WAS THOREAU A CHINAMAN?

“Qui multum peregrinatur, raro sanctificatur.”
[Those who travel a lot seldom attain sainthood.]
The Shang Dynasty was overcome by the Chou (from what are now Kansu and Shensi provinces). This would bring what later would be known as the “Classical Age” of China, renowned for:

- The Five Classics:
  
  The *SHIH-CHING* or BOOK OF POETRY  
  The *SHU CHING* or BOOK OF HISTORY  
  The *LI CHI* or BOOK OF RITES  
  (a work which contains, incidentally, the first written description of *kuai zi* or “chopsticks”)  
  The *CH’UN-CH’IU* or SPRING AND AUTUMN ANNALS  
  The *I CHING* or BOOK OF CHANGES

- the teachings of Confucius

- the teachings of Mencius

In this case, not even an inauthentic image is available.
It would be the Duke of Chou who would have created for him an early “south-pointing carriage” complete with magnetic compass (in Chinese, a compass is referred to as a “south-pointing needle”; this south-pointing carriage used a differential gear to keep a part of the carriage superstructure pointing in the same direction no matter how the carriage beneath it turned). ¹

1. Francis Bacon would characterize the origin of the magnetic compass as “obscure and inglorious,” either because it had originated in obscure and inglorious China or because the Neapolitans were claiming that one of their own, Flavio of Malphi, had invented it in the early 14th Century (tour guides on the Amalphi coast southwest of Naples point out a statue of this Flavio).
Confucius died at the age of 73 and was buried at Ch’ü-fu in the Shandong province of China. The record has it that 72 of his students were credited with having mastered the “six arts,” and that those who at this early point were honoring his memory numbered some 3,000 persons. The Analects (the Lun-yü, one of the Four Books) would probably be compiled during the 2nd generation of these disciples.

A most persuasive personal description of spiritual development, presumably somewhat idealized, is to be found in these early records:

At 15 I set my heart on learning; at 30 I firmly took my stand; at 40 I had no delusions; at 50 I knew the Mandate of Heaven; at 60 my ear was attuned; at 70 I followed my heart’s desire without overstepping the boundaries of right.

This teacher most definitely had never embraced the missionary position:

I do not enlighten anyone who is not eager to learn, nor encourage anyone who is not anxious to put his ideas into words.

What this generation of followers recorded of him, instead, was that he had been in the habit of making strenuous demands not only of them but also of himself:

It is these things that cause me concern: failure to cultivate virtue, failure to go deeply into what I have learned, inability to move up to what I have heard to be right, and inability to reform myself when I have defects.

When one of his students had difficulty describing him, Confucius had reportedly sprung to the rescue:

Why did you not simply say something to this effect: he is the sort of man who forgets to eat when he engages himself in vigorous pursuit of learning, who is so full of joy that he forgets his worries, and who does not notice that old age is coming on?
When his life was threatened in the district of K’uang, Confucius said:

Since the death of King Wen [founder of the Chou dynasty] does not the mission of culture (wen) rest here in me? If Heaven intends this culture to be destroyed, those who come after me will not be able to have any part of it. If Heaven does not intend this culture to be destroyed, then what can the men of K’uang do to me?

His recommendation for goals in life was that we strive to bring comfort to the old, to have trust in friends, and to cherish the young. He had no delusion that this might be accomplished by one person acting in isolation, and to achieve such aims he sought the creation of a scholarly community which he referred to as the fellowship of chün-tzu or “noblemen”:

A man of humanity, wishing to establish himself, also establishes others, and wishing to enlarge himself, also enlarges others. The ability to found one’s inferences upon what is near at hand can be called the method of humanity.
Chu Hsi’s edition of *The Four Books*, originally prepared in 1190, was accepted in all China as the basis for a very elaborate and rigorous civil service examination system which could elevate the more painstaking student to the important role of Mandarin. This literature would reach a Western audience as of 1840 with M.J. Pauthier’s *Confucius et Mencius*, a complete French version of the *Four Books* along with Chu Hsi’s 12th-Century commentaries.

2. The *Ta-hsüeh* (The Great Learning), the *Lun-yü* (The Analects), the *Meng-tzu* (the book of Mencius), and the *Chung-yung* (The Doctrine of the Mean).

3. This examination system would persist until 1905.
The Reverend Professor James Legge, in 1890 in translating the *Tao Tê Ching* of Lao-tze into the English language, would discover in the files of the India Office a Latin manuscript translation of this material, that had been sent to the office by a missionary organization in 1788. The document as discovered would be still “in excellent preservation.” Legge would indicate that the object of the translator had evidently been to demonstrate Chinese knowledge of the Holy Trinity and the Christian God, and would dismiss this manuscript he had found as of little value. In quoting a section of it in a note he would indicate, also, that this represented “the first morsel of it that has appeared in print.”

(Inference: There is zero likelihood that either Henry Thoreau or Waldo Emerson ever had access to this early translation.)
4. According to Lyman V. Cady, this is one of the works which would be utilized by Henry Thoreau as a source for Confucian inserts in WALDEN. This book would also be consulted repeatedly by Waldo Emerson.
The Reverend David Collie had been serving for four years as head of the Anglo-Chinese College in Malacca. At this point his *The Chinese Classical Work, Commonly Called The Four Books* was published by the Mission Press there.

5. The charter of this institution was the reciprocal cultivation of Chinese and European literature and the diffusion of Christianity. The college was as open to Chinese students of European literature as it was to European students of Chinese. Proselytization was not encouraged and precious few of the Chinese students would convert. In 1843 the Reverend James Legge would relocate this institution to Victoria Island of Hong Kong, where it would come to be known as the Ying Wa College.

6. This edition would be in the personal library of Waldo Emerson. It is the source for the “Chinese Four Books” piece that would appear in *The Dial* for October 1843, a piece that we tentatively ascribe to Henry Thoreau. According to Lyman V. Cady this was one of the works which would be utilized by Thoreau as a source for the quotes of Confucius in *Walden*, but other scholars have suggested that Thoreau obtained the material from a French translation by G. Pauthier.
At the end of the journal entries for this year, Waldo Emerson listed his recent readings in Oriental materials: “Plotinus; Confucius, Zoroaster, and Mahabarat, (apud DeGérando).” In his journal for the year, Waldo had noted that the Golden Rule, so markedly a part of Christianity, actually was to be ascribed to Confucius, and that THE FOUR BOOKS contained “promising definitions” of Nature, Law, and Instruction.
At Xinhai in Sichuan province in the interior of China, a well was dug for brine, and for the natural gas to boil this brine and transform it into edible salt, which reached the incredible depth of over one kilometer: 1,001 meters. At this time, in the West, the deepest wells were on the order of about 370 meters.

8. When L.J.M. Imbert, a French missionary, had attempted to inform Western engineers of the deep drilling in Sichuan province in the 1820s, communicating detailed information in regard to the techniques employed, his letters had not been found credible in Europe. Attempts to duplicate Chinese cable drilling succeeded in reaching depths of only in the range of a hundred meters during the 1840s, because the Western engineers substituted local rope for the Chinese bamboo. Samuel A.M. Adshead, SALT AND CIVILIZATION, Macmillan, 1992; Hans Ulrich Vogel, “The Great Well of China,” Scientific American 268 (June 1993):116-121.
We may wonder whether at the top of this well in Xinhai, it might not have been possible for the Chinese, by listening carefully, to overhear Concordians informing their neighbors of their failings. Seriously, folks, we may wonder what literary use Henry might have made of the fact of the brine wells of Sichuan province, had news of their existence reached him. Certainly, he would have excised, from the ending of *Walden*, his embarrassingly conventional, Emersonish tropes presuming the stagnation of the Chinese!
At the end of the journal entries for this year, Waldo Emerson listed his recent readings in Oriental materials: “Code of Menu; Confucius, *apud* Marshman”; Arabian Nights.” While perusing Marshman’s *CONFUCIUS*, he had copied many sentences ascribed to *Confucius* into his journals. One of these sentences, “How can a man remain concealed,” would appear in his 1st volume of essays.

9. Joshua J. Marshman’s *CONFUCIUS* may be the same book as the reference to the *SHEKING BOOK OF ODES.*
M.J. Pauthier translated the *Tao Tê Ching* into French.10

In this year the British government disassociated the East India Company from obligations into which it had entered, to maintain the temples of India. Forget your promises, that’s an order!

The Reverend William Adam abandoned India and joined his family in the United States. He would further journey from Boston to London, to attend the initial meeting of an antislavery group, the British India Society.


Monier Williams matriculated at King’s College School, Balliol College of Oxford University.

At the end of the journal entries for this year, Waldo Emerson listed his readings in Oriental materials during the period: “Hermes Trismegistus; Synesius; Proclus; Thomas Taylor; Institutes of Menu; Sir William Jones, Translations of Asiatic Poetry; Buddha. Zoroaster; Confucius.”

Again Emerson copied extracts from the Confucian canon into his journals, extracts such as “Action, such as Confucius describes the speech of God.”

10. Lyman V. Cady’s inference that Henry Thoreau could not have encountered Taoism, based as it was on incomplete evidence about the sorts of Taoist reading material available in Indo-European languages during Thoreau’s lifetime, must now be subjected to reexamination. A Latin version of the *Tao Tê Ching* would be created by Jesuits, and two German translations would appear, during the 1840s. These were all, of course, languages that Thoreau could read. David T.Y. Ch’en has become convinced on the basis of new evidence of the 19th-Century availability of such translations, and on the basis of detective work among several strands of converging internal evidence, and on the basis of a series of seven paradoxes written into Thoreau’s journal on June 26, 1840, that Thoreau had as of that date just been perusing one or another of the translations of *Lao-tze*, most likely this one by Pauthier. – For more information, refer to that entry for June 26, 1840.
Publication of M.J. Pauthier’s *CONFUCIUS ET MENCIUS. LES QUATRE LIVRES DE PHILOSOPHIE MORALE ET POLITIQUE DE LA CHINE, TRADUITS DU CHINOIS, PAR M.G. PAUTHIER* (Paris: Charpentier, Libraire-Éditeur, 29, Rue de Seine), a complete translation into French of THE FOUR BOOKS with Chu Hsi’s commentaries, as part of *LES LIVRES SACRÉS DE L’ORIENT* in Paris.

(Ezra Pound would base his poetic rendering known as the “Confucian Cantos” upon a 1915 encounter with this book.)

June 26, Friday: David T.Y. Ch’en has become convinced on the basis of research into the 19th-Century availability of translations from the Chinese, and on the basis of detective work among several strands of converging internal evidence, and on the basis of a series of seven paradoxes written into Thoreau’s journal on this day, that our guy had just been perusing one or another of the translations of Lao-tze, most likely the one by M.J. Pauthier. Do any changes or developments in Henry Thoreau’s patterns of thought hinge on this period?

There is a Taoist concept, *tzu-jan*, that we ought to be investigating in connection with research into such “Thoreauvian” attitudes. It is that ideal state of human existence which would proceed from a life which, because wholly spontaneous, would be in complete harmony with all the realities of nature. This world is constantly being made and unmade and made and unmade, therefore we should offer no resistance whatever to the process of making and unmaking. Question: what would be the primary Chinese sources in which we should study such an attitude, and when did these sources become available in the Western world which Thoreau inhabited? Question: To what extent was Lin Yu-t’ang’s endorsement of Thoreau as Chinese in his writing and in his thought processes merely an identification of Thoreauvianism with this sort of *tzu-jan*ism?
June 26: The best poetry has never been written, for when it might have been, the poet forgot it, and when it was too late remembered it — or when it might have been, the poet remembered it, and when it was too late forgot it.

The highest condition of art is artlessness.

Truth is always paradoxical.

He will get to the goal first who stands stillest.

There is one let better than any help — and that is — Let-alone.

By sufference you may escape suffering.

He who resists not at all will never surrender.

When a dog runs at you whistle for him.

Say — not so — and you will outcircle the philosophers.

Stand outside the wall and no harm can reach you — the danger is that you will be walled in with it.

11. “Thoreau and Taoism,” pages 410-11: We must also ask ourselves questions about possible readings of translations of Chuang-tze for, according to Ch’en’s reading, Thoreau’s personality was more like Chuang-tze’s than like Lao-tze’s. Ch’en notes that there are more affinities between Thoreau and Chuangtse than there are between Thoreau and Laotse.... [T]he fundamental teaching of Laotse was humility. He often praised the virtue of gentleness, resignation, non-contention and the wisdom of lying low. Chuangtse, on the other hand, was inclined to speak of the virtue of quiescence, of keeping and preserving men’s spiritual power through tranquility and rest. Therefore, while Laotse regarded water, the softest of all substances, as a symbol of the wisdom of seeking lowly places, Chuangtse often compared it to the tranquility of the mind and clarity of spirit: “Calm represents the nature of water at its best. In that it may serve as our model, for its power is preserved and is not dispersed through agitation.” In another instance, Chuangtse likened the mind of the perfect man to a mirror: “The mind of the perfect man is like a mirror. It does not move with things, nor does it anticipate them. It responds to things, but does not retain them. Therefore, he is able to deal successfully with things, but is not affected.” In like manner, Thoreau wrote of Walden symbolically: “Walden is a perfect mirror.... Nations come and go without defiling it. It is a mirror which no stone can crack, whose quicksilver will never wear off, whose gilding Nature continually repairs; no storms, no dust, can dim its surface ever fresh; — a mirror in which all impurity presented to it sinks, swept and dusted by the sun’s hazy brush, — this the light dust-cloth, — which retains no breath that is breathed on it, but sends its own to float as clouds high above its surface, and be reflected in its bosom still.” On the surface, this passage is a beautiful description of the pond. But when we look beneath, we shall find that the limpidity of its water is intended to signify the transparency of Thoreau’s character.

(After becoming aware that Thoreau retained this perspective, unchanged, for the remainder of his short life, we may wonder when this perspective developed, and from whom he “absorbed” it.)
At the end of the journal entries for this year, Waldo Emerson would list his readings in Oriental materials during the period: “Plotinus; HERMES TRISMEGISTUS; Porphyry, ON ABSTINENCE FROM ANIMAL FOOD (Taylor’s translation); Iamblichus, LIFE OF PYTHAGORAS; Synesius; Proclus; Olympiadorus; VISHNU SARNA; Zoroaster; Confucius; Saadi; Hafiz.” Here is an example of the sort of record he had made of Confucius:

Chang Tsoo and Kee Neih retired from the state to the fields on account of misrule, and showed their displeasure at Confucius who remained in the world. Confucius sighed and said, I cannot associate with birds and beasts. If I follow not man, whom shall I follow? If the world were in possession of right principles, I should not seek to change it.

M.J. Pauthier’s CONFUCIUS ET MENCUIS. LES QUATRE LIVRES DE PHILOSOPHIE MORALE ET POLITIQUE DE LA CHINE, TRADUIT DU CHINOIS PAR M.J. PAUTHIER, which had been published in Paris in the previous year as part of LES LIVRES SACRÉS DE L’ORIENT, was republished in this year as a separate volume. It would be from this source that, as Hongbo Tan would point out in 1993, perhaps in the year 1843 but not earlier than the month of April Henry Thoreau would translate 96 paragraphs of Confucius into 23 pages of his 1st Commonplace Book, now at the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library.12

In “Spiritual Laws” in his book of essays published during this year, Emerson had written:

If you would not be known to do any thing, never do it. A man may play the fool in the drifts of a desert, but every grain of sand shall seem to see. He may be a solitary eater, but he cannot keep his foolish counsel. A broken complexion, a swinish look, ungenerous acts, and the want of due knowledge, — all blab. Can a cook, a Chiffinch, an Iachimo be mistaken for Zeno or Paul? Confucius exclaimed, — “How can a man be concealed! How can a man be concealed!”

During this year Waldo Emerson made uncritical use, in his essay “The Conservative,” of the current Western prejudice and presumption about “Chinese stagnation”:

I understand well the respect of mankind for war, because that

12. Bradley P. Dean believed 1849 to be a more likely date for this translation activity than 1843.
Was Thoreau a Chinaman?

breaks up the Chinese stagnation of society.
Translation of the Pilgrim’s Progress into Chinese.

