] greatness. The music of the Yin and Zhou periods [carried on] all [these things].[53]

Confucius also said, however, that he hated the music of Cheng and Wei because it was like the colour of purple detracting from the lustre of red.[54] Wolfram Eberhard suggests that Confucius disliked the music of Cheng because the women who performed it were considered improper. "The

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[47] Lau, *Analects*, 71.

[48] Ibid., 87.

[49] The music of the legendary Emperor Yao.

[50] The music of the Yellow Emperor.

[51] The music of the legendary Emperor Shun.

[52] The music of the legendary Emperor Yu.

[53] *Yue Ji*, 622.

[54] *Analects*, 146.

people of Cheng lived in the mountains and bathed in the valleys, both men and women together. Their lascivious songs and dances were said to originate from that custom."[55] Eberhard claims that this music had erotic effects and reduced one's will power. Confucius also despised the music of the "Mulberry Grove," a dance that enacts the origin of the Shang dynasty. The *Yue Ji* has this to say about this music,

> If these five [notes] are all out of tune and repeatedly interfere with each other then this is called dissonance. If this is the case then the country's doom is only a short time away. The music of the states of Cheng and Wei was the music of times of anarchy and disorder, this was dissonance. The music of the Mulberry Grove on the river Pu[56] was the music of a state in decay, the government was in ruins, the people were unsettled, falsely accusing their superiors and acting selfishly and there was no way to stop it.[57]

Music of this nature was thought to bring nothing but evil effects to any

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[55] Eberhard, 36.

[56] A note to the Chinese text here says, "Chen Xuan says 'On the Pu River is a mulberry grove. In the time of Duke Wei of Ling, Master Juan there wrote the licentious music that was lost with Yin Zhou (the tyrant ruler at the end of the Yin/Shang dynasty). This is referred to in the tenth chapter of the *Han Feizi* and in the *Shi Ji*'s chapter on music.' Other commentators say the mulberry grove is not a place, but a reference to the rule of Yin Zhou."
According to Liang Mingyue, the Mulberry Grove, "...enacts the story of the origin of the Shang dynasty and the Shang Totem--the "black bird." According to legend, the birth of the Shang dynasty founder, Xie, was the result of his mother, the ancestral Shang mother, Qiandi, having swallowed the egg of a "black bird." "The Mulberry Grove" was apparently a dance act which portrayed the courtship between Qiandi and the bird, represented by a dancer with feathered ornaments." See Liang, 50.

[57] *Yue Ji*, 609.

society allowing it to be performed.

According to Confucians, harmony was the sole end of any musical performance. Music could never be performed solely for entertainment. The *Book of Music* says, "It is for this reason that virtue's success is held to be superior, while mere art's success is inferior to it; the practice of virtue is first, the artistic show is second."[58] The *Yue Ji* also makes it quite clear that the point of music was not the satisfaction of human desires, but rather the cultivation of proper, moral virtues among the people. Again it says,

> This means that music's height is not in the sweetest melodies just as ritual's sacrificial food's height is not in the flavour. The music at King Wen's temple was accompanied by the *se* with red strings and few apertures, one lute led the music and three others joined in so that much of the melody was missed out. Similarly, in the rituals for the great sacrifices, first honoured is the dark wine; the fish on the stands were uncooked, the great soup had no spices so that much of the flavour was lost. This means that when the sage kings established the rites and music it was not to exhaust the appetite or the desires of the eyes and ears, but to guide the people's likes and dislikes and then return them to the proper Way.[59]

Confucians, then, did not use music for its own sake, for the indulgence of human desires, but rather for the cultivation and regulation of those desires.

DeWoskin suggests that Confucians considered music to be a "corrective art," meaning that, "...an integrated state of mind is achieved by communion with an integrated and tranquillizing art, rather than by exposure

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[58] *Yue Ji*, 634.

[59] *Yue Ji*, 611.

to excitation and catharsis."[60] This meant that music should never reflect the painful experiences of human life, only the harmony of the universe. For example, no music was played at funerals. The *Book of Rites* lists five types of ceremonies and, of these, only mourning rituals used no music.[61] Instead, great music was supposed to be the successful imitation of the harmony of nature because Confucians believed that, "It is a basic principle of all things that each thing is moved by things that are like it."[62] This means that music that was inspired by sorrowful emotions would cause sorrowful emotions in its listener, and music inspired by improper desires would likewise bring out improper desires in its listener. Undesirable music, then, was inspired not by the harmony of the universe, but by the disruptive circumstances of human affairs.

There were some general properties to the kind of music that Confucians liked.[63] Rafined music, or *ya yue* (雅樂), was not very loud, and it contained no crescendos or decrescendos. No staccatos could be used, and no naw notes or instruments could be employed. Pure music had

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[60] DeWoskin, 161.

[61] Legge, *Li Ki*, 2:236.

[62] *Yue Ji*, 628.

[63] For more on *ya yue* versus *su yue*, see Wiant, 3; DeWoskin, 92-4, 193; Kaufmann, 73-4; and Curt Sachs, *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World East and West* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1943), 106.

no complicated rhythms, but was composed of simple and delicate melodies. "Great music must be easy and great rites must be simple."[64] Such music promoted balance, peace, quietude, inner reflection, and satisfied the mind. On the other hand, vulgar music, or *su yue* (俗樂), was often very loud with great crescendos and decrescendos. It mixed men and women in performance and contained irregular lines and rhythms and complex melodies. It often employed new notes and instruments that were not passed down from the ancient rulers but were introduced by the surrounding "barbarian" tribes. The *Yue Ji* claimed that, "When music reaches its fullest potential there is no anger,"[65] but instead this vulgar kind of music caused excitement, feelings of passion, anger, and so forth, and satisfied only the ear.

ASPECTS OF MUSIC AND *LI* IN CONFUCIAN THOUGHT

Confucians had very definite ideas about how *li* and the right and wrong types of music influenced everyday, human life. If, as the Confucians believed, music and *li* had the power to influence the workings of the universe, it seemed logical that they should also have the power to influence an individual's life and self-cultivation. In fact, Confucians claimed that

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[64] *Yue Ji*, 615.

