

Appendix:

ON FRIENDSHIP

Explicating the TEN *yi*'s (q.v. # 10-B, N.B.), Master Wang gives a short definition of the Confucian (or, perhaps more generally, the Chinese) concept of friendship (cf. *DES MICHELS*, p. 45-46, text; p. 62-64, translations):

同德為朋	t'ung ² te ^{2.5} wei ² p'eng ²
同類為友	t'ung ² lei ⁴ wei ² yu ³
感契以情	kan ³ ch'i ⁴ yi ³ ts'ing ²
周旋以禮	chou ¹ hsüan ² yi ³ li ³
序分長幼	hsü ⁴ fen ¹ chang ³ yu ⁴
誼同手足	yi ⁴ t'ung ² shou ³ tsu ^{2.5}
義共死生	yi ⁴ kung ⁴ ssu ³ sheng ¹
情均苦樂	ts'ing ² tsün ¹ k'u ³ lo ^{4.5}
朋友之道	p'eng ² yu ³ chih ¹ tao ⁴
如是而已	ju ² shi ⁴ erh ² yi ³

非此則不過一時聚散之浮交非所謂友也
 fei¹ tz'u³ tse^{2.5} pu^{4.5} kuo⁴ yi^{1.5} shih² tsü⁴ san³ chih¹ fu² chiau¹
 fei¹ so³ wei⁴ yu³ yeh³

This iambic hymn to friendship does not rhyme, nor does it contain classical quotations. In its FIVE couplets, however, it shows a noteworthy formal neatness: FIVE, since friendship is the FIFTH, and hence the central point of the FIVE human relations 五倫 (q.v. # 10-A). I could not determine the source from which Master Wang drew his text. The importance given to numerology has a distinctly Taoist flavour; we may even detect an anti-Mencian stance in the avoidance of the kanji 信 “sincerity” which, according to Mencius, is the characteristic feature of friendship (cf. # 10-A). Instead, our text uses twice the kanji 情 “affectionate feelings, desire; true, sincere.”

Translation:

Couplet ONE (the number of undivided *yin* and *yang*):

同德為朋 . 同類為友

[Men] of equal potency make p'eng's;

[Men] of equal kind make yu's.

> 同德 brings to mind a current saying quoted in the *Shu ching* (L., p. 287): 同力度 (to^{4,5}) 德. 同德度義 G.: *Bei gleicher Kraft, sieh nach der Potenz; bei gleicher Potenz sieh nach der Rechtschaffenheit. When the forces are equal, take (intellectual, social, sexual) potency into consideration; when the potency is equal, take moral righteousness into consideration.*

> 朋, *M.* (5.14340.I.ro) gives in first position the definition of the *Chou li* commentary: 同師曰朋 “men who share/-d a teacher are called p'eng's”; he quotes too the famous “friends coming from distant quarters”, of the second *Lun yü* apophthegm. These 朋 are defined, ditto, as 同處師門曰朋 “men who tarry /-ied together at a teacher's gate are called p'eng's”. These two definitions fit the context of the *San tzu ching*, characterizing friendship as the fruit of higher education, of cultural refinement.

Etymologically (*W.*, 64.I), 朋 depicts the tail of the 鳳 feng⁴, a “transcendental” (ling² 靈) bird which the western idiom traditionally renders as “phoenix” (the two birds have nothing in common except their transcendence and, vaguely, the sound of their names). In a way comparable to the tail of said bird, the friend follows the friend, either as an individual or in “a group, party, faction” 黨 tang³ (cf. # 10-I). In turn, the “phoenix,” a male bird (its female is called a huang² 凰), is the emblem of the south 南 nan² which is homonymous with 男 “male” and loaded with homoerotic implications: “southern songs” = homoerotic songs; “southern ways”, “southern habits”, &c. This etymological interpretation, albeit derived from the *Shuo wen*, is mentioned in *M.* in ultimate position (VII). For the immensely complex symbolism of the “phoenix”, cf. *DORÉ*, vol. 4, chapter X, “Minéraux, animaux, végétaux doués d'un pouvoir

merveilleux”, Art. 2, pp. 442-443, picture # 208; *EBERHARD*, pp. 227-229. For the present, however, let us retain that the “phoenix” is the king of all the 360 species of birds, and that his tail is composed of twelve plumes (of thirteen plumes in years with an intercalary moon); that his feathers show the FIVE colours, and that his call includes the FIVE tones of the Chinese scale. It is an emblem of joy and happiness (*MTH.*, 1894).