In this year (as James Legge would belatedly discover) a translation of the Tao Tê Ching was made, from the Chinese characters into French — but this effort by Stanislas Julien would not be published, it would be stuck into a drawer in England, so there’s not a chance that Henry Thoreau might have been in any way influenced by it.
Waldo Emerson translated Dante’s *Vita Nuova*.

At the end of the journal entries for this year, he listed his recent readings in Oriental materials: “Plotinus; Iamblichus; Synesius; Proclus; (Thomas Taylor’s translations); Thomas Taylor; Sheking13; THE FOUR BOOKS (Chinese Classics); Vishnu Sarna; Saadi; Desatir (Persian).”

Emerson had recorded during this year the fact that “My Chinese book does not forget to record to Confucius, that his nightgown was one length and a half of his body.” He may on some unknown occasions have caught a glimpse of one or another Chinaman and one or another Jew (or one or another giraffe), for he also opinioned in his journal that “The Chinese are as wonderful for their etiquette as the Hebrews for their piety.”

(This is in Volume VI, page 418. The Sage of Concord might of course as well have been expressing an informed opinion that “The lion is as wonderful for its ferocity as the ant for its diligence” or that “The negroes are as wonderful for their sense of rhythm as the English for their sense of propriety”!)

Emerson copied many sentences from the translation by the Reverend D. Collier of THE FOUR BOOKS, published in Malacca, into his journals for inclusion in his later works, and in fact he would insert into almost

13. THE BOOK OF ODES. Presumably this was borrowed from Samuel Gray Ward of Lenox MA, as there is a reference in this year to “Ward’s Chinese book.”
every book he would issue, at one point or another, a few such Chinese sayings, which (I will parenthetically remark) he was deploying clearly for mere purposes of color and **never** delving into in any interesting manner. In radical contrast with the serious manner in which Henry Thoreau would consider his Confucian extracts, Emerson used such materials as mere “throwaways,” inserted into his materials for reader titillation — for him Chinese wisdom was merely opportunistic as opposed to religious, and was so impoverished by Eastern inertia and quietism that it was not to be taken seriously. Chinese philosophy boiled down to Confucius, and that guy, in Emerson’s view of the matter, had been no originator, no innovator, no creator — but a mere “middle man.” The writings of Confucius, Emerson suggested, were to Eastern philosophy as the writings of General Washington were to Western philosophy — merely a record of practicality and of practice.

In this year Emerson made some permissive remarks about the go-ahead spirit of the Americans:

5. Now these things are so in Nature. All things ascend, and the royal rule of economy is, that it should ascend also, or, whatever we do must always have a higher aim. Thus it is a maxim, that money is another kind of blood. *Pecunia alter sanguis*: or, the estate of a man is only a larger kind of body, and admits of regimen analogous to his bodily circulations. So there is no maxim of the merchant, e. g., “Best use of money is to pay debts;” “Every business by itself;” “Best time is present time;” “The right investment is in tools of your trade;” or the like, which does not admit of an extended sense. The counting-room maxims liberally expounded are laws of the Universe. The merchant’s economy is a coarse symbol of the soul’s economy. It is, to spend for power, and not for pleasure. It is to invest income; that is to say, to take up particulars into generals; days into integral eras, — literary, emotive, practical, of its life, and still to ascend in its investment. The merchant has but one rule, **absorb and invest**: he is to be capitalist: the scraps and filings must be gathered back into the crucible; the gas and smoke must be burned, and earnings must not go to increase expense, but to capital again. Well, the man must be capitalist. Will he spend his income, or will he invest? His body and every organ is under the same law. His body is a jar, in which the liquor of life is stored. Will he spend for pleasure? The way to ruin is short and facile. Will he not spend, but hoard for power? It passes through the sacred fermentations, by that law of Nature whereby everything climbs to higher platforms, and bodily vigor becomes mental and moral vigor. The bread he eats is first strength and animal spirits: it becomes, in higher laboratories, imagery and thought; and in still higher results, courage and endurance. This is the right compound interest; this is capital doubled, quadrupled, centupled; man raised to his highest power.
April: In this month and the following one, two articles on Buddhist thought by Professor Eugène Burnouf were appearing in *La Revue Indépendante*, a prominent French journal which was presumably being stocked by Miss Elizabeth Palmer Peabody at her bookstore in downtown Boston. This month’s article was entitled *Fragments des Prédications de Buddha*. Professor Burnouf was the first to translate the *LOTUS SUTRA* from Sanskrit into a European language and eventually Henry Thoreau would possess a personal copy of the 1852 edition of his *Le LOTUS DE LA BONNE LOI, TRADUIT DU SANSCRIT, ACCOMPAGNÉ D’UN COMMENTAIRE ET DE VINGT ET UN MÉMOIRES RELATIFS AU BUDDHISME, PAR M. E. BURNOUF* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale). An English translation of this French translation of Chapter V of the Sanskrit of *THE LOTUS SUTRA* would appear in *The Dial* for January 1844, and presumably either Thoreau or Peabody, busy as beavers, prepared that translation—which would amount to the very first presentation of any part of this essential Buddhist scripture in the English language!

Thoreau edited this issue (Volume III, Number 4) of *The Dial*.

“One Bronson Alcott’s Works,” by “C.L.” (Charles Lane), appeared in this issue on pages 417-454 (thanks to Thoreau’s editorial pruning, it is considered the best short account of Alcott’s work).

The issue carried 21 quotes in its “Ethnical Scriptures: Sayings of Confucius” section, but these are not the ones which Thoreau would (probably later in this same year) retranslate from the French of M.J. Pauthier’s *CONFUCIUS ET MENCUIUS*. Thoreau was still relying upon English editions, at least three of which he had at this point perused, and the translation he was relying upon at this point was one made in 1809 by the Reverend Joshua J. Marshman.14

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14. We know he read the English translation by Father Couplet, a Jesuit in China from 1658 to 1680, which had been in 1687 the very first notice of the writings of Confucius for an European audience, in an 1835 edition, plus two by a Baptist missionary in India in 1809, the Reverend Joshua J. Marshman, and one done in 1828 by David Collie, a member of the London Missionary Society who was at one time the principal of the Protestant Anglo-Chinese College at Malacca.
WAS THOREAU A CHINAMAN?

15 WEST STREET

Novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne once described 15 West Street as "Mrs. Peabody's Caravansary." In reference to the diverse activities of the Peabody family who from 1840 to 1854 made their home in this building. In the front parlor, daughter Elizabeth opened a bookstore, the first in Boston to offer works by foreign authors. Here she and Ralph Waldo Emerson published The Dial, the quarterly periodical of the Transcendentalist poets. Here also, journalist-critic Margaret Fuller held her famous "Conversations" which today are considered landmark tracts in the history of American feminism. In the private rear parlor, daughter Sophia in 1842 married Hawthorne, and daughter Mary in 1843 married Horace Mann, the father of public education in America. During the years the Peabody family lived on West Street, they were hosts — and friend — to many who helped broaden American thought and literature.
Ethnical Scriptures.

Sayings Of Confucius.

1. Chee says, if in the morning I hear about the right way, and in the evening die, I can be happy.

2. A man’s life is properly connected with virtue. The life of the evil man is preserved by mere good fortune.

3. Coarse rice for food, water to drink, and the bended arm for a pillow — happiness may be enjoyed even in these. Without virtue, riches and honor seem to me like a passing cloud.

4. A wise and good man was Hooi. A piece of bamboo was his dish, a cocoa-nut his cup, his dwelling a miserable shed. Men could not sustain the sight of his wretchedness; but Hooi did not change the serenity of his mind. A wise and good man was Hooi.

5. Chee-koong said, Were they discontented? The sage replies, They sought and obtained complete virtue;—how then could they be discontented?

6. Chee says, Yaou is the man who, in torn clothes or common apparel, sits with those dressed in furred robes without feeling shame.

7. To worship at a temple not your own is mere flattery.

8. Chee says, grieve not that men know not you; grieve that you are ignorant of men.

9. How can a man remain concealed! How can a man remain concealed! Have no friend unlike yourself.

10. Chee-Yaou enquired respecting filial piety. Chee says, the filial piety of the present day is esteemed merely ability to nourish a parent. This care is extended to a dog or a horse. Every domestic animal can obtain food. Beside veneration, what is the difference?

11. Chee entered the great temple, frequently enquiring about things. One said, who says that the son of the Chou man understands propriety? In the great temple he is constantly asking questions. Chee heard and replied—“This is propriety.”

12. Choy-ee slept in the afternoon. Chee says, rotten wood is unfit for carving: a dirty wall cannot receive a beautiful color. To Ee what advice can I give?

13. A man’s transgression partakes of the nature of his company. Having knowledge, to apply it; not having knowledge, to confess your ignorance; this is real knowledge.

14. Chee says, to sit in silence and recall past ideas, to study and feel no anxiety, to instruct men without weariness; —have I this ability within me?

15. In forming a mountain, were I to stop when one basket of earth is lacking, I actually stop; and in the same manner were I to add to the level ground though but one basket of earth
daily, I really go forward.

16. A soldier of the kingdom of Ci lost his buckler; and having sought after it a long time in vain; he comforted himself with this reflection; "A soldier has lost his buckler, but a soldier of our camp will find it; he will use it."

17. The wise man never hastens, neither in his studies nor his words; he is sometimes, as it were, mute; but when it concerns him to act and practice virtue, he, as I may say, precipitates all.

18. The truly wise man speaks little; he is little eloquent. I see not that eloquence can be of very great use to him.

19. Silence is absolutely necessary to the wise man. Great speeches, elaborate discourses, pieces of eloquence, ought to be a language unknown to him; his actions ought to be his language. As for me, I would never speak more. Heaven speaks, but what language does it use to preach to men, that there is a sovereign principle from which all things depend; a sovereign principle which makes them to act and move? Its motion is its language; it reduces the seasons to their time; it agitates nature; it makes it produce. This silence is eloquent.\(^\text{15}\)

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\(^\text{15}\) This last of the Marshman translations which Thoreau inserted into *The Dial* is now considered to have been a Taoist inclusion in the Confucian *Analects*, so we cannot ever allege that Thoreau had no contact whatever with Taoism.
WE should read history as little critically as we consider the
landscape, and be more interested by the atmospheric tints, and
various lights and shades which the intervening spaces create,
than by its groundwork and composition. It is the morning now
turned evening and seen in, the west, — the same sun, but a new
light and atmosphere. Its beauty is like the sunset; not a fresco
painting on a wall, flat and bounded, but atmospheric and roving
or free. In reality history fluctuates as the face of the
landscape from morning to evening. What is of moment is its hue
and color. Time hides no treasures; we want not its then but its
now. We do not complain that the mountains in the horizon are
blue and indistinct; they are the more like the heavens.
Of what moment are facts that can be lost, — which need to be
commemorated? The monument of death will outlast the memory of
the dead. The pyramids do not tell the tale that was confided
to them; the living fact commemorates itself. Why look in the
dark for light? Strictly speaking, the historical societies have
not recovered one fact from oblivion, but are themselves instead
of the fact that is lost. The researcher is more memorable than
the researched. The crowd stood admiring the mist, and the dim
outlines of the trees seen through it, when one of their number
advanced to explore the phenomenon, and with fresh admiration,
all eyes were turned on his dimly retreating figure. It is
astonishing with how little cooperation of the societies, the
past is remembered. Its story has indeed had a different muse
than has been assigned it. There is a good instance of the manner
in which all history began, in Alwakidi’s Arabian Chronicle.
“I was informed by Ahmed Almatin Aljorhami, who had it from
Rephaa Ebn Kais Alamiri, who had it from Saiph Ebn Fabalah
Alchatquarmi, who had it from Thabet Ebn Alkamah, who said he
was present at the action.” These fathers of history were not
anxious to preserve, but to learn the fact; and hence it was not
forgotten. Critical acumen is exerted in vain to uncover the
past; the past cannot be presented; we cannot know what we are
not. But one veil hangs over past, present, and future, and it
is the province of the historian to find out not what was, but
what is. Where a battle has been fought, you will find nothing
but the bones of men and beasts; where a battle is being fought
there are hearts beating. We will sit on a mound and muse, and
not try to make these skeletons stand on their legs attain. Does
nature remember, think you, that they were men, or not rather
that they are bones?
Ancient history has an air of antiquity; it should be more
modern. It is written as if the spectator should be thinking of
the backside of the picture on the wall, or as if the author
expected the dead would be his readers, and wished to detail to
them their own experience. Men seem anxious to accomplish
an orderly retreat through the centuries, earnestly rebuilding the
works behind, as they are battered down by the encroachments
of time; but while they loiter, they and their works both fall a
prey to the arch enemy. It has neither the venerableness of
antiquity, nor the freshness of the modern. It does as if it

Dark Ages.
would go to the beginning of things, which natural history might with reason assume to do; but consider the Universal History, and then tell us—when did burdock and plantain sprout first? It has been so written for the most part, that the times it describes are with remarkable propriety called *dark ages*. They are dark, as one has observed, because we are so in the dark about them. The sun rarely shines in history, what with the dust and confusion; and when we meet with any cheering fact which implies the presence of this luminary, we excerpt and modernize it. As when we read in the history of the Saxons, that Edwin of Northumbria “caused stakes to be fixed in the highways where he had seen a clear spring,” and “brazen dishes were chained to them, to refresh the weary sojourner, whose fatigues Edwin had himself experienced.” This is worth all Arthur’s twelve battles.

But it is fit the past should be dark; though the darkness is not so much a quality of the past, as of tradition. It is not a distance of time but a distance of relation, which makes thus dusky its memorials. What is near to the heart of this generation is fair and bright still. Greece lies outspread fair and sunshiny in floods of light, for there is the sun and day-light in her literature and art, Homer does not allow us to forget that the sun shone—nor Phidias, nor the Parthenon. Yet no era has been wholly dark, nor will we too hastily submit to the historian, and congratulate ourselves on a blaze of light. If we could pierce the obscurity of those remote years we should find it light enough; only there is not our day. — Some creatures are made to see in the dark. — There has always been the same amount of light in the world. The new and missing stars, the comets and eclipses do not affect the general illumination, for only our glasses appreciate them. The eyes of the oldest fossil remains, they tell us, indicate that the same laws of light prevailed then as now. Always the laws of light are the same, but the modes and degrees of seeing vary. The gods are partial to no era, but steadily shines their light in the heavens, while the eye of the beholder is turned to stone. There was but the eye and the sun from the first. The ages have not added a new ray to the one, nor altered a fibre of the other.

T.
Here is a review describing how Buddhism was being mis-appreciated, in the West during Thoreau’s lifetime. It is important to understand that Thoreau had no share whatever in any of the various mis-appreciations of Buddhism which are here described.

Reviewed for H_Buddhism by David R. Loy, Bunkyo University
Published by H_Buddhism in December 2003

In May this year media headlines announced the discovery that Buddhists are happier. Smaller print summarized the results of new research into the effects of meditation on brain activity, behavior, and even immune responses to flu vaccine. Richard Davidson, director of the Laboratory for Affective Neuroscience at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, and a participant in Dharamsala meetings with the Dalai Lama, used new scanning techniques to examine the brain activity of experienced meditators. MRI scanners and EEGs showed dramatic changes in brain function, including high activity in brain centers associated with positive emotions. Similar results were also achieved with new meditators. Although still provisional, these findings led the philosopher Owen Flanagan to comment in New Scientist magazine:

The most reasonable hypothesis is that there’s something about conscientious Buddhist practice that results in the kind of happiness we all seek.16

Such scientific results show a rather different perception of Buddhism than the understanding that horrified Westerners throughout most of the nineteenth century. Buddhism today is usually seen as a kind of pragmatic therapy that cures or reduces suffering, but from approximately 1820 to 1890 –the period of focus for Droit’s book– Europe was haunted by the nightmare of an alternative religion that denied existence and recommended annihilation. THE CULT OF NOTHINGNESS: THE PHILOSOPHERS AND THE BUDDHA summarizes and analyzes the history of this (mis)understanding. He concludes that it had less to do with the rudimentary state of Buddhist studies during that period than with Europe’s fears about its own incipient nihilism, which would later ripen into the horrors of the twentieth century. “Thinking they were talking about the Buddha, Westerners were talking about themselves” (p. 21).