[65] Ibid.

music and *li* had a prominent and essential role in producing good, moral human beings. *Li* and music were considered to be irrelevant if they did not foster or reflect the inner virtues of human beings.[66]

Music, *Li*, and Desires

One of the ways *li* and music helped to create moral and virtuous individuals was by restraining and regulating natural, human desires. Confucians believed that desires are natural to human beings; Xunzi, for example, says, "Beings that possess desires and those that do not belong to two different categories -- the categories of the living and the dead."[67] Desires can have either a good or evil effect depending on how the individual acts on them in his or her life. Xunzi argues that the sage kings instituted the rites in order to restrain the desire for material goods.[68] He writes,

> What is the origin of ritual? I reply: man is born with desires. If his desires are not satisfied for him, he cannot but seek some means to satisfy them himself. If there are no limits and degrees to his seeking, then he will inevitably fall to wrangling with other men. From wrangling comes disorder and from disorder comes exhaustion. The ancient kings hated such disorder, and therefore they established

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[66] Benjamin Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985), 109.

[67] Xunzi, trans. Watson, 150.

[68] Ibid., 89-111.

> ritual principles in order to curb it, to train men's desires and to provide for their satisfaction.[69]

Desires, then, are natural and cannot be completely eliminated, but they must be curbed and controlled. The *Yue Ji* contains a good example of how the *li* can restrain the evil that results from improper displays of one's desires. In the following passage, the *Book of Music* explains how the *li* restrain the evil effects of alcohol:

> Now [feasts on] grain-fed animals with wine were not meant to produce evil, but lawsuits resulting from them increase. Because the flow of wine does produce evil, the early kings created rituals for drinking: There is the ritual that for one presentation of a cup, guest and host salute each other one hundred times, so that from morning until night they drink wine and do not get drunk on it. This [is the sort of thing] the sages used to protect against the evils of wine. Thus, wine and food were used together for enjoyment; music was used as the outward expression of virtue and the rites were used to stop licentious [behaviour].[70]

The rites, then, having the ability to control the desires for alcohol, food, and so on, were also used to regulate sexual desires. The *li* regulated such desires by providing conditions for the interaction of men and women and by making clear distinctions between the two. The *Yue Ji* mentions several ceremonies used in distinguishing men and women, "...by marriage, capping and the wearing of the hairpin[71] they distinguished male and female..."[72]

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[69] Ibid., 89.

[70] *Yue Ji*, 623.

[71] "Capping" was the coming of age ceremony for men and "wearing the hairpin", that for women.

The *Yue Ji* also explains the conditions in a society where people's desires go unrestrained,

> The things that affect people are without number and [when] people's likes and dislikes are not restrained, then things move people and people are changed by things. Those who are changed by things are lose their heavenly principle within and indulge completely their desires. From this [the parson] has a rebellious [and] deceitful heart and acts with wantonness, violence and disorder. It is for this reason that those who are strong threaten the weak, those who are many are violent towards those who are solitary, those who have knowledge cheat the foolish, those who are brave abhor the cowardly, the ill are not cared for, the old, the young and those who are neglected do not live in satisfactory conditions, and this is the way of great chaos.[73]

We can see the strong influence of the Xunzi school in this passage: the *li* were established on the basis of the natural distinctions inherent in the universe, precisely to prevent contention. The rites decided whose desires were satisfied, to what extent they were satisfied, and how and when this occurred.

One of the main desires of human beings is for sound. Confucians believed that people had basic impulses to create sound and music. Music, then, was itself considered to be a desire. This desire was neither good nor bad in itself, but could have good or bad results depending on its expression. Music could achieve the "highest worth but [could] also have the greatest

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[72] *Yue Ji*, 613.

[73] Ibid., 612.

evil effects."[74] The right kind of music had a positive influence on human beings and the universe, and this was the good expression of the desire to create music. The wrong type of music, however, was destructive to the harmony of the universe and to a person's moral self-cultivation; this was the evil expression of the desire for music. The right kind of music, therefore, was used to civilize and refine a basic human desire for sound.[75]

Music, *Li* and Emotions

Music and *li* also aided in the creation of virtuous people because of their ability to control the emotions. Confucians generally had the same attitude toward emotions as toward desires: human emotions could have good or bad results, depending on how they were expressed them.[76] The *Xunzi* claims that emotions, including joy, are necessary in people at certain times, and they should therefore be expressed in the proper way.[77] The *Book of Music*, following the *Doctrine of the Mean*, claims that emotions are

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[74] Yang, 7.

[75] This idea of music civilising and refining a natural human desire is in line with much of the thought of the *Li Ji*, where rituals are given a psychological purpose; funeral rituals, for example, refine and civilise natural human grief.

[76] Huang, 52.

[77] Xunzi, 112.

not part of a person's nature, but rather that they are the result of outside circumstances affecting a person's original nature, "[W]hen people are born they are tranquil, this is the human nature given by Heaven; emotions [come] from the movement of [external] things, [these are] the desires of one's nature."[78] When one's emotions were formed into sound, then music was created,

> All melodies are born from the human heart. The human heart is moved [and then] things are made naturally. Emotions [come] from the movement of things and thus are formed into sound. Different sounds coming together make a harmony. Because the sounds [that people make in response to external stimulus] are not the same, changes in sound begin. The changes become a pattern and this is called a melody. Making melodies along with [the instruments used in] military and civil dance make up what is called music.[79]

If the emotions were expressed in the proper way, through the right kind of music, then they were good, and promoted virtue within the person.

> In ancient times it was said: music is joy. The gentleman [uses] music to obtain the Way, the small man [uses] music to obtain his desires. If one uses the Way to control desires then [there will be] joy and not disorder. If one uses desires to forget the Way then [there will be] confusion and not joy. Therefore the gentleman controls his emotions by harmonising them with his will, he [makes] extensive [use of] music in order to complete his education. [When] music works [as it should] and the people [therefore] incline towards honesty, in this we may see virtue. Virtue is the basis of [human] nature. Music is the splendour of virtue.[80]

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[78] *Yue Ji*, 612.

[79] Ibid., 607.

[80] Ibid., 630.