> 類 (*W.*, 160C) is a *hui-yi* representing a “heading” (頁) such as is found in Chinese encyclopaedias: headings of, e.g., “plants and animals” (米犬), or, according to another graph not contained in my TwinBridge “plants and women” (米女) – Chinese encyclopaedias are traditionally arranged by subject matter: “sorts”, “kinds”, including “gender”, “professions” &c. Example: *Lun yü*, *HY*. 32/15/39; *L.*, p. 305; *C.*, p. 248; *WIL.*, p. 181: 子曰. 有教無類 *The Master said, 'In teaching there should be no distinction of classes.'* Legge; Wilhelm ditto. Couvreur follows Chu Hsi’s commentary: “[The wise teacher] admits [all men] to his school irrespectively [of their initial moral or intellectual abilities, so that all may learn and improve themselves].” Personally I understand the logion to mean that, (in East and West alike) in the republic of letters there are no distinctions of rank, except for a precedence granted to seniority (cf. below; cf. Bischoff, *Han lin*, p.63, and below couplet THREE). However, friendship was by no means confined to men of higher education; in particular, it was of vital importance to merchants (cf. 10-K, > 其). Hence, we should probably take “same kind” in its broadest sense, as in the proverb, “birds of a feather flock together”, or in Chinese, 同類相求 (*Cd.*, p. 501c). Notice that ch’iu² carries a passionate connotation absent from the English saying: a *strong* desire to attract, to obtain, to seek after something – which, indeed, brings us back to the “phoenix”.

> 友 (*W.*, 43P) depicts “two right hands” acting in the same direction.

Couplet TWO (the *yin* number by which *yin* and *yang* begin their complementary action):

感契以情 . 周旋以禮

They disagree, and they also agree, in affectionate sincerity; They rotate in complementary directions in conformity with cosmic laws.

Our text gives consistently *yin* the precedence over *yang*. Meaning: no friendship without readiness to yielding; also, friendship shows its true quality in times of distress (cf Jun yü, HY 17/9/28; C., p. 172 + commentary; L., p. 225).

> 感 “to call forth, excite a feeling; to influence; gratitude”, or to the contrary, “to clash, to reject”. Which one to choose? Taking our argument from the classics, let us quote the *Yi king* (HY., 49b; Wil., p. 355): 情偽相感 “The true and the false collide.” *Cd.*, p. 319c, is correct – to my mind – Wil., “The true and the false influence each other”, is wrong (Hegelianism?). In the quoted *Yi ching* oracle there are two more verbs: they mean “to injure”, and “to combat”. Hence, consistency calls for the “opposing” meaning of kan³. Parallelism with the next line, which shows an antinomy of *yin* and *yang*, supposes an antinomy here too.

> 周 is the right turn of the earth, while 旋 is the left turn of the sky. We read in *The Conversations of the White Tiger Hall* (quoted. *Cd.*, p. 844) :

天左旋地右周猶君臣陰陽相對向也

Heaven rotates to the left; earth rotates to the right: the directions of the correspondence of ruler and minister, of yin and yang.

> 禮 “the Ceremonies” (the Chinese orthopraxy) are indeed the (macro-) cosmic order applied to (the microcosmic) human society. The catchword leads to the next couplet, by means of a *Li chi* quotation (HY. 27/1; C., II, p. 363):

非禮無以辨君臣上下長幼之位也

without li³ there is nothing by which to decide the placement of ruler and subject, of high and low, of senior and junior. (already quoted in # 2-A).