At the end of the eighteenth century, new translations of Indian texts were exciting European intellectuals, giving rise to hopes for another Renaissance greater than the one that had resulted from the late-medieval rediscovery of Greek texts. But it never happened. About 1820, when scholarly research first clarified

the distinction from Brahmanism, “Buddhism” became constructed as a religion that, amazingly, worshiped nothingness, and European commentators reacted in horror. In their descriptions of nirvana, earlier scholars such as Francis Buchanan and Henry Thomas Colebrooke had been careful to deny that it was equivalent to annihilation. Their influence, however, was overwhelmed by the philosophical impact of Hegel and later the unsurpassed authority of Eugene Burnouf at the Collège de France. Hegel established the strong link with Nichts that would endure throughout most of the century. Instead of benefiting from the best scholarship then available, he relied on earlier sources such as de Guignes and the Abbots Banier and Grosier, evidently because their views of Buddhism fit better into his equation of pure Being with pure Nothingness. In Hegel’s system this equation signified the advent of interiority, a “lack of determination” that was not really atheistic or nihilistic in the modern sense—more like the negative theology of Rhineland mystics such as Meister Eckhart. Later, Burnouf’s Introduction à l’histoire du bouddhisme indien (1844) was immensely influential because it provided the first rigorous study of the Buddha’s teachings, thus taking Buddhist studies to a new level of sophistication, but one which firmly established the nihilistic specter: despite making cautious qualifications due to the West’s still-limited knowledge, Burnouf did not hesitate to identify nirvana with total annihilation.

Burnouf’s scholarly objectivity was soon supplemented by apologetic and missionary ardor. Catholic preachers such as Ozanam declared that, behind his serene mask, the Buddha was Satan himself in a new incarnation. The Buddha’s cult of nothingness aroused in Felix Neve’s soul the need to liberate Buddhist peoples from their errors, weakness, and immobility. Victor Cousins, who played a major role in establishing philosophical education in mid-century France, and who proclaimed that Sanskrit texts were worthy of Western philosophical attention, nevertheless followed Burnouf in reacting against the Buddhist system: it was not only an anti-religion but a counterworld, a threat to order. His follower Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire took a further step and denied that such a “deplorable and absurd” faith could be philosophically relevant, even asking whether such a strange phenomenon meant that human nature in India “is still the same nature we feel within ourselves,” since Buddhism’s “gloomy meaning” led only to “moral suicide” (pp. 122-23). Ernest Renan called Buddha “the atheistic Christ of India” and attacked his revolting “Gospel of Nihilism” (p. 120).

Schopenhauer discovered in Buddhism many of his favorite themes—renunciation, compassion, negation of the will to live—but relatively late, so, according to Droit, Buddhism had no significant influence on his system. However, his annexation of Buddhist principles brought the Buddhist challenge back to Europe, from missionary conversion to counteracting home-grown nihilism. Ever the philosopher, however, Schopenhauer was careful to say that nirvana could only be nothingness “for us,” since the standpoint of our own existence does not allow us to say anything more about it. Would that other commentators had
been so sensible!
The nihilistic understanding of Buddhism had a significant impact on Arthur de Gobineau’s Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races (1853), which would become enormously influential for the Nazis and other twentieth-century racists. For Gobineau, humanity was rushing to perdition and nothingness due to degeneration caused by intermingling of the races. He viewed Buddhism as the effort of an inferior people to overthrow the racially superior Aryan Brahmins. The failure of this attempt – the fact that Buddhism was largely eliminated from India – was somewhat inconsistent with his own historical pessimism, which accepted the inevitability of decline; but it may have encouraged the Nazis to attempt their own program of extermination for the sake of racial purity. Nietzsche, too, accepted the view of Buddhism as aspiring to nothingness, although for him it was the similarity with Christianity, not the difference, that was the problem. Despite the undoubted value of Buddhism as a moderate and hygienic way of living that denied transcendence and viewed the world from more rigorous psychological and physiological perspectives, in the end the choice is between Buddhism, Schopenhauer, India, weakness, and peaceful inactivity, or strength, conflict, Europe, pain, and tragedy. Buddhism’s spread in Europe was unfortunate, Nietzsche believed, since “Nostalgia for nothingness is the negation of tragic wisdom, its opposite” (p. 148).

About 1864 the annihilationist view of Buddhism began to decline. Carl F. Koppen’s THE RELIGION OF THE BUDDHA (2 vols., 1857-59), very influential in the 1860s and 70s, emphasized the Buddha’s ethical revolution, which affirmed a human deliverance and proclaimed human equality. Although literary fascination with the worship of nothingness continued, by the early 1890s emphasis was on Buddhism as a path of knowledge and wisdom, a “neo-Buddhist” view attacked by a still-active Burnouf. In place of Christian apologetics, there was a growing tendency to think of different religions as converging, as Vivekananda argued at the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago (although elsewhere he imagined Buddhism as responsible for various spiritual degenerations). As Droit summarizes: “The cult of nothingness was ending…. The time of wars was soon to come. Another cult of nothingness was beginning” (p. 160). He argues persuasively that the issue at stake was always Europe’s own identity. With “Buddhism” Europe constructed a mirror in which it dared not recognize itself. (Here perhaps Droit could have strengthened his case with some more reflections on Darwin, the death of God, and Europe’s own hopes for/fears of a religion of Reason without transcendence.) When the question of the Buddha’s atheism arose, it was the atheism of the Europeans that was really in question. No one really believed, and almost no one ever said, that the beliefs of the Buddhists on the other side of the world were going to come and wreak havoc among the souls of the West. It was not a conversion, a corrosion, a “contamination” of any kind that was threatening, coming from outside. It was in Europe itself that the enemy, and the danger, were to be found. (p. 163) This was not only a threat to the foundations of one’s personal
belief-system, but a challenge that threatened to undermine social order. “The nothingness of order corresponded to the nothingness of being. Once again, this nothingness was not the equivalent of a pure and simple absence. It was supposed to undo and disorganize. It was dangerous because it shattered, it leveled, it instigated anarchy” (p. 165).

Tragically, the decline of this nihilistic view of Buddhism was accompanied by the unprecedented triumph of a more active nihilism in the following century, with well over a hundred million war-dead, two-thirds of them civilian non-combatants. Today, to say it again, Buddhism for us has become a pragmatic and non-metaphysical kind of therapy that reduces suffering. But how confident should we be about this view, given how well it reflects the postmodern West’s own pragmatic, anti-metaphysical, therapeutic self-understanding? If we cannot leap over our own shadow, must we resign ourselves to “misinterpretations” of Buddhism that always reflect our own prejudices? Or is “Buddhism” better understood as the still-continuing history of its interpretations? Interpretations that must reflect our prejudices because they reflect our own needs.

The Cult of Nothingness: The Philosophers and the Buddha concludes with a 65-page chronological bibliography of Western works on Buddhism, most of it derived from a more extensive (15,073 titles!) bibliography compiled by Shinsho Hanayama and published by the Hokuseido Press in 1961. Droit claims that his own bibliography is almost complete for 1638-1860, omitting only more specialized works on archaeology, philology, etc. for 1860-1890. The translation is clear and fluent, although I have not compared it with the French original. And, although not a specialist in this field, I do not doubt that this work is indispensable to anyone studying the history of the Western reception of Buddhism.
In South China, the newly self-baptized “Christian” Hung Hsiu Ch’üan 洪秀全 and those of his persuasion were destroying the tablets to Confucius in the village schools in which they were teaching, and were of course as a consequence of this being terminated, whereupon he and his buddy Feng Yin-shan 冯音山 went off together on a preaching mission into the province of Kwangsi. Hung eventually would make himself the T’ien-wang, the Heavenly King, of the Chinese Christian movement that had been nurtured there by Feng, while Feng would remain the movement’s Nan-wang or Southern King and general of the advance guard. Setting out to do good, they would indeed do well, including the accumulation of quite sizeable harems.17

In “Character” in the collection of essays which Waldo Emerson published in this year, he commented that he found it more credible “that one man should know heaven, as the Chinese say, than that so many men should know the world” (whatever that may mean), and then went on to cite the context in which he had discovered this supposedly Chinese “knows heaven” idiom:

“The virtuous prince confronts the gods, without any misgiving. He waits a hundred ages till a sage comes, and does not doubt. He who confronts the gods, without any misgiving, knows heaven; he who waits a hundred ages until a sage comes, without doubting, knows men. Hence the virtuous prince moves, and for ages shows empire the way.”

In this year appeared two German versions of the TAO TÊ CHING of Lao-tze 道德經 that, according to the Reverend James Legge, were very different from each other.

(We don’t know that Henry Thoreau came across either of these.)

17. The harems did not constitute the offensiveness which the white missionaries to China found so utterly offensive. The abomination committed by the Chinese Christian movement was that instead of remaining under the paternal guidance of the kindly white fathers from the other side of the planet, they began to provide themselves with yellow ministers of the gospel of their own local manufacture. You see, white overlordship wasn’t an incidental and temporary artifact of the missionary position, it was its essential element. It wasn’t the Apostles’ Creed which was the whole banana, it wasn’t the Lord’s Prayer which was the whole banana, it wasn’t the Sermon on the Mount which was the whole banana, and it wasn’t who got or who didn’t get a harem which was the whole banana. The missionary position, which is to say, white overlordship, was the whole banana.
January 13, Tuesday: Waldo Emerson delivered before the Lowell Mechanics’ Association in Lowell the first lecture of his 7-lecture “Representative Men” series, entitled “Uses of Great Men.” He would receive $175 for the series (1 of the 7 lecture dates is unknown). This 1st lecture contained the following remark:

We cannot read Plutarch, without a tingling of the blood; and I accept the saying of the Chinese Mencius: “A sage is the instructor of a hundred ages. When the manners of Loo are heard of, the stupid become intelligent, and the wavering, determined.”
January 26, Thursday: The Daily Hartford Courant carried the following editorial about the deranged dentist and recreational drug user Horace Wells who had committed suicide in prison:

*The Late Horace Wells. The death of this gentleman has caused profound and melancholy sensation in the community. He was an upright and estimable man, and had the esteem of all who knew him, of undoubted piety, and simplicity and generosity of character.*

*Bronson Alcott* wrote about *Henry Thoreau* in his journal (*JOURNALS. Boston MA: Little, Brown, 1938, page 201)*:

*Heard Thoreau’s lecture before the Lyceum on the relation of the individual to the State – an admirable statement of the rights of the individual to self-government, and an attentive audience. His allusions to the Mexican War, to Mr. Hoar’s expulsion from Carolina, his own imprisonment in Concord Jail for refusal to pay his tax, Mr. Hoar’s payment of mine when taken to prison for a similar refusal, were all pertinent, well considered, and reasoned. I took great pleasure in this deed of Thoreau’s.*

Thoreau delivered “The Rights and Duties of the Individual in Relation to Government”:

*[W]hat is once well done is done forever…. [T]he world is not governed by policy and expediency…. [F]or thinkers, and those who legislate for all time, he [Daniel Webster] never once glances at the subject [of government].
We do not know whether the lecture at this early point already contained the famous words:

“RESISTANCE TO CIVIL GOVERNMENT”: After all, the practical reason why, when the power is once in the hands of the people, a majority are permitted, and for a long period continue, to rule, is not because they are most likely to be in the right, nor because this seems fairest to the minority, but because they are physically the strongest. But a government in which the majority rule in all cases cannot be based on justice, even as far as men understand it. Can there not be a government in which majorities do not virtually decide right and wrong, but conscience? – in which majorities decide only those questions to which the rule of expediency is applicable? Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience, then? I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right. It is truly enough said that a corporation has no conscience; but a corporation of conscientious men is a corporation with a conscience. Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice. A common and natural result of an undue respect for law is, that you may see a file of soldiers, colonel, captain, corporal, privates, powder-monkeys, and all, marching in admirable order over hill and dale to the wars, against their wills, ay, against their common sense and consciences, which makes it very steep marching indeed, and produces a palpitation of the heart. They have no doubt that it is a damnable business in which they are concerned; they are all peaceably inclined. Now, what are they? Men at all? or small movable forts and magazines, at the service of some unscrupulous man in power? Visit the Navy Yard, and behold a marine, such a man as an American government can make, or such as it can make a man with its black arts – a mere shadow and reminiscence of humanity, a man laid out alive and standing, and already, as one may say, buried under arms with funeral accompaniments, though it may be

“Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corse to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O’er the grave where our hero we buried.”
The mass of men serve the state thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies. They are the standing army, and the militia, jailers, constables, posse comitatus, etc. In most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense; but they put themselves on a level with wood and earth and stones; and wooden men can perhaps be manufactured that will serve the purpose as well. Such command no more respect than men of straw or a lump of dirt. They have the same sort of worth only as horses and dogs. Yet such as these even are commonly esteemed good citizens. Others, as most legislators, politicians, lawyers, ministers, and office-holders, serve the state chiefly with their heads; and, as they rarely make any moral distinctions, they are as likely to serve the devil, without intending it, as God. A very few, as heroes, patriots, martyrs, reformers in the great sense, and men, serve the state with their consciences also, and so necessarily resist it for the most part; and they are commonly treated as enemies by it. A wise man will only be useful as a man, and will not submit to be “clay,” and “stop a hole to keep the wind away,” but leave that office to his dust at least:—

“I am too high-born to be propertied,
To be a secondary at control,
Or useful serving-man and instrument
To any sovereign state throughout the world.”
### Lecture

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<td>February 16, Wednesday, 1848, at 7PM</td>
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18. From Bradley P. Dean and Ronald Wesley Hoag’s “Thoreau’s Lectures before WALDEN: An Annotated Calendar.”
WAS THOREAU A CHINAMAN?

Narrative of Event:
No minutes were kept during the Concord Lyceum’s 1847-48 season; however, A.G. Fay, the secretary, did include “H D Thoreau of Concord” in a list of nine speakers who “During the Season … lectured before the Lyceum” (THE MASSACHUSETTS LYCEUM DURING THE AMERICAN RENAISSANCE, page 163). In part to answer his townspeople’s curiosity about why he had spent a night in jail rather than pay his poll taxes, Thoreau pulled together his thoughts on the relation of the individual to the state into a lecture that he delivered in Concord on 26 January 1848. He lectured at the Concord Lyceum on the same general topic again on 16 February, although the scant evidence we have suggests that the two lectures were considerably different from one another.

Advertisements, Reviews, and Responses:
In his diary entry of 26 January 1848, Alcott wrote:

Heard Thoreau’s lecture before the Lyceum on the relation of the individual to the State — an admirable statement of the rights of the individual to self-government, and an attentive audience.

His allusions to the Mexican War, to Mr. Hoar’s expulsion from Carolina, his own imprisonment in Concord Jail for refusal to pay his tax, Mr. Hoar’s payment of mine when taken to prison for a similar refusal, were all pertinent, well considered, and reasoned.

I took great pleasure in this deed of Thoreau’s.

Description of Topic:
Alcott’s reference to Thoreau’s allusions in this early lecture version of what was to become “Civil Disobedience” indicate that Thoreau included in this lecture at least some topics (for instance, Samuel Hoar’s expulsion from South Carolina and payment of Alcott’s taxes) that he removed during the three weeks intervening between this version of the lecture and the one he delivered on 16 February. Given the probable length of the lecture (about fifty-five handwritten pages), the brief time Thoreau had between deliveries, and the relative paucity of early-draft manuscript leaves, we can assume that substantial portions of this lecture remained in Thoreau’s evolving lecture draft and were published in mid-May 1849, less than four months after this delivery of the lecture.

Quotations Used:
It has been pointed out by Hongbo Tan that although it was in this material that Thoreau would first insert a segment of the translation of 96 excerpts from Confucian materials which he had made out of M.J. Pauthier’s CONFUCIUS ET MENCIUS, we do not know that quotation was already in the lecture as he delivered it as of this date since no manuscript of the lecture itself survives. All we know is that the translation was in the text as it would be published by Elizabeth Palmer Peabody published on May 14, 1849 as Article X of her AESTHETIC PAPERS.

YOUR GARDEN-VARIETY ACADEMIC HISTORIAN INVITES YOU TO CLIMB ABOARD A HOVERING TIME MACHINE TO SKIM IN METATIME BACK ACROSS THE GEOLOGY OF OUR PAST TIMESLICES, WHILE OFFERING UP A GARDEN VARIETY OF COGENT ASSESSMENTS OF OUR PROGRESSION.