Emotions become evil when they are not expressed properly and thus are out of control. Again, the *Yue Ji* explains,

> Now the people have natures made up of blood, physical *qi* and mental knowledge. When there are no rules [that govern the emotions of] sorrow, happiness and anger, they react to, and are affected, by the things that happen and are excited by them. Thus, [there are] both good and bad results. Therefore when [the ruler's] ambitions are only small, melodies that are destructive are made, and the people's thoughts are sad. When he is tolerant, harmonious, calm and easy going, then complex melodies with simple rhythms are made and the people are peaceful and happy. When he is rude, violent and quick to severity, the melodies which are made begin and end strongly and are forceful throughout, and the people are inflexible and resolute. When he is honest and fair, strong and correct then solemn and sincere melodies are made and the people are respectful. When he is lenient, tolerant and treats the people as his own flesh and blood, the melodies made are smooth, complete, and moving with harmony and the people are kind and loving. When he is unsettled, inaccessible, evil and loose the melodies made are capricious, sweeping and unrestrained and the people are licentious and chaotic.[81]

So, if someone, drawing on his or her emotions, created the wrong kind of music, the consequences could be enormous. That incorrect music could, in turn, affect its listeners, causing their emotions to be aroused and allowing for evil effects on an even greater scale, eventually culminating in moral decay and complete social disorder. The Confucians believed that social chaos would ensue if people's emotions were not expressed in the right kind of music.

Besides music, the *li* were also thought to have a role in controlling

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[81] Ibid., 625.

the emotions and focusing them into the proper channels. For example, the funeral rites were designed to provide adequate time and proper channels for the expression of grief. These rites made sure that one did not become overly consumed with grief, because at the appropriate time, according to the *li*, one had to return to everyday life. The *Yue Ji* claims, "Therefore the sage kings established the rites and music in order to restrain people: wearing mourning clothes and weeping were the ways they controlled funerals..."[82]

Music and *li* therefore, were used to produce the right attitudes in people. The aim of both music and the rites was to bring people to the Mean, the ideal of human life.[83] "When the rites and music are both reached, this is called having virtue. Virtue means reaching music and the rites."[84] The very purpose of music and *li* was to foster the correct, inner virtues in people. The *Analects* claims that without the virtue of *ren* (仁), music and *li* are in vain,

> The Master said, 'What can a man do with the rites who is not

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[82] Ibid., 613.

[83] Tang Hua, *Zhongguo Zhexue Sixiang Shi* [History of Chinese philosophical thought] (Taibei: Da Zhongguo Yuan, 1981), 311; Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, trans. Derk Bodde (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), 1:342.

[84] *Yue Ji*, 611.

> benevolent? What can a man do with music who is not benevolent?'[85]

In the *Mencius*, music and *li* were said to celebrate and adorn the virtues of respecting one's parents and obeying one's elder brothers.

> Mencius said, 'The content of benevolence is the serving of one's parents; the content of dutifulness is obedience to one's elder brothers; the content of wisdom is to understand these two and to hold fast to them; the content of the rites is the regulation and adornment of them; the content of music is the joy that comes of delighting in them...'[86]

When music and *li* become engrained in people, the virtuous life is effortless for them. The *Classic of Filial Piety* says, "To change ways and transform customs, nothing is better than music."[87] People would act properly at all times and always express their feelings and desires correctly. As Benjamin Schwartz writes,

> Confucius believes as staunchly as does Plato that music (including perhaps dance as well) can directly and powerfully mold man's affective life, lifting the heart to a plane where it is open to the most elevated thoughts and inspired to the noblest actions.[88]

The result of all of this was that a person reached the goal of the process of self-cultivation. The individual became fully human and attained the ideal of

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[85] *Analects*, 67.

[86] *Mencius*, 127.

[87] *Xiao Jing* (Classic of Filial Piety), 12; quoted in DeWoskin, 190.

[88] Schwartz, 87.

human life, .

> Therefore the one who knows the nature of the rites and music can perform them; the one who knows the elegance of the rites and music can transmit them. The one who performs them is called a sage, the one who transmits them is called intelligent. To be intelligent and a sage means to transmit and perform [the rites and music].[89]

Music and *li* achieved their ultimate goal when they were studied and performed with meticulous care. They were considered to be tools for creating a sage, a perfectly virtuous individual.

Music and *Li* in Society

Just as music and *li* were essential in the cultivation of civilised human beings, by regulating the desires and emotions, they served as tools for maintaining a civilised society as a whole. Confucians gave both music and the rites an essential place in government. The *Book of Music* links music and *li* to government in the following passage:

> [When] the great kings completed their achievements, they made music; [when] their government was settled, they established the rites. The greatest of their achievements was this musical perfection and the totality of their government was in ritual perfection.[90]

Confucians claimed that it was better for people to act morally simply

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[89] *Yue Ji*, 617.

[90] Ibid., 619.

because it was the proper thing to do, rather than out of fear of punishment. If people behaved properly only because they feared the consequences of improper behaviour, then, whenever they thought they would not get caught, most people would do as they pleased. Laws and punishments, therefore, would not really work in promoting true peace and harmony in a society. As we have seen, Confucians believed that music and *li* could have an influential role in each individual's life, cultivating the proper virtues, right attitudes, and so on. The *Yue Ji* claims,

> Music is also what the sages [used to express] happiness, and [since] it can make people's hearts good, it affects people very deeply and it can make changes in customs and traditions. Therefore the ancient kings indeed gave instructions in it.[91]

A good ruler, therefore, could use the right kind of music and education in the *li* to cultivate moral virtue in the people. In an ideal society with an ideal ruler, only the two tools of music and *li* were necessary for establishing and maintaining social order. Laws, punishments and so on would not need to be used because the people would naturally act morally.[92] Laws and punishments were only there to back up music and *li*, because there would be some exceptions who would not conform to the regulation of music and *li*

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[91] Ibid., 623.