Couplet THREE (the *yang* number of “manliness“):

序分長幼 . 誼同手足

Age is their [only] rank distinction;

Decisions adopted after deliberation are carried out as by [one body's] hands and feet.

> 手足 “hands and feet” is a metaphor referring primarily to the cooperation of elder and younger brothers. Indeed, friendship is associated with brotherhood (in East and West alike). The verse is a current saying quoted *MTH.*, 2994.(a)1.

> 誼 = 義 is the catch word leading to the next couplet.

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Couplet FOUR the second power of the *yin* number TWO. It is the number of both “coition” and “death”, ἔρωσ and θάνατος (érōs, thánatos). Notice that FOUR is, throughout the hymn, the number of kanjis to the line:

義共死生 . 情均苦樂

Fidelity makes them share death as well as life;

Mutual affection makes them feel their sorrows as well as their joys to an equal degree.

All this is very Chinese.

> 共死 “the sharing of death” was exemplified in # 10-I,J.

> 共生, what is meant by “sharing of life”, is illustrated by the modern usage of the expression, defined as “symbiosis, permanent union between organisms, each of which depends for its existence upon the other” (*Mth.*, 3709. 45). It does certainly not mean the popular “shacking up” of two men who would live together quasi as a married couple. Such a thing may have occurred among paupers, out of sheer necessity and only for a time (cf. *Chin p'ing meh*, k. 74, p. 462, or even k. 96, p.447-448 although Hu Lin'er is not an ordinary pauper but a super-*yang* charismatic comparable to Wu Sung). Among wealthy men of which each one was possessed of a polygynous household, it included more or less frequent and extended visits at each other's hermitage – as lovingly shown on countless Chinese landscape paintings.

> 均 “equally, to the same degree, with the same intensity”.
 Meaning: not only do friends harbour identical feelings; but their feelings show the same degree of intensity.

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Couplet FIVE (the *yang* number of the MIDDLE, of the most important). It applies to the lines NINE & TEN, the numbers of “uniting” (九 *chiu*³ “nine”; *chiu*¹ “to unite”) and of “completion”:

朋友之道 . 如是而已

Thus, and only thus,

I is the department of friends.

Conclusion:

非此則不過一時聚散之浮交非所謂友也

Or else, even though it may last some time, it is a flitting intercourse between meeting and parting, which does not deserve the name of friendship.

Friendship, as defined by the Chinese, is much more demanding than its Western counterpart. In particular, the duties of friendship are given precedence over wife and children (as implied by the FOURTH couplet). The West, far from admiring such a view, considers it immoral.

Although homoerotic feelings and activities were by no means reprov'd – they were, on the contrary, valued as the expression of cultural (= moral) refinement – traditional Chinese friendship did not encourage an “alternative lifestyle,” as it has been labelled in recent years. The obligation to propagate one’s family line and to produce a new generation remained. However, wives and children were not to hinder the noble obligations of a father’s friendly commerce with other men.

FIVE: Chinese civilisation has at all times valued friendship highly (see *OLTMANN*). However, the central, fundamental and all-pervading role of friendship, including the public display of mutual erotic attraction, in Ming and Ch’ing China (from the end of the fourteenth to the beginning of the twentieth centuries) calls for an explanation of its own.

Nothing, absolutely nothing that relates to sexuality is simple, and there is certainly no simple explanation to this particular behaviour either. Yet this phenomenon is historically synchronous with, and hence linked (at least in part) to the phenomenon of the crippled feet of the Han Chinese women. This custom, to which all Han Chinese women submitted regardless of their social position, was introduced purposely as a fetish, for exciting the male – which it did; but it showed side effects. It made that the women, throughout their lives, were suffering from and fussing over their feet, and sore feet have never been conducive to happy sex (not even in China) nor to an amiable character. Moreover, it confined the women to the “inner apartments” and limited their functions to breeding and feeding. Ignorant of arts and letters, Chinese women were excluded from any higher form of culture or entertainment. To a refined upper-class husband they presented no intellectual challenge, no intellectual interest.