What a load of crap! You should refuse this helicopterish overview of the historical past, for in the real world things happen only as they happen. What this sort writes amounts, like mere “science fiction,” merely to “history fiction”: it’s not worth your attention.
March 31, Saturday: Here is the 1st known interpretation of the hound/horse/turtledove parable of Henry Thoreau as it was offered by an anonymous newspaper correspondent far in advance of the publication of WALDEN:

**WALDEN:** In any weather, at any hour of the day or night, I have been anxious to improve the nick of time, and notch it on my stick too; to stand on the meeting of two eternities, the past and future, which is precisely the present moment; to toe that line. You will pardon some obscurities, for there are more secrets in my trade than in most men’s, and yet not voluntarily kept, but inseparable from its very nature. I would gladly tell all that I know about it, and never paint “No Admittance” on my gate.

I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtle-dove, and am still on their trail. Many are the travellers I have spoken concerning them, describing their tracks and what calls they answered to. I have met one or two who had heard the hound, and the tramp of the horse, and even seen the dove disappear behind a cloud, and they seemed as anxious to recover them as if they had lost them themselves.

To anticipate, not the sunrise and the dawn merely, but, if possible, Nature herself! How many mornings, summer and winter, before yet any neighbor was stirring about his business, have I been about mine! No doubt many of my townsmen have met me returning from this enterprise, farmers starting for Boston in the twilight, or woodchoppers going to their work. It is true, I never assisted the sun materially in his rising, but, doubt not, it was of the last importance only to be present at it.
We have a record in the Portland Transcript, page 5 column 4 and page 6 columns 1 and 2, of how one newspaper correspondent received the parable of the hound, the bay horse, and the turtle-dove. What this auditor had jotted down during the lecture of March 21 was:

It had been his wish, previous to adopting his present mode of life, ever to catch the nick of time, to make his mark on the passing moment. He had wished to stand on the meeting of two eternities, the past and the future, and gathering wisdom from the one, push forward to the other.

This is utterly fascinating because we know that the parable had already reached virtually its final form two years before, as of 1847, so we know that the deviations from its canonical form found in this account are entirely due to the receiver’s difficulties of reception of such unacceptable and utterly unanticipated ideas. Note that the receiver has cast the attitude being expressed into the past tense, interpreting the lecturer as if he had been attempting to describe a previous, unacceptable, replaced attitude “previous to adopting his present mode of life,” as subsequently altered by things he learned during his solitude in the woods. Since the parable as it existed in 1847 most definitely suggested no such thing, it is clear that this supposition was the newspaper person’s attempt to distance himself or herself from what Thoreau was offering. If this were a mere description of past attitudes then it would not need to be seriously thought about by the audience, for it would not be being seriously recommended to them by the speaker! And notice how closely the terminology that was recorded in this contemporary newspaper maps over the prevailing un-Thoreauvian sentiments of what is known as “progressivism”: notice, for instance, how close “make his mark on the passing moment” is to civilization’s preferred tombstone “leave his mark on the world” and how close “push forward to the other” is to civilization’s wet dream “march forward into the future”! This is fantasization being passed off as journalism.

In A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS Thoreau had quoted Mencius, Book XI, 1-4:

A WEEK: Mencius says: “If one loses a fowl or a dog, he knows well how to seek them again; if one loses the sentiments of his heart, he does not know how to seek them again.... The duties of practical philosophy consist only in seeking after those sentiments of the heart which we have lost; that is all.”

THOREAU AND CHINA

PEOPLE OF A WEEK

MENCUS
On page 879 of the Reverend James Legge’s THE FOUR BOOKS, this is translated as:

Mencius said, “Benevolence is man’s mind, and righteousness is man’s path.

“How lamentable it is to neglect the path and not pursue it, to lose this mind and not know to seek it again!

“When men’s fowls and dogs are lost, they know to seek for them again, but they lose their mind, and do not know to seek for it.

“The great end of learning is nothing else but to seek for the lost mind.”

I would gather from this reference to “a fowl or a dog” in what is officially Thoreau’s 1st book, A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS, that interpretations of his references to a hound and a turtledove in what is officially his 2d book, WALDEN, must be somewhat restricted. They must be restricted in a manner so as not to conflict with his previous reference to the animal totems of Mencius, who used them to refer to “the sentiments of the heart.” (However, an interpretation of the hound as problematic hounding recollections, and of the turtledove as problematic hopeful anticipations, is well within this restrictive stipulation.)

Please note that according to James Lyndon Shanley’s THE MAKING OF WALDEN, WITH THE TEXT OF THE FIRST VERSION (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1957), page 113, in the first preserved MS variant of Thoreau’s text he had been using dashes: “I long ago lost a hound — and a turtle dove and a bay horse — and am still on their trail.”
May 14, Monday: Prussia ordered its deputies removed from the German National Assembly.

A Revolutionary Executive Committee for Baden was established in Karlsruhe and Rastatt under Chairman Lorenz Brentano.

When Franz Liszt arrived at his home in Weimar he found Richard Wagner and decided to help his fellow composer hide from the authorities. Liszt would organize a false identity and an escape to Switzerland and Paris. Before departing, Wagner would be able to hear Liszt conduct a rehearsal of Tannhäuser, scheduled to be performed on May 20th. Wagner would reminisce, “I was astounded to recognize in him my second self....”

Henry Thoreau’s “Resistance to Civil Government” and, it has been alleged, Charles V. Kraitsir’s language theories, appeared in the ÆSTHETIC PAPERS of Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, and to some Westerners at that time, “go-ahead” Americans,

“Resistance to Civil Government”: If a state is governed by the principles of reason, poverty and misery are subjects of shame; if a state is not governed by the principles of reason, riches and honors are the subjects of shame.

20. I am at a loss for how to substantiate this allegation unless it refers to the article “Language. — The Editor” that occupies pages 214-223.
Confucius’s reasoning (straight out of the Analects or LUN-YÜ, one of The Four Books) was not seeming particularly persuasive:

I think that Mr. Thoreau has got into better company than he deserves and doubt if there is much in him.

Better company than he deserved:
Elizabeth Palmer Peabody (in 1878)

But there were in addition those were impressed, for the Boston Daily Chronotype, edited by Elizur Wright, Jr., would comment on its page 2 that ÆSTHETIC PAPERS contained an essay by H.D. Thoreau on resistance to civil government which was

a very interesting paper, and quite radical — beautifully so.

Also appearing in ÆSTHETIC PAPERS was the Reverend Samson Reed’s “Genius.”
Nathaniel Hawthorne took “Main Street” (and several other stories) out of the future editions of his *The Scarlet Letter*, and included it in his sister-in-law’s volume. (He definitely knew how to recycle: he would also include this story “Main Street” in his 1852 volume *The Snow-Image and Other Twice-Told Tales.*)
THE SCARLET LETTER: A portion of his facts, by-the-by, did me good service in the preparation of the article entitled “MAIN STREET,” included in the present volume. The remainder may perhaps be applied to purposes equally valuable hereafter, or not impossibly may be worked up, so far as they go, into a regular history of Salem, should my veneration for the natal soil ever impel me to so pious a task. Meanwhile, they shall be at the command of any gentleman, inclined and competent, to take the unprofitable labour off my hands. As a final disposition I contemplate depositing them with the Essex Historical Society. But the object that most drew my attention to the mysterious package was a certain affair of fine red cloth, much worn and faded. There were traces about it of gold embroidery, which, however, was greatly frayed and defaced, so that none, or very little, of the glitter was left. It had been wrought, as was easy to perceive, with wonderful skill of needlework; and the stitch (as I am assured by ladies conversant with such mysteries) gives evidence of a now forgotten art, not to be discovered even by the process of picking out the threads. This rag of scarlet cloth –for time, and wear, and a sacrilegious moth had reduced it to little other than a rag– on careful examination, assumed the shape of a letter.
According to J. Lyndon Shanley’s *The Making of Walden* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1957, page 30), it was undoubtedly in the 1850-1851 period that Henry Thoreau went back through his *Walden* manuscript and interlined in Draft B and Draft C all or most of the quotations from Chinese and Indian sources.

At this point the first word of the manuscript became the word “When,” the word which would eventually be referred to, by Professor Robert M. Thorson, as “a white lie”:

> **Walden**: When I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone, in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which I had built myself, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, and earned my living by the labor of my hands only. I lived there two years and two months. At present I am a sojourner in civilized life again.

The very first word in *Walden* is a white lie. “When I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone, in the woods.” In *Revising Mythologies*, Stephen Adams and Donald Ross build on the previous work of Lyndon Shanley to document—in excruciating detail—that the bulk of the final version of *Walden* was written after Thoreau left the pond, with “most of the important changes occurring after 1852.” They further contend that the book has two separate narratives, the first being the “false economics of Concord” leading to “spiritual anesthesia,” and the second being the “basic poetic metaphor” of organicism. For my purposes, this is a fancy way of saying that *Walden*—Part I was early and has little to do with natural science. And that *Walden*—Part II is late and has everything to do with it.

The essayist who wrote Part I lived at the pond and spent much of his time there writing *A Week* and other works with neoclassical and transcendental themes. The field scientist who wrote Part II lived with his parents in town, sojourned widely over miles of territory each day, and—in early 1852—decided to use his observations of natural phenomena to upgrade his dormant *Walden* manuscript, most of which was then social critique. During this later stage, Thoreau’s modus operandi was to walk away from the village each afternoon, move outward into nature in whatever direction his inner compass suggested, and then drench himself in outdoor sensations until something caught.

**Timeline of Walden**

**1850**
his attention. At that point, his intellect would automatically engage, scientifically at first, and then poetically. On those days, Walden Pond was only one of many bright stars in the broader galaxy of his sojourning space. But on those nights and subsequent mornings — when sitting at his desk in his garret on Main Street — the pond became a potent literary black hole that drew everything inward and downward from his broader experience, concentrating the results.

This is “reaching” a little bit, I fear, for rather than categorizing that 1st word “When” as a lie, we might prefer to say that at the point at which Thoreau changed the initial sentence of his Draft B to begin with the word “When” — sometime before or during Summer 1849 — the bulk of the pages of the manuscript had in fact been Draft A with some Draft B additions, and Draft A dates at the very latest to September 1847 while Thoreau was moving back from his shanty at the pond, into the loft room of the Thoreau family’s boardinghouse in town. In other words, when it was written in pencil on this sheet of paper, it had been in no sense anything but the literal truth. We might as well add that the sentence “I lived there two years and two months” was another such “white lie,” because in very fact the author had lived there two years, two months, and two days. Rather than categorize this word “When” as a lie, therefore, we might better categorize it as something which through oversight would later fall through the cracks, neglecting to get itself updated as the manuscript grew and grew under Thoreau’s nurturing hand. (I am a bit sensitized to this word “lie” because Professor Walter Harding in his manifestly defective annotated edition of WALDEN had considered Thoreau’s words “a mile from any neighbor” to have constituted a material falsehood because — without offering any corroboration whatever — he was opinioning as of 1995 something new that no commentator however discerning had ever before noticed, that the Irish families of the laborers who had created the railroad embankments and tracks must have still been in residence in their shanties alongside the tracks within conversational hearing of Thoreau’s shanty.)

US Navy Lieutenant Charles Henry Davis’s “A Memoir upon the Geological Action of Tidal and Other Currents of the Ocean” saw publication in the MEMOIRS OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES (Boston), 4th series, part I (1849-1850), on pages 117-156:

**CAPE COD:** The light-house keeper said that when the wind blowed strong on to the shore, the waves ate fast into the bank, but when it blowed off they took no sand away; for in the former case the wind heaped up the surface of the water next to the beach, and to preserve its equilibrium a strong undertow immediately set back again into the sea which carried with it the sand and whatever else was in the way, and left the beach hard to walk on; but in the latter case the undertow set on, and carried the sand with it, so that it was particularly difficult for shipwrecked men to get to land when the wind blowed on to the shore, but easier when it blowed off. This undertow, meeting the next surface wave on the bar which itself has made, forms part of the dam over which the latter breaks, as over an upright wall. The sea thus plays with the land holding a sand-bar in its mouth awhile before it swallows it, as a cat plays with a mouse; but the fatal gripe is sure to come at last. The sea sends its rapacious east wind to rob the land, but before the former has got far with its prey, the land sends its honest west wind to recover some of its own. But, according to Lieutenant Davis, the forms, extent, and distribution of sand-bars and banks are principally determined, not by winds and waves, but by tides.
Was Thoreau a Chinaman?

“Magisterial History” is fantasizing; History is Chronology
At the end of the journal entries for this year, Waldo Emerson listed his recent readings in Oriental materials: “Plotinus; Porphyry; Iamblichus; Proclus; Rig Veda Sanhita; Vishnu Purana; Confucius; Koran; Ali ben Abu Talib; Saadi.”
October 31, Friday: Benjamin B. Wiley wrote from Providence, Rhode Island to Henry Thoreau in Concord, asking, among other things, about mystical philosophy in general and Confucius in particular:

Providence Oct 31, 1856
H D Thoreau
Concord
Dear Sir
In Worcester I saw Theo Brown who was very glad to hear from you. In the evening we went together to see Harry Blake. Both these gentlemen were well. Mr Blake is an enthusiast in matters which the world passes by as of little account. Since I returned here I have taken two morning walks with Chas Newcomb. He suggested that he would like to walk to the White Mountains with me some time and it may yet be done. He walks daily some miles and seems to be in pretty good health. He says he would like to visit Concord, but named no time for that purpose.
I am anxious to know a little more of Confucius. Can you briefly, so that it will not take too much of your time, write me his views in regard to Creation, Immortality, man's preexistence if he speaks of it, and generally anything relating to man's Origin, Purpose, & Destiny.
I would also like much to know the names of the leading Hindoo philosophers and their ideas on the preceding topics
Is Swedenborg a valuable man to you, and if so, why?
Do not think me too presuming because I ask you these questions. I am an inquirer (as indeed I always hope to be) and have to avail myself of the wisdom of those who have commenced life before me. Though I cannot hope that my existence will be of any direct benefit to you, yet I cannot fail to exert influence somewhere, and that it may be of an elevating character, I wish to make my own the experience of collective humanity.
I shall leave here next Thursday Nov 6 for Chicago. My address there will be care of Strong & Wiley. I shall undoubtedly spend the winter there and how much longer I shall stay I cannot tell.
I suggested brevity in your remarks about the views of those philosophers. This was entirely for your convenience. I shall read appreciatively and most attentively whatever you find time to write.
Yours truly
B. B. Wiley
December 12, Friday: Henry Thoreau responded to an inquiry by Benjamin B. Wiley of Providence, Rhode Island about Confucius by explaining what he took to be the core of the teaching and providing Wiley with three of his own translations from *Confucius et Mencius. Les quatre livres de philosophie morale et politique de la Chine, traduit du chinois par M.J. Pauthier*.

Concord Dec 12 ‘56

Dear Sir, I but recently returned from New Jersey after an absence of a little over a month, and found your letter awaiting me. I am glad to hear that you have walked with Newcomb, though I fear that you will not have many more opportunities to do so. I have no doubt that in his company you would long find yourself, if not on those White Mountains you speak of, yet on some equally high, though not laid down in the geographies.

It is refreshing to hear of your earnest purposes with respect to your culture, & I can send you no better wish, than that they may not be thwarted by the cares and temptations of life. Depend on it, now is the accepted time, & probably you will never find yourself better disposed or freer to attend to your culture than at this moment. When they who inspire us with the idea are ready, shall not we be ready also?

I do not now remember anything which Confucius has said directly respecting man’s “origin, purpose, and destiny”. He was more practical than that. He is full of wisdom applied to human relations — to the private Life — the Family — Government &c. It is remarkable that according to his own account the sum & substance of his teaching is, as you know, to Do as you would be done by. He also said — (I translate from the French) Conduct yourself suitably toward the persons of your family, then you will be able to instruct and to direct a nation of men.

“To nourish ones self with a little rice, to drink water, to have only his bended arm to support his head, is a state which has also its satisfaction. To be rich and honored by iniquitous means, is for me as the floating cloud which passes.”

“As soon as a child is born we must respect its faculties; the knowledge which will come to it by & by does not resemble at all its present state. If it arrives at the age of 40 or 50 years, without having learned any thing, it is no more worthy of any respect.”