[92] Munro, 155; Mollard, 32; Fung, 1: 343; Huang Siu-chi, 51; Leonard Shihlien Hsu, *The Political Philosophy of Confucianism* (reprint; 1932) (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 101.

and thus penalties would still be reserved for them.[93] This is what the *Yue Ji* claims,

> The rites were to restrain people's hearts, music to harmonize their voices, government to carry out the rites and music, and laws to defend the rites and music. When rites, music, laws, and government are all successful and are not obstructed, then the ways of an enlightened ruler are complete.[94]

Confucians did not only use music in establishing a good government, they also believed that a well-governed and harmonious society would express itself in the right kind of music.[95] This meant then that one could determine the merit of a government by looking at the music produced by its people. By hearing the music of a state, Confucians claimed to know if its ruler was a good one or not:

> Tzu-kung [Zekung] said, "Through the rites of a state he [Confucius] could see its government; through its music, the moral quality of its ruler. Looking back over a hundred generations he was able to appraise all the kings, and no one has ever been able to show him to be wrong in a single instance. Ever since man came into this world, there has never been another like the Master."[96]

This ability to gauge the merit of a ruler by the music produced in his state

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[93] Schwartz, 104; Benjamin Schwartz, "Some Polarities in Confucian Thought," in *Confucianism and Chinese Civilization*, ed. Arthur F. Wright (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), 8.

[94] *Yue Ji*, 613.

[95] Thomas Munro, *Oriental Aesthetics* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Press of Western Reserve University, 1965), 21.

[96] *Mencius*, 80.

was thought possible because music expressed the people's emotions. If the people were not content, their uneasiness would be expressed in music that was sad, anxious, disruptive, and so on. The *Yue Ji* claims,

> Music is the melodies that come from life. It originates from the emotions stimulated by external things. This therefore means that those whose feelings are troubled or sad make a sound that will be distressed or sad. Those whose feelings are joyful make a broad and clear sound. Those whose feelings are happy make an open sound. Those whose feelings are angry make a coarse and harsh sound. Those whose feelings are respectful make a true and clear sound. Those whose feelings are loving make a harmonious and tender sound.[97]

By looking at the music people were making, one could determine whether or not they were content and well-governed:

> Therefore the music of a time of peace and good government is peaceful; its government is harmonious. The music of an age of anarchy and disorder is ill-willed and angry; its government is perverse. The music of a time of decline is full of sorrowful thoughts; its people are poor. [Therefore] the ways of both music and government are interconnected.[98]

A ruler could periodically assess his progress as a virtuous ruler by collecting the songs of his people to determine their mood.[99] Music was like a mirror, exposing the character of a government by examining its effects on

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[97] *Yue Ji*, 608.

[98] Ibid., 609.

[99] Mollard, 33; Sachs, 113. An example of a ruler sending out officials to collect the people's folk songs is found in Legge, *Shoo King*, 81.

the people.[100] This job of collecting the songs of the people was the responsibility of the Music Ministry or Department of Music (*Yue Fu*), whose other duties included maintaining the correct pitch of instruments, and so on. This Department of Music was officially reestablished by Emperor Wu in 125 B.C., but there were most likely similar, though perhaps less elaborate, departments much earlier in Chinese political history that were abolished with the reign of Emperor Qin Shi Huangdi.[101]

SUMMARY

What we see, then, is that music wes an essential component of classical Confucian philosophy. It originated as one of the six arts of the cultivated gentleman. Its associations with harmony made it attractive to early Confucians who were living in a society where all harmony had essentially disappeared. Music, with its partner *li*, was thought to represent the harmony and principles of the universe itself. Confucians believed that the right kind of music could harness the powers of the universe and transmit some of its harmony into the human realm. They claimed that music and *li*, in their proper balance, would work to maintain the order of the universe, peace within society, and moral virtue within individual lives. To

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[100] Wiant, 13.

[101] Kaufmann, 150-51.

see how these ideas of the Confucians were perceived by other groups of their time, the next chapter will deal with music in the thought of other classical Chinese schools of philosophy.

CHAPTER THREE: MUSIC IN THE THOUGHT OF OTHER CLASSICAL CHINESE SCHOOLS

In order to better understand the Confucian idea of music, it is helpful to look briefly at the idea of music in other classical Chinese schools. Not only can we then see the particular philosophy of music according to each of these schools, but we can also see how they reacted to the ideas put forth by the Confucians.

DAOISM

There were three major Daoist philosophers in the time period we are examining: Laozi, Zhuangzi and Liezi. Laozi, the earliest of these three, focuses only rarely on the topic of music and is not really useful in explaining the Confucian understanding of music and *li*. Zhuangzi, however, does help in our understanding of the Confucian philosophy of music.

Zhuangzi

On the one hand, Zhuangzi claims that delighting in music leads to dissolution; it destroys our inborn nature and brings confusion to the world. For example, the *Zhuangzi*, the text believed to have been written by Zhuangzi says,

> Do men delight in what they see?--they are corrupted by

> colours. Do they delight in what they hear?--they are corrupted by sounds. Do they delight in benevolence?--they bring confusion to Virtue. Do they delight in righteousness?--they turn their backs on reason. Do they delight in rites?--they are aiding artificiality. Do they delight in music?--they are aiding dissolution. Do they delight in sageness?--they are assisting artifice. Do they delight in knowledge?--they are assisting the fault-finders. As long as the world rests in the true form of its inborn nature and fate, it makes no difference whether these eight delights exist or not. But if the world does not rest in the true form of its inborn nature and fate, then these eight delights will begin to grow warped and crooked, jumbled and deranged, and will bring confusion to the world. And if on top of that the world begins to honour them and cherish them, then the delusion of the world will be great indeed! You say these are only a fancy that will pass in time? Yet men prepare themselves with fasts and austerities when they come to describe them, kneel solemnly on their mats when they recommend them, beat drums and sing to set them forth in dance. What's to be done about it I'm sure I don't know![1]

Zhuangzi believed, then, that music could be quite dangerous. Its danger, however, is that, in a world without the Dao, it can become warped and crooked.

In other passages Zhuangzi claims music is a natural part of the universe. He believed that music had power and influence over the universe and that it was a part of the Dao. In a passage where Cheng of the North Gate hears, and is disturbed by, the music of the Yellow Emperor,[2] "perfect" music is given a place in nature; it is considered to be a cosmic event. In its own changes, music is seen as corresponding with the changes

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[1] Zhuangzi, 115.

[2] Ibid., 156-58.

of the universe.