This last, I think, will speak to your condition. But at this rate I might fill many letters.
Our acquaintance with the ancient Hindoos is not at all personal. The few names that can be relied on are very shadowy. It is however tangible works that we know. The best I think of are the Bhagvat-Geeta (an episode in an ancient heroic poem called the Mahabaratata) — the Vedas — The Vishnu Purana — The Institutes of Menu — &c

I cannot say that Swedenborg has been directly & practically valuable to me, for I have not been a reader of him, except to a slight extent: — but I have the highest regard for him and trust that I shall read all his works in some world or other. He had a wonderful knowledge of our interior & spiritual life — though his illuminations are occasionally blurred by trivialities. He comes nearer to answering, or attempting to answer, literally, your questions concerning man’s origin purpose & destiny, than any of the worthies I have referred to. But I think that this is not altogether a recommendation; since such an answer to these questions cannot be discovered, any more than perpetual motion, for which no reward is now offered. The noblest man it is, methinks, that knows, & by his life suggests, the most about these things. Crack away at these nuts however as long as you can — the very exercise will ennoble you — & you may get something better than the answer you expect —

Yrs
Henry D. Thoreau

The translations which Thoreau provided to Wiley from his M.J. Pauthier translations in his Commonplace Book are:

He also said — (I translate from the French) Conduct yourself suitably toward the persons of your family, then you will be able to instruct and to direct a nation of men.”

[23.6] “Conduct yourself suitably toward the persons of your family, then you will be able to instruct & to direct a nation of men.” Thseng-tseu in spirit of C.

“To nourish oneself with a little rice, to drink water, to have only his bended arm to support his head, is a state which has also its satisfaction. To be rich and honored by iniquitous means, is for me as the floating cloud which passes.”

[108.15] The Philosopher C said to nourish one’s self with a little rice, to drink water, to have only his bended arm to support his head, is a state which has also its satisfaction. To be rich & honored by iniquitous means, is for me as the floating cloud which passes. C.
“As soon as a child is born we must respect its faculties; the knowledge which will come to it by & by does not resemble at all its present state. If it arrives at the age of 40 or 50 years, without having learned anything, it is no more worthy of any respect.”

[121.22] As soon as a child is born (it is necessary to) we should respect its faculties; the knowledge which will come to it (in course) does not resemble at all its present state. If it arrives at the age of forty or fifty years, without having learned anything, it is no more worthy of any respect.

Dec 12th Wonderful — wonderful is our life and that of our companions—! That there should be such a thing as a brute animal — no human—! & that it should attain to a sort of society with our race!! Think of cats, for instance; they are neither Chinese nor Tartars—; they do not go to school nor read the Testament— Yet how near they come to doing so — how much they are like us who do so What sort of philosophers are we who know absolutely nothing of the origin and destiny of cats? At length — without having solved any of these problems, we fatten & kill & eat some of our cousins!!

As soon as the snow came, I naturally began to observe that portion of the plants that was left above the snow, not only the weeds but the withered leaves, which before had been confounded with the russet earth. Yesterday afternoon, after a misty forenoon, it began to rain by degrees, and in the course of the night more than half the snow has disappeared, revealing the ground here and there; and already the brown weeds and leaves attract me less.

This morning it is fair again.

P.M. — To Saw Mill Brook and back by Red Choke-berry Path and Walden. Large oaks in thick woods have not so many leaves on them as in pastures, methinks (?). At the wall between Saw Mill Brook Falls and Red Choke-berry Path, I see where a great many chestnut burs have been recently chewed up fine by the squirrels, to come at the nuts. The wall for half a dozen rods and the snow are covered with them. You can see where they have dug the burs out of the snow, and then sat on a rock or the wall and gnawed them in pieces. I, too, dig many burs out of the snow with my foot, and though many of these nuts are softened and discolored they have a peculiarly sweet and agreeable taste.

Yesterday morning I noticed that several people were having their pigs killed, not foreseeing the thaw. Such warm weather as this the animal heat will hardly get out before night— I saw Peter, the dexterous pig-butcher — busy in 2 or 3 places — & in the Pm I saw him with washed hands & knives in sheath—& his leather overalls drawn off — going to his solitary house on the edge of the Great Fields — carrying in the rain a piece of the pork he had slaughtered with a string put through it. Often he carries home the head, which is less prized taking his pay thus in kind—& these supplies do not come amiss to his outcast family.

I saw Lynch’s dog stealthily feeding at a half of his master’s pig which lay dressed on a wheelbarrow at the door— A little yellow brown dog — with fore feet braced on the ice — & out-stretched neck — he [swift] eagerly browsed along the edge of the meat half a foot to right & left — with incessant short & rapid snatches which brought it away as readily as if it had been pudding. He evidently knew very well that he was stealing — but made the most of his time. The little brown dog weighed a pound or 2 more afterward than before. Where is the great natural historian—? Is he a butcher or the patron of butchers? As well look for a great anthropologist among cannibals.
April 26, Sunday: Henry Thoreau wrote to Benjamin B. Wiley and attempted to explicate his parable in *Walden; Or, Life in the Woods* of the loss of the hound, horse, and turtle-dove.

**Walden**: In any weather, at any hour of the day or night, I have been anxious to improve the nick of time, and notch it on my stick too; to stand on the meeting of two eternities, the past and future, which is precisely the present moment; to toe that line. You will pardon some obscurities, for there are more secrets in my trade than in most men’s, and yet not voluntarily kept, but inseparable from its very nature. I would gladly tell all that I know about it, and never paint “No Admittance” on my gate.

I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtle-dove, and am still on their trail. Many are the travellers I have spoken concerning them, describing their tracks and what calls they answered to. I have met one or two who had heard the hound, and the tramp of the horse, and even seen the dove disappear behind a cloud, and they seemed as anxious to recover them as if they had lost them themselves.

To anticipate, not the sunrise and the dawn merely, but, if possible, Nature herself! How many mornings, summer and winter, before yet any neighbor was stirring about his business, have I been about mine! No doubt many of my townsmen have met me returning from this enterprise, farmers starting for Boston in the twilight, or woodchoppers going to their work. It is true, I never assisted the sun materially in his rising, but, doubt not, it was of the last importance only to be present at it.
Curiously, he explicated it as if he were explicating his reference to Mencius’s remark about the loss of the “sentiments of the heart” in A WEEK where he had quoted as follows:

**A WEEK**: Mencius says: “If one loses a fowl or a dog, he knows well how to seek them again; if one loses the sentiments of his heart, he does not know how to seek them again.... The duties of practical philosophy consist only in seeking after those sentiments of the heart which we have lost; that is all.”

So what he sent off to Wiley was:

How shall we account for our pursuits if they are original? We get the language with which to describe our various lives out of a common mint. If others have their losses, which they are busy repairing, so have I mine, & their hound & horse may perhaps be the symbols of some of them. But also I have lost, or am in danger of losing, a far finer & more ethereal treasure, which commonly no loss of which they are conscious will symbolize – this I answer hastily & with some hesitation, according as I now understand my own words.

I would infer, from this confusion, that in Thoreau’s memory his quotation in THE DIAL and then in A WEEK of a parable from Mencius, a parable which referred to a fowl and a dog, and his invention of his own parable in WALDEN, which referred to a hound, a horse, and a turtle-dove, had, by 1857 at least, become commingled.

**THE SCHOLAR.**

Teen, son of the king of Tse, asked what the business of the scholar consists in? Mencius replied, In elevating his mind and inclination. What do you mean by elevating the mind? It consists merely in being benevolent and just. Where is the scholar’s abode? In benevolence. Where is his road? Justice. To dwell in benevolence, and walk in justice, is the whole business of a great man.

Benevolence is man’s heart, and justice is man’s path. If a man lose his fowls or his dogs, he knows how to seek them. There are those who lose their hearts and know not how to seek them. The duty of the student is no other than to seek his lost heart. He who employs his whole mind, will know his nature. He who knows his nature, knows heaven.

It were better to be without books than to believe all that they record.
We should, therefore, limit the range of possible interpretations of Thoreau’s parable to those which are not blatantly discordant with the more decipherable intention of the Mencius parable. And immediately we notice that a key to the Mencius parable is that “loss” can mean such different things, that we may know how to recover from one “loss” but may have no clue as to how to recover from another “loss.”

There is a marked difference in the meaning of the word “my” when it is applied to my hound, my horse, and my turtledove.

Did we suppose that “my” means the same in the expression “Please get my hat” as in the expression “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” No, we did not suppose that, nor are we to suppose that the possessive pronoun is the same when it is applied to a family pet with whom we share a long-term and deep affectional relationship, to a barn animal we saddle in order to go somewhere, and to a wild bird we glimpse as it disappears behind a cloud. In the sense in which the dog is my dog, the horse is not my horse. In the sense in which the horse is my horse, the turtledove is not my turtledove. And there is not only a difference in the definition of the possessive pronoun “my” when it is applied to my hound, my horse, and my turtledove, there is also a difference in the meaning of the economic term “loss.” For me to lose my hound is for this dog to run off after a scent and return when it chooses. For me to lose my horse is for this horse to be stolen by a horse thief, or for me to gamble it away, or for it to lie down and die. For me to lose a turtledove is — what? Thoreau didn’t need to clutch a turtledove, so how could he lose it? What he said was “In Boston yesterday an ornithologist said significantly, ‘If you held the bird in your hand—’; but I would rather hold it in my affections,” and the bird of which he and the ornithologist spoke might as well have been a turtledove as an eponymous anonymous bird of some other species. When one gets to the turtledove part of the saying, one recognizes that Thoreau’s parable of loss is a secret joke, a joke on the whole idea that in this world there could be such a thing as loss. We may well wonder how the idea of loss could have arisen in a world in which each instant of our lives is a gift to us, and is a gift over which we have no control whatever.
Note that if we interpret the parable of the “loss” of the hound, horse, and turtle-dove as a secret joke on the whole idea that in this world there could be such a thing as loss, then the parable becomes an intrinsic part of the chapter, for the chapter, according to Stanley Cavell’s THE SENSES OF WALDEN, is, in its entirety, a parable about the unreality of loss and an attempt to subvert our customary deployment of economic terms such as loss when we attempt to deal with the affect of our lives:

The writer comes to us from a sense of loss; the myth does not contain more than symbols because it is no set of desired things he has lost, but a connection with things, the track of desire itself.

Note also that if we interpret this parable of the “loss” of the hound, horse, and turtle-dove as a secret joke on the simpleminded presumption that “loss” is one single, unproblematic concept, then we are led directly back, full circle, to this citation of Mencius in A WEEK, the citation in which the “duties of practical philosophy” are specified.

A WEEK: Mencius says: “If one loses a fowl or a dog, he knows well how to seek them again; if one loses the sentiments of his heart, he does not know how to seek them again.... The duties of practical philosophy consist only in seeking after those sentiments of the heart which we have lost; that is all.”
Barbara Johnson, while agreeing that the parable has to do with losses, evidently disagrees with the idea that the chapter is intended to distance us from the easy application of such economic terms to the affect of our lives. Rather, she suggests, Walden wakes us up to our losses, evidently to the reality of our losses:

Walden’s great achievement is to wake us up to our own losses, to make us participate in the trans-individual movement of loss in its own infinite particularity, urging us passionately to follow the tracks of what we know not quite what, as if we had lost it, or were in danger of losing it, ourselves. In order to communicate the irreducibly particular yet ultimately unreadable nature of loss, Thoreau has chosen to use three symbols [hound, bay horse, and turtledove] that clearly are symbols but that do not really symbolize anything outside themselves.

We may note also, here, that Johnson is attempting a pre-emptive strike at anyone and everyone who would make the three symbolic animals “symbolize anything outside themselves.” My own attitude toward this is that a good reader is an active reader, and seeks to read meaning into what she is reading. We should judge each attempt on its merits, and make no pre-emptive strike against the attempt to actively engage with the presented material.

Concord April 26th
1857
Dear Sir
I have been spending a fortnight in New Bedford, and on my return find your last letter awaiting me.
I was sure that you would find Newcomb inexhaustible, if you found your way into him at all. I might say, however, by way of criticism, that he does not take firm enough hold on this world, where surely we are bound to triumph.
I am sorry to say that I do not see how I can furnish you with a copy of my essay on the wild. It has not been prepared for publication, only for lectures, and would cover at least a hundred written pages. Even if it were ready to be dispersed, I could not easily find time to copy it. So I return the order.
I see that you are turning a broad furrow among the books, but I trust that some very private journal all the while holds its own through their midst. Books can only reveal us to ourselves, and as often as they do us this service we lay them aside. I should say read Goethe’s Autobiography by all means, also Gibbon’s Haydon the Painter’s—& our Franklin’s of course; perhaps also Alfieri’s, Benvenuto Cellini’s, & De Quincey’s Confessions of an Opium Eater – since you like Autobiography.
I think you must read Coleridge again & further—skipping all his theology– i.e.
if you value precise definitions & a discriminating use of language. By the way, read De Quincey’s reminiscences of Coleridge & Wordsworth. How shall we account for our pursuits if they are original? We get the language with which to describe our various lives out of a common mint. If others have their losses, which they are busy repairing, so have I mine, & their hound & horse may perhaps be the symbols of some of them. But also I have lost, or am in danger of losing, a far finer & more ethereal treasure, which commonly no loss of which they are conscious will symbolize— This I answer hastily & with some hesitation, according as I now understand my own words. I take this occasion to acknowledge, & thank you for, your long letter of Dec 21st. So poor a correspondent am I. If I wait for the fit time to reply, it commonly does not come at all, as you see. I require the presence of the other party to suggest what I shall say. Methinks a certain polygamy with its troubles is the fate of almost all men. They are married to two wives – their genius (a celestial muse) and also to some fair daughter of the earth. Unless these two were fast friends before marriage, and so are afterward, there will be but little peace in the house. In answer to your questions, I must say that I never made, nor had occasion to use a filter of any kind; but, no doubt, they can be bought in Chicago. You cannot surely identify a plant from a scientific description until after long practice. The “millers” you speak of are the perfect or final state of the insect. The chrysalis is the silken bag they spun when caterpillars, & occupied in the nymph state.

Yrs truly
Henry D. Thoreau

April 26. Riordan’s cock follows close after me while spading in the garden, and hens commonly follow the gardener and plowman, just as cowbirds the cattle in a pasture. I turn up now in the garden those large leather-colored nymphs.

P. M. — Up Assabet to White Cedar Swamp. See on the water over the meadow, north of the boat’s place, twenty rods from the nearest shore and twice as much from the opposite shore, a very large striped snake swimming. It swims with great ease, and lifts its head a foot above the water, darting its tongue at us. A snake thus met with on the water appears far more monstrous, not to say awful and venomous, than on the land. It is always something startling and memorable to meet with a serpent in the midst of a broad water, careering over it. But why had this one taken to the water? Is it possible that snakes ever hibernate in meadows which are subject to be overflowed? This one when we approached swam
toward the boat, apparently to rest on it, and when I put out my paddle, at once coiled itself partly around it and allowed itself to be taken on board. It did not hang down from the paddle like a dead snake, but stiffened and curved its body in a loose coil about it.

This snake was two feet and eleven inches long; the tail alone, seven and a quarter. There were one hundred and forty-five large abdominal plates, besides the three smaller under the head, and sixty-five pairs of caudal scales. The central stripe on the back was not bright-yellow, as Storer describes, but a pale brown or clay-color; only the more indistinct lateral stripes were a greenish yellow, the broad dark-brown stripes being between; beneath greenish. Beneath the tail in centre, a dark, somewhat greenish line.

This snake was killed about 2 P.M.; i.e., the head was perfectly killed then; yet the posterior half of the body was apparently quite alive and would curl strongly around the hand at 7 P.M. It had been hanging on a tree in the meanwhile.

I have the same objection to killing a snake that I have to the killing of any other animal, yet the most humane man that I know never omits to kill one.

I see a great many beetles, etc., floating and struggling on the flood.