The difference, then, is what we do with music. Zhuangzi disagreed with the Confucian emphasis on music in order to restrain people and control them,

> But if all emphasis is placed on the conduct of rites and music, then the world will fall into disorder. The ruler, in his efforts to rectify, will draw a cloud over his own virtue, and his virtue will no longer extend to all things. And should he try to force it to extend, then things would invariably lose their inborn nature.[3]

Zhuangzi believed that music should be listened to without trying to control or understand it. It should be listened to as an event in nature, reflecting the changes of the cosmos.[4] In the music that the Yellow Emperor played,

> ...there seemed to be a chaos where things grow in thickets together, a maturity where nothing takes form, a universal plucking where nothing gets pulled, a clouded obscurity where there is no sound. It moved in no direction at all, rested in mysterious shadow. Some called it death, some called it life, some called it fruit, some called it flower. It flowed and scattered, and bowed before no constant tone. The world, perplexed by it, went to the sage for instruction, for the sage is the comprehender of true form and the completer of fate.[5]

According to Zhuangzi, music should not be eliminated from society. In fact, he argues with Mozi who would do exactly that. Zhuangzi claimed that Mozi did not understand human nature because music is a natural human

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[3] Ibid., 171-72.

[4] DeWoskin, 62.

[5] Zhuangzi, 157-58.

desire that cannot be denounced. In a passage where he discusses Mozi's piece, "Against Music," Zhuangzi writes,

> I do not mean to discredit his teachings entirely; and yet men want to sing and he says, "No singing!"; they want to wail and he says, "No wailing!:--one wonders if he is in fact human at all. A life that is all toil, a death shoddily disposed of--it is a way that goes too much against us. To make men anxious, to make them sorrowful--such practices are hard to carry out, and I fear they cannot be regarded as the Way of the Sage. They are contrary to the hearts of the world, and the world cannot endure them. Though Mo Tzu [Mozi] himself may be capable of such endurance, how can the rest of the world do likewise? Departing so far from the ways of the world, they must be far removed indeed from those of the true king.[6]

Zhuangzi did not agree with Mozi; he believed that music was indeed a necessary part of human life. What was important to Confucians in music, however, the tones of the bells and drums and the positions of the feathers and tassels, was also only the trivia of music to Zhuangzi.[7] Music should be spontaneous and joyous. It is a means of communicating the ineffable.[8] One should listen to it without analyzing it, and without tying, as he believed the Confucians did, to force unnatural, moral messages into it.

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[6] Ibid., 365-66.

[7] Ibid., 145-46.

[8] Kenneth J. DeWoskin, "Early Chinese Music and the Origins of Aesthetic Terminology," in *Theories of the Arts in China*, ed. Susan Bush and Christian Murck (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 192.

Liezi

Like Zhuangzi, Liezi, an early Daoist philosopher in the second century B.C.E., believed in the importance of music. He believed that music could influence the universe and that it was a part of the Dao. For example, the *Liezi*, named for its author, tells the following story,

> Hsueh T'an [Xue Tan] studied singing under Ch'in Ch'ing [Qin Qing]. Before he had fathomed Ch'in Ch'ing's art he thought he had no more to learn, so he took his leave and set off home. Ch'in Ch'ing raised no objection; but as he presented his farewell gift at the crossroads outside the town, he sang a sad air beating the time. The sound shook the trees in the forest, the echoes stilled the drifting cloud. Then Hsueh T'an apologised and asked to be taken back, and for the rest of his life never dared to speak of going home.[9]

Liezi claims that music was a way of expressing one's feelings. He thought that through people's music it was possible to know their thoughts and feelings. This is the idea behind the following story,

> Po Ya [Bo Ya] was a good lute-player, and Chung Tzu-ch'i [Cheng Shiwen] was a good listener. Po Ya strummed his lute, with his mind on climbing high mountains; and Chung Tzu-ch'i said:
>
> 'Good! Lofty, like Mount T'ai [Tai]!'
>
> When his mind was on flowing waters, Chung Tzu-ch'i said:
>
> 'Good! Boundless, like the Yellow River and the Yangtse [Yangzi]!'
>
> Whatever came into Po Ya's thoughts, Chung Tzu-ch'i always grasped it.
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> Po Ya was roaming on the North side of Mount T'ai; he was caught in a sudden storm of rain, and took shelter under a cliff. Feeling sad, he took up his lute and strummed it; first he composed an

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[9] Liezi, *The Book of Lieh-tzu: A Classic of Tao*, trans. A.C. Graham (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 108-9.

> air about the persistent rain, then he improvised the sound of crashing mountains. Whatever melody he played, Chung Tzu-ch'i never missed the direction of his thought. Then Po Ya put away his lute and sighed:
>
> 'Good! Good! How well you listen! What you imagine is just what is in my mind. Is there nowhere for my notes to flee to?'[10]

Music then, according to Liezi, has both power over the universe and an integral relationship with one's thoughts and feelings. As such it is natural to human beings and is not something to be denounced.

These two members of the Daoist school, then, believed that music had a definite power over both the workings of the universe and the normal course of individual lives. Zhuangzi recognized that too much emphasis on music and its regulation will destroy our original natures. He believed that music should be listened to without trying to control or understand it, as simply another manifestation of the unknowable changes of the cosmos. Liezi believed in the power of music as reflecting the workings of the universe, but he also focused on how music can reflect and foretell a person's thoughts and feelings.

In stark contrast to these Daoist philosophers, however, the Moists, another major school of thought in ancient China, ascribed no power whatsoever to music. Instead, they saw music simply as a useless waste of precious time and resources. To understand why the Moists saw music in

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[10] Ibid., 109-10.

this way, we must look at Mozi's theory of utilitarianism and see how music fits into it.

MOISM

Mozi, a Chinese philosopher and politician from the fourth century B.C.E., advocated a strict program of utilitarianism. He believed that the only answer to the social and political chaos of his day was to discard all things that were not immediately useful in promoting the prosperity of the nation and the health and well-being of its people. The only judge of something's value was its usefulness in these two areas.

At the basis of Mozi's philosophy was his belief about the nature of human beings. Mozi argued that the "state of nature," the way human beings will behave if they are not taught, reformed and civilised, was a state of absolute chaos.[11] For reasons of safety, the people decided to institute political order. A ruler was chosen and a hierarchy of government was set up to bring order to the people.

Mozi had several strategies for creating a good government and enabling it to keep order in society, including identification with one's

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[11] Mozi, *The Ethical and Political Works of Motse*, trans. Mei Yi-pao (reprint; 1929) (Connecticut: Hyperion Press, 1973), 55-6.

superiors,[12] the elevation of the worthy,[13] the availability of high standards for the people to follow,[14] and the idea of universal love.[15] These strategies were all part of Mozi's solution to the chaos of the Warring States and the chaos that is our original state of nature. They were included in Mozi's program of utilitarianism, a program that meant doing whatever was useful and beneficial in the promotion of order and prosperity in the state.

On the other hand, however, utilitarianism also meant that anything that was not useful had to be eliminated. Mozi, therefore, condemned all forms of excess and frivolous spending, whether privately or publicly. The *Mozi* claims,

> When a sage rules a state the benefits of the state will be increased twice. When he governs the empire, those of the empire will be doubled. This increase is not by appropriating land from without. But by cutting out the useless expenditures it is accomplished. In issuing an order, taking up an enterprise, or employing the people and expending wealth, 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.[16]

The nation was to become prosperous and multiply not from without, by

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[12] See, "Identification with the Superior", ibid., 55-77.

[13] See, "Exaltation of the Virtuous", ibid., 30-54.

[14] See, "On the Necessity of Standards", ibid., 13-16.

[15] See, "Universal Love", ibid., 78-97.

[16] Ibid., 117.

wars that increased the size of the country's territory, but by ending all forms of wasteful expenditure within the country.

Mozi went on to argue that clothing, housing, weapons, boats and vehicles should be made only for keeping out the cold in winter, the heat in summer, for simple protection and for facility and convenience in transportation. In each case, Mozi claimed that "...what is merely decorative and contributes nothing... should be let alone."[17] This was the idea that led Mozi also to condemn music.[18]

The Moist Condemnation of Music

Musical instruments were expensive to make and took time that could be batter spent providing food or necessary clothing for the people. The time spent by those in office listening to music and dancing would be better spent working for the betterment of the nation. When ordinary people spent time listening to music, they were abandoning their fields and farms, their sewing, and their weaving.

For all these sacrifices, however, music contributed nothing in

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[17] Ibid., 117-8.

[18] Ibid., 175-81.

return.[19] It in no way helped the prosperity, wealth or order of society. Music did not have any power over the universe. It had no power to produce virtue in people nor to harmonize society as a whole. Music appealed only to the emotions, and the emotions themselves were useless and had to be eliminated altogether. Music was useful only for sensual, momentary pleasures and had no future benefit. Even when the country had achieved its ideal of prosperity and populousness, it still did not have time to spend idly enjoying music, because inattention to the administration of the country would lead it back to disorder and poverty. As Benjamin Schwartz writes,

> In Mo-tzu [Mozi] there is a much greater sense of urgency--one might almost say desperation--concerning the task of meeting the elemental needs of the people for food, shelter, clothing, security, and peace. Nothing less than a total and sustained concentration of all the energies of society are required to attain this goal. Any diversion of society's resources for needless activities is a subtraction from what is required for subsistence.[20]

According to Mozi, music, like everything else that was frivolous and useless, had no place in society.

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[19] For discussions of Mozi's attack on music and ritual, see Schwartz, *World*, 139-40, 151-53; Fung, 1:86-90; Huang Siu-chi, 51-2; Peter R. Moody, Jr., "Ritual and Technique: Some Variations in Classical Chinese Thought," *Asian Culture Quarterly* 12.4 (Winter 1984): 15.

[20] Schwartz, *World*, 151.

SUMMARY

Among the three major schools of the Warring States period, then, there were significant differences in ideas about music and its value. Confucians were convinced of the importance of music because of its tremendous, moral influence in the creation and maintenance of harmony, both in society and in individual lives. Daoists were also convinced of the influence and power of music with respect to both the universe as a whole and individual lives and feelings as well. Moists, however, advocated a complete prohibition of all types of music, claiming that it had no use or purpose in society and that it was actually a detriment to a country's well-being. All of this leads us, then, to the next chapter, and a look at how the musical theories of these early Chinese schools of thought affected the way scholars have traditionally understood classical Confucian philosophy.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE POLITICAL USE OF MUSIC

Music and ritual were integral parts of the classical Confucian system of thought. Traditionally, however, the study of Confucianism has either de-emphasized or completely ignored the place of music in Confucian philosophy while the role of *li* has usually been given at least some recognition. Recently, the role of *li* has been reexamined by several contemporary scholars and, as a result, the importance of *li* in the Confucian system has been emphasized more than ever. Music, however, continues to be ignored, and its essential role in Confucian philosophy still has not been recognized.

THE RECENT EMPHASIS ON *LI*

Herbert Fingarette, in his book *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred*, was one of the first to point out the important role of *li* in Confucian philosophy. In his introduction, Fingarette claims that people try to interpret Confucianism "sympathetically".[1] By this he means they look for things that can give Confucianism "maximum validity" today, ignoring anything they consider "superstitious", magical, and so on. He claims that if Confucianism contains ideas that contradict today's usual notions of what is

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[1] Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1972), 4.

possible and probable, those who want to be sympathetic to Confucianism will pass off any such references as simply, "poetic statements of a prosaic truth".[2]

Fingarette argues that, when he leaves all his Western assumptions behind and looks at the *Analects* with an open mind to find out what it really means, he discovers the focus of Confucius' philosophy there is *li*.[3] He believes that, according to Confucius, *li* is a magical power that gives human beings a sacred dignity. Fingarette says that, in the *Analects*, Confucius, "...talks of what it is to be man, and he sees that man is a special being with a unique dignity and power deriving from and embedded in *li*."[4] According to Fingarette, then, Confucius believed that human beings are holy because of their participation in the magical power of *li*.

More recently, Robert Eno, in *The Confucian Creation of Heaven*, also argues that *li* was the focal point of early Confucian philosophy. Eno claims that scholarship has traditionally, but wrongly, viewed the Confucians primarily as politicians.[5] He argues it has generally been thought that the goal of Confucian philosophy is political and that all other aspects of their

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[2] Ibid., 5.