We sit on the shore at Wheeler’s fence, opposite Merriam’s. At this season still we go seeking the sunniest, most sheltered, and warmest place. C. says this is the warmest place he has been in this year. We are in this like snakes that lie out on banks. In sunny and sheltered nooks we are in our best estate. There our thoughts flow and we flourish most. By and by we shall seek the shadiest and coolest place. How well adapted we are to our climate! In the winter we sit by fires in the house; in spring and fall, in sunny and sheltered nooks; in the summer, in shady and cool groves, or over water where the breeze circulates. Thus the average temperature of the year just suits us. Generally, whether in summer or winter, we are not sensible either of heat or cold.

A great part of our troubles are literally domestic or originate in the house and from living indoors. I could write an essay to be entitled “Out of Doors,” — undertake a crusade against houses. What a different thing Christianity preached to the house-bred and to a party who lived out of doors! Also a sermon is needed on economy of fuel. What right has my neighbor to burn ten cords of wood, when I burn only one? Thus robbing our half-naked town of this precious covering. Is he so much colder than I? It is expensive to maintain him in our midst. If some earn the salt of their porridge, are we certain that they earn the fuel of their kitchen and parlor? One man makes a little of the driftwood of the river or of the dead and refuse (unmarketable!) wood of the forest suffice, and nature rejoices in him. Another, Herod-like, requires ten cords of the best of young white oak or hickory, and he is commonly esteemed a virtuous man. He who burns the most wood on his hearth is the least warmed by the sight of it growing. Leave the trim wood-lots to widows and orphan girls. Let men tread gently through nature. Let us religiously burn stumps and worship in groves, while Christian vandals lay waste the forest temples to build miles of meeting-houses and horse-sheds and feed their box stoves.

The white cedar is apparently just out. The higher up the tree, the earlier. Towed home an oak log some eighteen feet long and more than a foot through, with a birch with around it and another birch fastened to that. Father says he saw a boy with a snapping turtle yesterday.
In this year the scholar Wang T’ao came to live in Hong Kong (he would assist the Reverend James Legge in many translations from the Chinese into English).

At the end of the journal entries for this year, Waldo Emerson listed his recent readings in Oriental materials: “Confucius, Book of Poetry, apud J. Legge,21 D’Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale; Saadi; Hafiz; Von Hammer Purgstall.” While reading in the James Legge translation, he had jotted into his journal an impression that in reading Confucius he was “reading a better Pascal,” and had declared that this ancient had “anticipated the speech of Socrates, and the Do as be done by, of Jesus.”

21. It seems clear that the source that Emerson consulted in this year for the Chinese “Book of Poetry, apud J. Legge,” could not have been any one of the three editions that the Reverend Legge published in book form, for these would not be published until 1871, 1876, and 1879. Emerson must, therefore, have been referring to some earlier effort along this line as published in some local journal such as the North American Review.
Asked to discourse at a banquet in honor of an embassy from China that was passing through Boston, Waldo Emerson delivered an after-dinner speech in which he naturally focused upon his more positive impressions. The Chinese were to be praised as they possessed a great “power of continuous labor” (were there already Chinese restaurants in downtown Boston?) — the Chinese were to be praised as practitioners of a “stoical economy” (were there already Chinese shirt laundries in downtown Boston?) One item in this polite speech, having to do with the Mandarin education, is of special interest because it appears nowhere else in Emerson’s published records:

I am sure that gentlemen around me bear in mind the bill ... requiring that candidates for public offices shall first pass examinations on their literary qualifications for the same. Well, China has preceded us, as well as England and France, in this essential correction of a reckless usage; and the like high esteem of education appears in China in social life, to which distinctions it is made an indispensable passport.

Emerson had apparently forgotten that he had once contrasted the “fatalism” and “withdrawal” that was typical of China with the “freedom” and “dynamism” to be found characteristic of the West. China, the “playground of the world’s childhood,” he had mused, was to be urged by the West to grow up and stand tall. Our project was to be her “regeneration.” Or perhaps he hadn’t forgotten, and his polite after-dinner speech was intended to urge these Chinamen along the path of “regeneration”?

Emerson also during this polite speech credited China with its many early inventions and innovations, and recognized there the “respectable remains of astronomic science, and the historic records of forgotten time.” He concluded this by dropping the name of a Chinese philosopher who could not be spared by the world:

Confucius has not yet gathered all his fame.

Emerson had apparently forgotten that he had once characterized Confucius, derogatorily, as “no originator,” and suggested that he knew no more to do with philosophy than had General Washington (which would have been, in case you are wondering, precisely nothing). The reasons why Confucius was needed by the world were that he had originated the Golden Rule of Jesus (the Doctrine of Reciprocity, the Golden Mean), that like Socrates he had known that he knew nothing, that “His ideal of greatness predicts Marcus Antoninus,” and that he grasped the fact that we must always place the blame for our own misfortunes upon ourselves rather than upon others — as when the governor who complained to Confucius of thieves was told “If you, sir, were not covetous, though you should reward them for it, they would not steal.”

All share the surprise and pleasure when the venerable Oriental dynasty —hitherto a romantic legend to most of us— suddenly steps into the fellowship of nations. This auspicious event, considered in connection with the late innovations in Japan, marks a new era, and is an irresistible result of the science which has given us the power of steam and the electric telegraph. It is the more welcome for the surprise. We had said of China, as the old prophet said of Egypt, “Her strength is to sit still.”
At the end of the journal entries for this year, Emerson listed his recent readings in Oriental materials: “Menu; Bhagavat Geeta; Vishnu Purana; Hafiz; Confucius.”

The first published partial translation of the *Tao Tê Ching* of Lao-tze into English was in this year, and had been accomplished by a Reverend Doctor John Chalmers.

The volume was entitled *The Speculations on Metaphysics, Polity, and Morality of “The Old Philosopher”, Lau-tsze* and had been published in London by Trubner. (This is one of the editions that Bronson Alcott would have in his library at the point of his death that Henry Thoreau could not possibly have seen. The volume in question is inscribed “A.B. Alcott with the affectionate regards of William Henry Channing – 1870.” Even though 1870 is very much later in his life, it was amply prior to his stroke and death in 1888 — and thus Alcott is the only Transcendentalist of whom we can say, with assuredness, that a good contact had been made with Taoism.)

NATURE creates in the East the uncontrollable yearning to escape from limitation into the vast and boundless, to use a freedom of fancy which plays with all works of Nature, great or minute, galaxy or grain of dust, as toys and words of the mind; inculcates a beatitude to be found in escape from all organization and all personality, and makes ecstasy an institution.

MR. MAYOR: I suppose we are all of one opinion on this remarkable occasion of meeting the embassy sent from the oldest Empire in the world to the youngest Republic. All share the surprise and pleasure when the venerable Oriental dynasty—hitherto a romantic legend to most of us—suddenly steps into the fellowship of nations. This auspicious event, considered in connection with the late innovations in Japan, marks a new era, and is an irresistible result of the science which has given us the power of steam and the electric telegraph. It is the more welcome for the surprise. We had said of China, as the old prophet said of Egypt, “Her strength is to sit still.” Her people had such elemental conservatism that by some wonderful force of race and national manners, the wars and revolutions that occur in her annals have proved but momentary swells or surges on the pacific ocean of her history, leaving no trace. But in its immovability this race has claims. China is old, not in time only, but in wisdom, which is gray hair to a nation, or, rather, truly seen, is eternal youth. As we know, China had the magnet centuries before Europe; and block-printing or stereotype, and lithography, and gunpowder, and vaccination, and canals; had anticipated Linnaeus’s nomenclature of plants; had codes, journals, clubs, hackney coaches, and, thirty centuries before New York, had the custom of New Year's calls of comity and reconciliation. I need not mention its useful arts, - its pottery indispensable to the world, the luxury of silks, and its
tea, the cordial of nations. But I must remember that she has respectable remains of astronomic science, and historic records of forgotten time, that have supplied important gaps in the ancient history of the western nations. Then she has philosophers who cannot be spared. Confucius has not yet gathered all his fame. When Socrates heard that the oracle declared that he was the wisest of men, he said, it must mean that other men held that they were wise, but that he knew that he knew nothing. Confucius had already affirmed this of himself; and what we call the GOLDEN RULE of Jesus, Confucius had uttered in the same terms five hundred years before. His morals, though addressed to a state of society unlike ours, we read with profit to-day. His rare perception appears in his GOLDEN MEAN, his doctrine of Reciprocity, his unerring insight, - putting always the blame of our misfortunes on ourselves; as when to the governor who complained of thieves, he said, "If you, sir, were not covetous, though you should re-ward them for it, they would not steal." His ideal of greatness predicts Marcus Antoninus. At the same time, he abstained from paradox, and met the ingrained prudence of his nation by saving always, "Bend one cubit to straighten eight."

China interests us at this moment in a point of politics. I am sure that gentlemen around me bear in mind the bill which the Hon. Mr. Jenckes of Rhode Island has twice attempted to carry through Congress, requiring that candidates for public offices shall first pass examinations on their literary qualifications for the same. Well, China has preceded us, as well as England and France, in this essential correction of a reckless usage; and the like high esteem of education appears in China in social life, to whose distinctions it is made an indispensable passport.

It is gratifying to know that the advantages of the new intercourse between the two countries are daily manifest on the Pacific coast. The immigrants from Asia come in crowds. Their power of continuous labor, their versatility in adapting themselves to new conditions, their stoical economy, are unlooked-for virtues. They send back to their friends, in China, money, new products of art, new tools, machinery, new foods, etc., and are thus establishing a commerce without limit. I cannot help adding, after what I have heard to-night, that I have read in the journals a statement from an English source, that Sir Frederic Bruce attributed to Mr. Burlingame the merit of the happy reform in the relations of foreign governments to China. I am quite sure that I heard from Mr. Burlingame in New York, in his last visit to America, that the whole merit of it belonged to Sir Frederic Bruce. It appears that the ambassadors were emulous in their magnanimity. It is certainly the best guaranty for the interests of China and of humanity.
At the end of the journal entries for this year, Waldo Emerson listed his recent readings in Oriental materials: “Plotinus; Porphyry; Menu; Confucius; Averroës.”

The Reverend James Legge received his LLD from the University of Aberdeen. He would be the pastor at Union Church, Hong Kong for the following three years, visiting mission stations at Shanghai, Chefoo (Yantai) and Peking (Beijing), and returning to England via Japan and the USA in 1873.
October: The Reverend James Legge became the initial professor to hold the newly endowed chair of Chinese Language and Literature at Oxford University (in fact he was the initial Nonconformist ever to achieve a professorship there!). Although he would attract few students to his lectures, he would be laboring over his translations of the Chinese classics in his study at 3 Keble-Terrace for the following couple of decades, until 1897. According to an anonymous obit in the Pall Mall Gazette, his practice was to retire at 10PM and rise at 3AM, winter and summer, making himself a cup of tea over a spirit-lamp and going directly to his desk. In this year he prepared the 2d of his three published translations of the SHI Ging, or SHI KING, into English as THE BOOK OF POETRY. “[I]t was Legge’s general practice to translate a text several times without reference to previous translations before embarking on a final version. Revisions of the final version were often carried out in a similar way — first an independent translation, then a comparison with his earlier efforts.” (He had publish his 1st translation of these materials in late 1871, and would publish a 3d in 1879.)

In his “Social Aims,” published in LETTERS AND SOCIAL AIMS, Waldo Emerson the Sage of Concord quoted Confucius:22

“If the search for riches were sure to be successful, though I should become a groom with whip in hand to get them, I will do so. As the search may not be successful, I will follow after that which I love.”

“’Eat at your table as you would eat at the table of a king,’ said Confucius.”

**EMERSON AND CHINA**

22. At some point (I’m going to have to look up in what year: it is Volume IX, page 399 in the printed journal), Waldo had recorded in his journal that “The Englishman in China, seeing a doubtful dish set before him, inquired, ‘Quack-quack?’ The Chinese replied, ‘Bow-wow.’”
April 27, Thursday: James Elliot Cabot, Bronson Alcott, Franklin Benjamin Sanborn, Ellery Channing, Judge Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar, and Sheriff Sam Staples were sent for, “to bid him good-bye,” and Sam thoughtfully brought along a bottle of brandy. Waldo Emerson spoke lovingly with Lydian, although mostly unintelligibly. Again and again he made reference to “the beautiful boy” and they supposed him to have been recollecting his first son Wallie who had died in 1842. He was able to make himself understood to Sam and to Judge Hoar. He greeted James Elliot Cabot, his literary executor, by name but by the time Sanborn and Channing saw him, he was dull. According to THE LETTERS OF ELLEN TUCKER EMERSON (Kent OH: Kent State UP, 1982, Volume I, page 690, Volume II, page 676), Emerson had Sanborn dismissed from the room, and presumably this would have been because after urging fighting on other young men he had not himself participated in the Civil War. Dr. James Putnam of Boston was in attendance. We may note that there was a “Confucius say” quote he had liked so much as to have used it twice:

“I will say with Confucius, ‘If in the morning I hear of the right way, and in the evening die, I can be happy.’”

When “a sharp pain came upon him,” his son Dr. Emerson administered sulphurous ether, “which soon relieved him, & kept the ether near his face until near the end” at about 8:30 in the evening.

The bell on the Unitarian Church was tolled, 79 strokes.

Dr. Garnett, Emerson’s biographer, would write:

Seldom had “the reaper whose name is Death” gathered such illustrious harvest as between December 1880 and April 1882. In the first month of this period George Eliot passed away, in the ensuing February Carlyle followed; in April Lord Beaconsfield died, deplored by his party, nor unregretted by his country; in February of the following year Longfellow was carried to the tomb; in April Rossetti was laid to rest by the sea, and the pavement of Westminster Abbey was disturbed to receive the dust of Darwin. And now Emerson lay down in death beside the painter of man and the searcher of nature, the English-Oriental statesman, the poet of the plain man and the poet of the artist, and the prophet whose name is indissolubly
linked with his own. All these men passed into eternity laden with the spoils of Time, but of none of them could it be said, as of Emerson, that the most shining intellectual glory and the most potent intellectual force of a continent had departed along with him.
Charlie Soon or Soong paid a return visit to Durham, North Carolina (“Now we’re spelling it with a ‘g’”).

The Chinese government decided that high school students needed several hours of exercise per week — “mens sana in corpore sano,” you know. This exercise would consist mostly of military drill, and saluting (German drill would be favored in the northern regions while Japanese drill would prevail in the south).

The very elaborate and rigorous civil service examination system based upon Chu Hsi’s edition of the Four Books of 1190 and originally regularized in the year 1313, which for so many centuries had elevated the more painstaking Chinese student to the important role of Mandarin, was in this year relinquished.
Lin Yu-t'ang at this point became acquainted for the first time with the writings of Henry Thoreau, and created THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVING (NY: Reynal & Hitchcock):23
“A richly, enjoyably wise and suggestive book.”
— The New York Times

The Importance of Living

The Classic Bestseller
That Introduced Millions
to the Noble Art of Leaving
Things Undone

Lin Yutang
Japan, having surpassed each and every European economy, in this year became the 3d economic powerhouse in the world after the USA and the USSR.

Schoei Ando, in ZEN AND AMERICAN TRANSCENDENTIALISM (Tokyo: Hokoseido Press), concluded that Henry Thoreau had achieved what is variously termed “Seishori” or “Meihakuri” or “Dajo Ippen,” or in English “clearly purified state” or “completely purified life.” In Zen, this is the condition immediately preceding the entire abandonment of the sense of selfhood.
Was Thoreau a Chinaman?

David T.Y. Ch’en, “Thoreau and Taoism” in Narasimhaiah, C.D., ed., 1972, ASIAN RESPONSE TO AMERICAN LITERATURE, Vikas Publications, Delhi, India, pages 406-16

Thoreau and China
April: John Emerson pointed out in “Thoreau’s Construction of Taoism,” in the Thoreau Quarterly Journal (Volume 12, Number 2, pages 5-14) that David T.Y. Ch’en in his 1972 study “Thoreau and Taoism” had failed to establish not only that Thoreau had seen the 1838 rendition of the Tao Tê Ching of Lao-tze into French, but even so much as that any copy of this book ever had made its way to America, or that any American had ever perused it. He chooses to emphasize the other possibility, that Thoreau came up with his Taoist ideas by personal inspiration and by life situation rather than by the reading of prior writings: “Taoism did not come to Thoreau, and what we must in the end try to understand is why Thoreau was looking so hard for Taoism.... To explain Thoreau’s convergence to Taoism ... the key is the closing off of public life.” The essence of this 1980 argument by Emerson is the same as the essence of Chen’s 1972 argument, that is to say, each author has presumed that because it may have happened one way, it is likelier that it happened that way. Chen presumed that Thoreau could have seen a translation of Taoist writings from the Chinese script into a Western script and that therefore he presumably did see that translation. Emerson presumed that Thoreau could have come up with these Taoist-like thoughts on his own and therefore he presumably did come up with these thoughts on his own. In neither case, it would seem, has the research as yet been attempted which would resolve this scripture-vs-inspiration dispute.
In China, the 300BCE *Guodian Laozi* inscribed on bamboo strips was dug up. (This would not be published until 1998.)

Professor Guy Davenport’s story “The Concord Sonata” in *Collages A Table of Green Fields Ten Stories* (New Directions) begins with a reference to the Thoreau parable of the hound, the bay horse, and the turtledove:

> At his small sanded white pine table in his cabin at Walden Pond on which he kept an arrowhead, an oak leaf, and an *Iliad* in Greek, Henry David Thoreau worked on two books at once. In one, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, he wrote: Give me a sentence which no intelligence can understand. In the other, *Walden; or Life in the Woods*, he wrote three such sentences, a paragraph which no intelligence can understand....

According to Professor Davenport, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* is Henry Thoreau’s “excursus through common places and commonplace books,” and the closing part “Thoreau” of Charles Ives’s “Second Pianoforte Sonata: Concord, Massachusetts 1840-1860” amounts to *A Week* in miniature. The music’s central theme is the orders of nature disclosed to the determined forager, and its central gesture is its foraging through commonplace books, on a quest to give (like Johann Wolfgang von Goethe) a true account of the actual. “Some, poor in spirit, record plaintively only what has happened to them; but others how they have happened to the universe, and the judgments which they have awarded to circumstances.” The key to the puzzle in *Walden*, of the hound, the bay horse, and the turtledove, is to be found in *The Dial: A Magazine for Literature, Philosophy, and Religion*’s and *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack River*’s...

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24. This reference to Thoreau’s parable was mentioned to me recently by Professor of Comparative Literature and Classics Kenneth Haynes of Brown University.
quotation of Mencius’s “If one loses a fowl or a dog, he knows well how to seek them again. The duties of all practical philosophy consists only in seeking after the sentiments of the heart which we have lost; that is all.”

**THE SCHOLAR.**

Teen, son of the king of Tse, asked what the business of the scholar consists in? Mencius replied, In elevating his mind and inclination. What do you mean by elevating the mind? It consists merely in being benevolent and just. Where is the scholar’s abode? In benevolence. Where is his road? Justice. To dwell in benevolence, and walk in justice, is the whole business of a great man.

Benevolence is man’s heart, and justice is man’s path. If a man lose his fowls or his dogs, he knows how to seek them. There are those who lose their hearts and know not how to seek them. The duty of the student is no other than to seek his lost heart.

He who employs his whole mind, will know his nature. He who knows his nature, knows heaven.

It were better to be without books than to believe all that they record.

According to Davenport, in seeking the lost hound, bay horse, and turtledove Thoreau was not seeking three particular things but instead was seeking the “fine effluences” in nature that he hoped would offer clues to the nature of these lost “sentiments of the heart.” Davenport apparently was unaware that he was covering ground that has already been fully covered and publicized in 1916 by Mark Van Doren in *Henry David Thoreau: A Critical Study* and in 1958 by Professor Sherman Paul in *The Shores of America: Thoreau’s Inward Exploration*, and was merely reaffirming Van Doren’s and Paul’s interpretation of the parable, which itself was merely reaffirming a letter of explication that Thoreau himself had written to one of his readers on April 26, 1857:

*Concord April 26th*

*1857*

*Dear Sir*

*I have been spending a fortnight in New Bedford, and on my return find your last letter awaiting me. I was sure that you would find Newcomb inexhaustible, if you found your way into him at all. I might say, however, by way of criticism, that he does not take firm enough hold on this world, where surely we are bound to triumph. I am sorry to say that I do not see how I can furnish you with a copy of my essay on the wild. It has not been prepared for publication, only for lectures, and would cover at least a hundred written pages. Even if it were ready to be dispersed, I could not easily find time to copy it. So I return the order. I see that you are turning a broad furrow among the books, but I trust that some very private journal all the while holds its own through their midst. Books can*
only reveal us to ourselves, and as often as they do us this service we lay them aside. I should say read Goethe’s Autobiography by all means, also Gibbon’s Haydon the Painter’s– & our Franklin’s of course; perhaps also Alfieri’s, Benvenuto Cellini’s, & De Quincey’s Confessions of an Opium Eater – since you like Autobiography. 

I think you must read Coleridge again & further –skipping all his theology– i.e. if you value precise definitions & a discriminating use of language. By the way, read De Quincey’s reminiscences of Coleridge & Wordsworth. 

How shall we account for our pursuits if they are original? We get the language with which to describe our various lives out of a common mint. If others have their losses, which they are busy repairing, so have I mine, & their hound & horse may perhaps be the symbols of some of them. But also I have lost, or am in danger of losing, a far finer & more ethereal treasure, which commonly no loss of which they are conscious will symbolize— This I answer hastily & with some hesitation, according as I now understand my own words. 

I take this occasion to acknowledge, & thank you for, your long letter of Dec 21st. So poor a correspondent am I. If I wait for the fit time to reply, it commonly does not come at all, as you see. I require the presence of the other party to suggest what I shall say. 

Methinks a certain polygamy with its troubles is the fate of almost all men. They are married to two wives – their genius (a celestial muse) and also to some fair daughter of the earth. Unless these two were fast friends before marriage, and so are afterward, there will be but little peace in the house. 

In answer to your questions, I must say that I never made, nor had occasion to use a filter of any kind; but, no doubt, they can be bought in Chicago. 

You cannot surely identify a plant from a scientific description until after long practice. 

The “miller” you speak of are the perfect or final state of the insect. The chrysalis is the silken bag they spun when caterpillars, & occupied in the nymph state. 

Yrs truly 

Henry D. Thoreau
Characteristically, however, the critic Davenport refrains from going further into this: “all Symbolism is subliminally perceived—is felt— without being arranged in a critic’s museum display.” Instead he delivers some epigrams such as that “Thoreau was most himself when he was Diogenes,” and an imaginary conversation between Thoreau and a mouse, and the remark “The man under the enormous umbrella out in the snow storm is Mr. Thoreau. Inspecting, as he says. Looking for his dove, his hound, his horse.”

Hongbo Tan presented “Confucius at Walden Pond: Thoreau’s Unpublished Confucian Translations” in STUDIES IN THE AMERICAN RENAISSANCE 1993, filling a significant void in Thoreau scholarship. It was revealed for the first time that the 1841 edition of M.J. Pauthier’s CONFUCIUS ET MENCIUS had been Thoreau’s basis for translation of 96 paragraphs of Confucius into 23 pages of a commonplace book at the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library.

“CONFUCIUS AT WALDEN POND:
THOREAU’S UNPUBLISHED CONFUCIAN TRANSLATIONS”

HONGBO TAN

STUDIES IN THE AMERICAN RENAISSANCE, 1993
(ED. JOEL MYERSON)

CHARLOTTESVILLE VA: U OF VIRGINIA P, PAGES 275-303

The Berg Collection of the New York Public Library possesses an

This is an important document, since for decades, scholars have been speculating on possible sources for the Confucian sayings Thoreau used in his writings. In 1961, Lyman V. Cady discovered to his surprise that none of the nine Confucian quotations he found in Walden coincided with any of the English translations of the Confucian works Thoreau had read. After a close comparison between these quotations and M.J. Pauthier’s Confucius et Mencius in Les Livres sacrés de l’Orient (Paris, 1840), Cady submitted that Thoreau must have made his own translations from M.J. Pauthier, whose text controlled “the form and wording of the English equivalent” of the Walden quotations, with even the proper names following “the French system of romanization used by Pauthier.” Despite his convincing demonstration, Cady admits that “external evidence is very scanty.” What Cady did not realize is that “external evidence” does exist in the Berg Collection manuscript notebook. In it, Thoreau had translated not only these nine quotations, but many more. This article, besides presenting for the first time Thoreau’s complete translation from M.J. Pauthier’s text, attempts to investigate the history of the manuscript, and the factors that have kept these translations from being acknowledged. It will also explore the possible causes behind Thoreau’s decision to make his own translation, the tentative date of his undertaking, as well as discuss the Neo-Confucian Four Books, the texts from which Thoreau selected his translations.

The manuscript that contains these translations has an interesting history. As early as 1932, Arthur Christy noted an unpublished Henry Thoreau notebook described in the Catalogue of the Stephen H. Wakeman Collection of Books of Nineteenth Century American Writers as containing Thoreau’s translations of Confucius. Sold at the Wakeman sale to a private collector, and apparently not easily accessible, in 1958, it was sold at the Parke-Bernet Galleries to the House of El Dieff for $3,750. Six years later,
Kenneth Walter Cameron listed this notebook, now in the collection of the New York Public Library, as the only unpublished Thoreau Commonplace book. In 1974, William L. Howarth presented a bibliographical description of the notebook itself in The Literary Manuscripts of Henry David Thoreau, and the following year, Joseph J. Moldenhauer, editor of Thoreau’s Early Essays and Miscellanies, acknowledged his translations when commenting in a textual note on Thoreau’s selections of the Confucian sayings for The Dial. Most recently, and on the evidence of the notebook, Robert Sattelmeyer included M.J. Pauthier’s Confucius et Mencius in his “Bibliographical Catalogue” in Thoreau’s Reading (1988). But none of these scholars seems to show an understanding of exactly what Thoreau had translated; nor do they seem to feel the need for further investigation. The Princeton edition of Thoreau’s Translations, for example, ignores these translated Confucian passages, stating that its editorial principle is to publish Thoreau’s “literary translations” only. Thus, ironically, while critics such as Cady go so far as to infer that Thoreau had made his own translations in Walden, while a single figure of speech in Thoreau’s writings often triggers endless source probing and investigation, these twenty-three pages of Thoreau’s actual translation remain ignored in the archive, their content virtually unknown.

Anxious to defend Thoreau’s originality, or, rather his Occidentality, critics since Mark Van Doren, who asserted in 1916 that “Thoreau took figures and sentences, not ideas from his Oriental reading,” have tended to minimize Thoreau’s debt to the Orient, particularly to the Confucian texts. In his pioneering study of the Orient in American Transcendentalism, Christy acknowledges the Confucian canon as one of the three major Oriental resources. But he quickly dismisses it as least significant when compared with the Indian and Persian influences, and declares unhesitantly that it is “fruitless to attempt finding in [Thoreau] a resemblance to the ethics of Confucius.” He further asserts that there was “nothing essentially Confucian in Thoreau’s temperament,” adding “No Confucius would ever have gone to Walden.” Few scholars have challenged these conclusions. Even Cady, after his elaborate effort to argue that the nine Confucian quotations in Walden are Thoreau’s own translation, finds himself noting apologetically that Thoreau “for the most part uses Confucian materials in a non-Confucian way,” and that “he rarely sees these sayings in their proper implications.” As if it were to avoid the pit,

some recent scholars turn to the “construction’ of Thoreau’s Taoism via his reading of Confucianism. When Orientalism in general is regarded as marginal, the Confucian canon marginal within that margin, one cannot be surprised that these translations have been neglected for so long.

II

To understand what impelled Henry Thoreau to undertake his own translation, we need to examine what the Confucian texts are, and how they came into existence. Most Thoreau scholars view the Confucian tradition as a stagnant orthodoxy having nothing in common with Thoreau’s dynamic and unconventional, if not eccentric, individualism. A closer study of Chinese intellectual history will reveal, on the contrary, that Confucianism is, to quote Daniel K. Gardner, “no more an unchanging monolith than was Christianity.” Just as the understanding of the Bible varied from a Puritan to a Transcendentalist, the interpretation of the Confucian texts differed between scholars of the Han and Sung dynasties.

The texts Thoreau translated are from the Neo-Confucian Four Books, compiled by the great Sung Confucian scholar, Chu Hsi (1130-1200), “the most influential philosopher” since the time of Confucius and Mencius. A collection of four Confucian classics, THE FOUR BOOKS consists of the TA-HSÜEH (the GREAT LEARNING), the LUN-YÜ (the ANALECTS), the MENG-TZU (the Mencius), and the CHUNG-YUNG (the DOCTRINE OF MEAN). While the LUN-YÜ and the MENG-TZU were originally two of the THIRTEEN CONFUCIAN CLASSICS, the TA-HSÜEH and the CHUNG-YUNG were two chapters from the LI CHI (the BOOK OF RITES, one of the THIRTEEN as well). In 1190, Chu Hsi grouped the four together and published them for the first time in one collection. The significance of this compilation was far-reaching; it altered the entire course of the Confucian classics.

For centuries, the central texts in the Confucian tradition had been the FIVE CLASSICS: the I CHING (the BOOK OF CHANGES), the SHIH-CHING (the BOOK OF POETRY), the SHU CHING (the BOOK OF HISTORY), the LI CHI (the BOOK OF RITES) and the CH’UN-CH’IU (the SPRING AND AUTUMN ANNALS). These works were the first of the Thirteen Classics to be canonized and remained central and most important for more than a millennium. But Chu Hsi, after over fifty years’

45. The canonization of the Thirteen Confucian works began in the 2d Century BCE, but was not complete until near the end of the 11th Century CE when the MENG-TZU was finally added. Throughout this process, the FIVE CLASSICS had been the first of importance (Gardner, CHU HSI AND THE TA-HSÜEH: NEO-CONFUCIAN REFLECTION ON THE CONFUCIAN CANON (Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1986, page 7.)
devotion to the Confucian classics, was convinced that the Confucian principles were “more accessible” in *The Four Books*. He therefore urged his students to focus on these works instead. In 1313, the *Four Books*, together with Chu Hsi’s commentaries, were made official and became the basis of the Chinese civil service examinations. Until 1905, when the examination system was abolished, the *Four Books* had been held as the “intellectual standard” for the Chinese literati.46

The rise in importance of the *Four Books* was closely connected with Sung intellectuals’ efforts to revive the Confucian tradition. Like any philosophical or religious tradition, Confucianism has also experienced its ups and downs. Since the reign of Emperor Wu (141-87 BCE) of the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE), Confucianism had gained a more privileged status than any other Chinese doctrines. From the late Han through the Tang (618-907 CE) dynasties, however, Neo-Taoism and Buddhism, the latter in particular, gained a stronger hold on the Chinese population. The political chaos and social upheaval prevailing throughout the country during the late Tang dynasty further enhanced the appeal of these teachings.