[3] Ibid., 6.

[4] Ibid., 76.

[5] Eno, 42.

thought are believed to revolve around that focus. Eno contends that *li* was actually the core of Confucian philosophy; he argues that the Confucians were essentially apolitical; Confucians, he says, employed political rhetoric only to give themselves credibility in the eyes of the rest of the world.[6] Eno argues that we do not recognize *li* as the centre of Confucian philosophy because it is so different from anything we think of as philosophy or from anything we would consider a foundation of political order.[7]

THE PROBLEM WITH THE RECENT EMPHASIS ON *LI*

Both Fingarette and Eno claim to be reinterpreting Confucianism to show that Westerners have been ignoring the things in Confucian philosophy that are foreign to their own ways of thought. They both claim that *li* is the core of Confucian philosophy but has been ignored. They say it has not been seen as a viable basis for a system of thought because it is outside of our usual way of thinking about the world.

Neither, however, have Fingarette and Eno recognized what Confucians clearly posed as the complement to ritual: the other pillar of order for individuals, society, and the universe. Instead, they have ignored the integral role of music in Confucian thought. Ritual was only half of the

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[6] Ibid., 62-3.

[7] Ibid., 28.

program recommended by the Confucians to establish the order of the universe; music was the other half. Neither music nor ritual was sufficient without the other. Rather, as we have seen in the preceding chapters, music and *li* mutually supplemented and restricted each other, working together to promote both the harmony and the distinctions of the universe, and thereby creating a balanced order in the world.

MUSIC, *LI* AND POLITICS

Because Fingarette and Eno have missed the role of music in Confucian thought they have also misinterpreted, in part, the role of *li* in the Confucian system. Their ideas of the place of *li* in early Confucianism cannot be complete if they have missed the importance of music as *li*'s necessary complement.

What, then, does this mean for Eno's argument that the Confucians were entirely apolitical, that all that was important to them was the practice and perfection of *li*? Eno believes that the early Confucians had two basic goals, self-cultivation and political reform. In theory, both were of equal importance to the Confucians, but self-cultivation was necessarily prior, a first step before any political reform was possible.[8] Eno argues that the Confucian program of self-cultivation focused solely on training in *li* and the

[8] Ibid., 30-1, 44.

"complete ritualization of personal conduct."[9] According to Eno, Confucians believed *li* was the only key to social order. First, one would achieve ritual perfection within oneself, thus becoming a sage, and then, when the time was right, the sage would begin to reform society as whole according to the *li* he had learned. Eno argues that the perfection of self-cultivation was thought to be necessary before the beginning of political reform; he claims it was this bifurcation of doctrine that made Confucianism essentially apolitical.[10] No Confucian ever achieved perfect ritualization, and the time for political reform was therefore never right. Eno claims that, "...the idealistic conditions imposed on political activism effectively ruled out political action."[11] Because there was no history of high-level involvement in government by any of the early Confucians, Confucians were neither directly involved, nor even interested, in politics.[12] Eno argues instead that the Confucians only used political rhetoric to make themselves appear legitimate and useful to the rest of society in an attempt to justify their own existence.[13]

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[9] Ibid., 31.

[10] Ibid., 42.

[11] Ibid., 63.

[12] Ibid., 45-50.

[13] Ibid., 60-2.

Contrary to what Eno claims, however, the Confucians were indeed political. Eno has ignored the role of music in Confucian philosophy, and, in doing so, has misinterpreted the role of *li* and missed the political nature of Confucianism. Actually, the Confucian emphasis on music and *li* is precisely political.

Confucians saw the "subconscious" influence music can have over people and then looked for a way to harness that power. They understood that music can influence the way people think and feel. As we have seen, they believed that if you can control the music that people hear, you can control the way that they think and feel. You have only to make sure that people use only the "right" kind of music, and you ban the "wrong" types. The Confucians believed that if you combine this regulation of music with rituals that determine the way people act, you can control people's thoughts, feelings, and actions. The Confucian idea of "moral persuasion," then, has its basis in these "mind-controlling" techniques; you can most effectively govern and control the people by regulating the things that influence them and the way they express themselves. If the Confucian system works, it is much more effective than laws and punishments. Under Confucian control, people cannot even consider doing the "wrong" thing, and then, only if the system fails, do laws and punishments have to step in to back it up. In the end, this is a much easier system of government than

one based on laws and punishments because it begins right at the source of political trouble, influencing the very way its people think and their ability to even consider civil disobedience.

The Confucians, then, were indeed political. This is obvious from their system of music and ritual and its desired effect. Music and ritual were themselves techniques of government. In the Confucian system, *li* and music are not separate from politics; indeed, to separate them is to impose artificial and foreign distinctions on Confucian philosophy. To the Confucians, music and ritual were politics, and they were the central elements of their philosophy. The Confucians' ideal of government would control people to the greatest degree possible, affecting people subconsciously. If the Confucian system worked, people would not even realize they were being controlled, and that is certainly a most effective type of politics.

This political use of music, advocated by the Confucians, was precisely what the Daoists and Moists objected to. For example, the Daoists, as we have seen, disagreed completely with the system devised by the Confucians. They believed, as did the Confucians, in the powers of music, but the idea of using that power to control was against their whole philosophy. The Daoists thought that music should be allowed to influence people spontaneously and naturally. Daoists argued that the Confucian use

of music, which controls the way people think, and rituals that regulate how they act, are destructive to people's original natures and act contrary to the Dao. Because the Daoists argued vehemently against controlling and regulating human nature, they were completely against the Confucian program of music as a political tool.

The Moists, on the other hand, did not believe, as the Confucians and Daoists did, in the powers of music. The subtle art of government through music and ritual was lost on them. Unlike the Daoists, they insisted that people had to be controlled and regulated, but they also thought that the only effective means of such control were concrete laws, total adherence to the ruler, and so on. In this way, the Moists were ardent politicians; nothing besides politics mattered to them. They would not have bothered with anyone who was not a threat to their political ambitions. A group of hermit ritual specialists, as Eno would describe Confucians, would not have aroused the bitter criticisms of Confucian philosophy we see in Moist texts. We can assume that when attacking Confucian philosophy, Moists would aim their criticisms at the Confucian system of politics. In fact, what the Moists attack is the Confucian philosophy of music and ritual, because they recognized, however objectionable it was to them, that it was indeed the Confucian's political system.

When we miss the Confucian point about music and its powers, then,

we also miss the fact that the Confucians were political. We do not believe music has any importance of its own other than pure entertainment, and so, in the Confucian view, we undervalue and trivialize it. We also draw strict boundaries between ritual, music, religion, psychology, politics, philosophy, and so on. We do not see ritual and music as having any bearing on politics. Confucianism, however, does not compartmentalize the different aspects of human life in this way. Instead, Confucian philosophy is much more holistic, believing all parts of life and society, including the religious and political aspects of human life, are inter-related and mutually supplementary.

While Eno is mistaken in claiming that the Confucians were strictly apolitical and absorbed solely in ritual, those on the opposite side of the debate are equally incorrect. Anyone claiming Confucians were merely political, and ignoring or down-playing the roles of music and *li* in Confucian philosophy, is as wide of the mark as Eno. For the Confucians, music and *li* were not outside the realm of politics, but were the essential tools of any political leader.

CONCLUSION

It is misleading, then, to ignore the role of music and *li* in Confucian philosophy and to claim that Confucianism is simply political theory. On the other hand, emphasizing *li* and ignoring music and the essential political function of music and *li* is also far too one-sided. We have seen the key role music played in classical Confucianism, its relation to *li* and the centrality of music and *li* in any political theory of the Confucians.

The first chapter was a background sketch of ancient Chinese music and it showed that music began to have great importance in China from very early times. For example, music was thought to have been a tool in the founding acts of civilisation. The sage did not create music, but discovered it in the universe and put it to use in the establishment of civilised society. In ancient Chinese religious practices, music was used by the *wu* as a means of communicating with the world of the spirits. The Confucians later adopted this idea into their system, especially in the *Book of Rites*, as they continued there a number of *wu* practices. Indeed, music was thought to be so important in early China that it necessitated the establishment of governmental departments of music regulating its use.

Throughout the second chapter we saw that music was an essential part of classical Confucian philosophy. Confucian belief credited music with the power to maintain or destroy the harmony of the universe, and music

itself was thought to be the very representation of that harmony. In the Confucian system, music was set opposite *li*, in a mutually supplementary relationship, as what imitates and maintains the order of the universe. Confucians also argued that music was able to mold and cultivate good virtuous character within individuals, due to its status as the refined expression of the natural desire for sound and the morally good expression of natural human emotions (as long as these desires and emotions were expressed in the right kind of music). Given its importance, then, to the order of both the universe and each individual's life, music was also credited with a place opposite ritual in the correct government of a state. It could be used by the ruler to cultivate virtue in his people and to determine his own success as a moral and virtuous leader.

The third chapter focused on the idea of music in other classical philosophical schools. The objections from the Daoists and Moists are testimony to the importance attached to music by classical Confucians. For instance, the Daoists agreed with Confucians about the power of music in the working of the universe, but disagreed with the use Confucians proposed for that power. The Daoists thought that music should be listened to without any thought to controlling or refining either the music itself, or the human beings listening to it. It was to serve only as the expression of the workings of the Dao; that is, anything else would result in the loss of

one's inborn nature.

The Moists, on the other hand, unlike the Daoists, did not even agree with the Confucian's interest in, and emphasis on, music. For Moists, because music is impotent in creating order in society, it is useless and a waste of time and money; it contributes nothing to the benefit of society. It becomes obvious in their criticism of Confucianism, that music and ritual must have played a very large role in Confucian philosophy because these are the main points against which the Moists argue. They do not attack Confucian political philosophy, but rather their ideas about the power of *li* and music to represent and control the order of the universe and thus of individuals and society.

In the fourth and final chapter, we saw that though there has been a recent upsurge of interest in Confucian *li*, ritual by itself should not be overemphasized. Neither scholars like Robert Eno, who claim that Confucians were interested in nothing but ritual and were actually apolitical hermits, nor anyone suggesting that Confucians were straight-forward politicians who did not mean for their claims on music to be taken literally have fully understood the Confucian point about music. For Confucians, music, ritual, and politics were all one thing: a means for the preservation of harmony and order within the universe, society, and individual lives.

There is much more, then, to the Confucians' use of music than what

Kaufmann's "factual" references would have us see. Because music is not a part of our system in the way it was a part of the Confucian tradition, we have left out a huge piece of Confucian philosophy. The idea that music and politics are somehow related does not fit into our way of thinking and so we do not see it as an important part of Confucian thought either.

For an example of this blindness to ideas outside of our own we need only look as far as Fingarette and Eno, who fall into precisely the same trap they point out to other people. They recognize that the idea of *li*, as a means of creating order within a society or the universe as a whole, is quite foreign to us. It is not something that we find in our own systems of thought and so we have difficulty in acknowledging it in other systems. What Fingarette and Eno fail to realize, however, is that the same thing applias to music, but to an even greater extent. *Li* can at least be thought of as a set of rules and regulations to follow, and so there is something concrete there to be examined and analyzed. In this way, *li* as a basis for social order is much closer to our own ideas of law and government than the idea that the right kind of music can influence people, making them virtuous individuals and good subjects, and finding them their proper place in the working of the universe. Most people today simply do not think of music in that way. It is radically different from any ideas we may have about what music is and how it works. The idea of music as representing an inherent

harmony of the universe and then as being able to keep human beings in tune with that harmony is simply foreign to us, and probably considered quite foolish or even "superstitious" by most people.

We have to start taking classical Confucianism at face value, not passing things off as interpolations or as "poetic" expressions of something much more concrete and rational. There are, and will be, things in Confucianism that we do not understand and that do not fit into our way of thinking, but this does not make them wrong, superstitious, or irrelevant. We must leave our own assumptions behind, to the extent that that is possible, when we go into a different culture to try to interpret its way of thought. We can see the problems that ignoring the Confucian's argument about music has caused. Perhaps the same thing has happened with other aspects of Confucian thought as well.

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