Restoration of the Confucian tradition became urgent for the Sung dynasty (960-1279 CE). To many of the Sung scholars, the Confucian classics were no doubt the “receptacle of the truth.”47 The problem was how to interpret them. They found that scholars since Han had relied too heavily on Han commentaries, many of which “obscured” the true message of the original. To unveil the truth, Sung scholars advocated a return to the “bare” text. This going back to the original was not a mere intellectual gesture. It was closely related to the Sung Confucianists’ vision of the world order. As Gardiner’s study shows, with the collapse of the powerful Tang empire still “fresh” in their mind, the Sung Chinese encountered new problems: nomads were occupying the north, and the doctrines of Buddhism, penetrating from India, continued luring away the population. “Be they adults or children, officials, farmers, or merchants, men or women, all have entered the Buddhist fold,” lamented Chu Hsi.48 The Sung scholars believed that this was all because the Confucian “Way” had declined. To return to the Golden age, they held, one needed only to bring back the principles of the Classics and let the Way prevail again. Thus Chu Hsi wrote:

> The sages wrote the classics in order to teach later generations. These texts enable the reader to reflect on the ideas of the sages while reciting their words and hence to understand what is in accordance with the principle of things. Understanding the whole substance of the proper Way, he will practice the Way with all his strength, and so enter the realm of the sages and worthies.49

Not all Thirteen Classics caught his equal attention, however;

nor was the Five Classics his preference. He was attracted instead, as has already been mentioned, to the **Four Books**;

In reading, begin with passages that are easy to understand. For example, principle is brilliantly clear in the *Ta-hsüeh*, the *Chung-yung*, the *Lun-yü*, and the *Meng-tzu*, these four texts, Men simply do not read them. If these texts were understood, any book could be read, any principle could be investigated, any affair could be managed.50

It seems that an easy accessibility of Confucian principles made Chu Hsi turn his attention to the **Four Books**. But other factors were even more important. With the impact of Buddhist thought, accompanied by the increasing prominence of Neo-Taoism, Sung Confucian scholars could no longer ignore broader ontological and metaphysical issues. They had to ponder not only man’s relation to man, but also man’s relation to the universe. While the Five Classics were more prescriptive in nature, indicating, for example, how one should conduct oneself in “certain concrete objective situations,” how “ritualistic practice” could maintain “a well-ordered society,” the **Four Books** were concerned primarily with the “nature of man,” the “inner source” of his morality, and his relation to the world.51

Another factor Gardner believes grew logically from the “reaction” of the scholars to the “bleak” political situation of the time, and, particularly, to the failure of Wang An-shih’s political and institutional reform. Disillusioned, Sung scholars realized that institutional and legal changes alone could not bring about social and political order. Many then turned their concerns inward to the process of “moral self-perfection.” They felt deeply that progress in the “outer” realm depended on “prior” progress in the “inner realm,” and believed that only the “truly” good man could bring about good reform; only the “truly” good man could maintain the effectiveness of his reformation.52 Consequently, the problems of human nature and the cultivation of the self became the center of their attention, and the **Four Books**, with their emphasis on exactly these issues, rose naturally in importance. Their centrality in the Confucian canon was thus established. Understandably, books of this nature would catch the attention of Thoreau, who was equally engaged with these issues. In 19th-century New England, social reform—from civil disobedience and the abolition of slavery to communitarian schemes like Brook Farm—was on everybody’s mind.

Before proceeding with the description of Henry Thoreau’s translations, a brief note to each of The Four Books is necessary.

1. The Ta-Hsüeh. The Ta-Hsüeh, the first of the Four, was originally Chapter 42 of the Li Chi. Chu Hsi, following Ssu-ma Kuang (1019-1086 CE) and the famous Cheng brothers (1032-1085 CE, 1033-1107 CE), rearranged the chapter, making it an individual work. As its title suggests, the Ta-Hsüeh presents an “outline for learning,” and a “pattern for cultivating the self and governing the other.” Chu Hsi compares this text to the “foundation” of a house. A man building a house must start with the foundation; a student reading The Four Books must begin with the Ta-Hsüeh. Chan finds that the Ta-Hsüeh, despite its small size, has summarized the Confucian “educational, moral, and political” programs neatly in its “three items” of “manifesting the clear character of man, loving the people, and abiding in the highest good,” and the “eight steps” of “the investigation of things, extension of knowledge, sincerity of the will, rectification of the mind, cultivation of the personal life, regulation of the family, national order, and world peace.” In contrast to the Chung-Yung, this book is “rational in tone.” While the former is a metaphysical discourse, the latter, Chan maintains, is the “Confucian doctrine of humanity (jen) in application.” Although the Ta-Hsüeh does not discuss metaphysical problems, it presents “the investigation of things” as the “starting point” in moral and social life. This, Chan holds, is “perfectly” in accordance with the Confucian emphasis on learning.

2. The Lun-yü. A collection of sayings by Confucius and his pupils, the Lun-yü consists of two parts of ten books each. Four hundred and ninety-two chapters in its original state, Chu Hsi combined and redivided certain chapters, making a total of eight hundred and forty-two, with one of the chapters further divided into eighteen sections. Chan considers the material of the text “unsystematic,” in a few cases, “repetitive,” and in some cases “historically inaccurate”; but the Lun-yü, he insists, is “generally accepted” as “the most authentic and reliable source of

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Confucian teachings.\(^{59}\) It reflects most explicitly the humanistic emphasis of the Confucian teaching. Like Thoreau in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*,\(^{60}\) Confucius talks about man and life at present: “Chi-lu (Tzu-lu) asked about serving the spiritual being. Confucius said, ’if we are not yet able to serve man, how can we serve spiritual beings?’ He ventured to ask about death, Confucius said, ’if we do not yet know about life, how can we know about death.’”\(^{61}\) His strong faith in man is reflected in his belief that man “can make the Way [Tao] great,” and not that “the Way can make man great.”\(^{62}\) He offers also specific instructions on how to be a superior man and on what constitutes proper conduct. He teaches further, like Emerson and Thoreau, the perfectibility of all men. Until Confucius’s time, the term *chün-tzu*, often translated as “superior man,” was a term referring to hereditary nobility. Confucius changed this concept and used it to address most of the time a “morally superior man.”\(^{63}\) The Confucian interpretation of Heaven in the *Lun-yü* departed from the traditional belief even more radically. According to Chan, the superior power was originally called “Ti” (the Lord) or “Shang-ti” (the Lord on High) and was understood in an “anthropomorphic sense.” Confucius never used “Ti,” but “T’ien” (Heaven) instead. While it is still “purposive” and is the “master of all things,” Chan writes, Confucius’s Heaven is no longer the “greatest of all spiritual beings who rules in a personal manner.” His is a “Supreme Being” who only “reigns,” leaving his “Moral Law” to operate by itself.\(^{64}\)

- (3) The *Meng-tzu*. The *Meng-tzu* is perhaps the most “unified text” of the four.\(^{65}\) The work is divided into seven books; each in turn is divided into two parts. While Confucius talks about specific modes of behavior, Mencius speaks to larger issues, such as preserving the mind, and nourishing the nature. Chan considers Book 6, Part I, “the most important portion” of the text. It records in full Mencius’s theory of human nature. While “Confucius no more than implied that human nature is good,” Mencius “declared definitely” that human nature is “originally good.”\(^{66}\) In Mencius’s scheme, as for the Transcendentalists’, the universe is “essentially moral.” Both man and nature originate from Heaven. The moral principles of man are

therefore “the metaphysical principles of the universe,” and the nature of man is an “exemplification” of these principles. Based on his conception of the original goodness of human nature, Mencius further develops the theory that all things are complete within: “All things are already complete in oneself. There is no greater joy than to examine oneself and be sincere.”.67 Built up around his theory of human nature are, as Chan summarizes, Mencius’s other tenets: Man “possesses the ‘innate’ knowledge of the good and ‘innate ability’ to do good”; “if one develops his mind to the utmost, he can ‘serve Heaven,’ and ‘fulfil his destiny’”; “evil is not inborn but due to man’s own failures and his inability to avoid evil external influences”; “serious efforts must be made to recover our original nature”; and “the end of learning is none other than to ‘seek for the lost mind.’”68

(4) The CHUNG-YUNG. Of the FOUR BOOKS the CHUNG-YUNG is considered the most difficult since it concerns, to quote Chu Hsi, “subtle mysteries of the ancients”; it speaks often of “the abstract,” of “spiritual beings,” and of “forming a trinity with heaven and earth.”69 Formerly a chapter of the I CHING, the CHUNG-YUNG is, in Chan’s opinion, “the most philosophical” of the FOUR.70 The text begins with Chu Hsi’s remark:

Master Ch’eng I [Ch’eng I-ch’uan, 1033-1107 CE] said, “By Chung (central) is meant what is not one-sided, and by yung (ordinary) is meant what is unchangeable. Chung is the correct path of the world and yung is the definite principle of the world.” This work represents the central way in which the doctrines of the Confucian school have been transmitted.... The book “first speaks of one principle, next it spreads out to cover the ten thousand things, and finally returns and gathers them all under one principle.” Unroll it, and it reaches in all directions. Roll it up, and it withdraws and lies hidden in minuteness.

The language itself reveals the mystic nature of the text. No wonder this work has “strong appeal” to both Taoist and Buddhist scholars, who had written lengthy commentaries on it long before it was made one of the Confucian FOUR BOOKS. One Buddhist monk in the eleventh century even styled himself by the title of the book.71 What had attracted Taoists, Buddhists, as well as Sung Confucian scholars, is, Chan believes, the very subject the text explores, “human nature and the Way of Heaven”: “What Heaven (T’ien, Nature) imparts to man is called human nature. To follow

71. For this, Wing-tsi Chan considers the book “a bridge” between Taoism and Buddhism, which “prepared” in his view for their influence on Confucianism (Chan, A SOURCE BOOK IN CHINESE PHILOSOPHY. Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 1963, page 95.)
our nature is called the Way (Tao). Cultivate the Way is called education. The Way cannot be separated from us for a moment. What can be separated from us is not the Way."72 These are the concepts even Emerson had to copy into his “savings bank.”73

IV

We must note that Thoreau had read at least three English translations of the Neo-Confucian *Four Books*, from which he made, together with Waldo Emerson, two selections, and published them in *The Dial* in 1843.74 But in his writings he seldom relied on these translations. The reason is perhaps easy to surmise: by his time, western intellectuals had inherited two conflicting views of *Confucius*. The Jesuits, whose mission reached China in the late 16th Century, were the first introducers of Confucius into the west. Hoping to win over the mandarin-scholars, hence the Imperial Court, these missionaries carefully studied the Chinese classics, many becoming renowned Chinese scholars and great admirers of Confucius. The version of the Chinese sage they presented to the West had so aroused the admiration of such European thinkers as Leibnitz and Voltaire that Confucius became “the patron saint of eighteenth-century Enlightenment.”75 On the other hand, the Protestant missionaries, who came to China in the early 19th Century, and who ardently set about to convert millions of lost souls, found Confucius a pagan, lacking the light of God. It is altogether characteristic of this age that David Collie, one of the Protestant translators Thoreau encountered, should describe the Confucian system as “compounded of a number of self-evident, sound, practical truths, intermingled with many abstruse, high sounding, false, and highly dangerous theories,” while noting that Confucius himself laboured “under the destructive influence of the most gross and dangerous ignorance, viz. Ignorance of his Creator.”76

Of the three English translations Henry Thoreau read, the first was by Father Couplet, a Jesuit missionary who went to China in 1658 and stayed there till 1680 when he was sent back to

Europe,77 and published in 1687 Confucius Sinica Philosophus, “the first translation of Confucius” in Europe.78 The other two were by Joshua Marshman, a Baptist missionary stationed in India,79 and Collie, a member of the London Missionary Society, and later principal of the Protestant Anglo-Chinese College at Malacca.80 Unlike these English translators, M.J. Pauthier (1801-1873) was not a missionary. He was, according to Raymond Schwab, a “good Indic scholar” but a “better sinologist.”81 Pauthier began his literary career as a poet, publishing two collections of poems in the late 1820s. But his verse, as Schwab notes, showed “few flashes of genius.” It was his Oriental scholarship that put him on a level with Abel Rémusat, Stanislas Julien, and other famed Orientalists. His translation of Henry Thomas Colebrook’s “Essay on the Philosophy of the Hindus” in 1832 won him a prize from the royal college. His Les Livres sacrés de l’Orient (Paris, 1840) provided the curious “a portable Asia,” and became an “important channel” through which “works exhumed by the philologists were to enter the larger sphere of living values.”82 Even Ezra Pound based his poetic rendering of the Confucian Cantos on this book.83 Like the famous sinologist Rémusat, Pauthier, too, devoted much of his life to Chinese studies. His scholarly works include a Chinese-Latin-French dictionary, translations of various Chinese classics (including the Taoist text), chronologies, and official documents. He also wrote essays and books on China, ranging from its literature, government, and religion to agriculture, medicine, and plants; from general descriptions of the country to accounts of its interactions with Western powers – making a total of over forty publications.84 Pauthier’s Confucius et Mencius was first published as part of Les Livres sacrés in 1840. This part, a complete translation of The Four Books with Chu Hsi’s commentaries, was reprinted the following year as a separate book. It was from this that Thoreau made his translations.

Contrary to what had then been held to be the Oriental mentality, motionless and immovable, M.J. Pauthier begins his introduction to Confucius et Mencius by stating that “En Orient, comme dans la plupart des contrées du globe, mais en Orient surtout, le sol a été sillonné par de nombreuses révolutions, par des bouleversements qui ont changé la face des empires.”85 What have endured these “bouleversements,” Pauthier writes, are those monuments that “exercent la plus puissante influence sur les destinées des nations.” These are “les grandes œuvres de l’intelligence humaine que les siècles produisent de loin en

loin, et qui, météores extraordinaires, apparaissent comme des révélations à des points déterminés du temps et de l’espace, pour guider les nations dans les voies providentielles que le genre humain doit parcourir” (page i). The Chinese text presented here in French is, he states, “un de ces monuments providentiels” (page i). Pauthier has certainly shown his reverence for the subject. He has been disturbed by the assumption held by many of his contemporary historians of philosophy in regard to Confucius. In *Livres sacrés* he cites with overt agitation G.W.F. Hegel’s view:

N’est-il pas pénible, par exemple, de voir des historiens de la philosophie comme Hegel et H. Ritter, dont les habitudes d’esprit sérieuses devaient être exemptes, sinon d’une pareille ignorance, au moins d’une pareille légèreté, écrire, le premier: ‘Nous avons des entretiens de Confucius avec ses disciples, dans lesquelles est exprimée une morale populaire; cette morale se trouve partout, chez tous les peuples, et meilleure; elle n’a rien que de vulgaire.’ Confucius est un philosophe pratique; la philosophie spéculative ne se rencontre pas dans ses écrits; ses doctrines morales ne sont que bonnes, usuelles, mais on n’y peut rien apprendre de spécial.86

G.W.F. Hegel blindly dismisses Confucius as a mere “practical philosopher.” His moral is “good,” Hegel writes, but “common,” and can be found at “homes of all peoples.” Because the “speculative philosophy” is lacking in this teaching, Hegel continues, there is “nothing special” in it. With a tone of Occidental superiority, Hegel writes: “L’ouvrage moral de Cicéron, *De Officiis*, nous en apprend plus et mieux que tous les ouvrages de Confucius” quoted on page ix). Addressing himself directly to Hegel’s “Légèreté,” if not “ignorance,” M.J. Pauthier argues that “cette doctrine, il ne la donnait pas comme nouvelle,” but in the “mission d’Institute du genre humain,” the Chinese philosopher accomplished

bien autrement qu’aucune philosophie de l’antiquité classique. Sa philosophie ne consistait pas en spéculations plus ou moins vaines, mais c’était une philosophie surtout pratique, qui s’étendait à toutes les conditions de la vie, à tous les rapports de l’existence sociale. Le grand but de cette philosophie, le but pour ainsi dire unique, était l’amélioration constante de soi-même et des autres hommes; de soi-même d’abord, ensuite des autres. L’amélioration ou le perfectionnement de soi-même est d’une nécessité absolue pour arriver à l’amélioration et au perfectionnement des autres.87

To teach the priority of self-improvement, Pauthier maintains, is what makes Confucius unique and distinctive from other philosophers. Speaking of *Mencius*, Pauthier holds that he

possédait une connaissance profonde du cœur humain” (page xxiv), and he finds Mencius’s philosophy “plus de vigueur et de sallies spirituelles” than that of Socrates and Plato (page xxv). Pauthier also commends the Confucian way of government, stating: “Selon Khoung-tseu, le gouvernement est ce qui est juste et droit. C’est la réalisation des lois éternelles qui doivent faire le bonheur de l’humanité, et que les plus hautes intelligences, par une application incessante de tous les instants de leur vie, sont seules capables de connaitre et d’enseigner aux hommes” (page xi). Perhaps Thoreau would find him quite in agreement when Pauthier concludes: “Dans un temps où le sentiment moral semble se corrompre et se perdre, et la société marcher aveuglément dans la voie des seuls instincts matériels, il ne sera peut-être pas inutile de répéter les enseignements de haute et divine raison que le plus grand philosophe de l’antiquité orientale a donnés au monde” (page xxviii).88

The manuscript that contains Henry Thoreau’s Confucian translations is a bound notebook, consisting of “136 leaves of white wove [paper], 23.8 x 19.2 cm., paged ‘1-269.’”89 The catalog of the Parke-Bernet Galleries 1958 sale describes the notebook thus:

Thoreau, Henry D. MS Note Book, containing Transcripts and Extracts of Poems By Early English Poets, Translations of Portions of two French Works with his notes on the same, etc. Closely written, in ink, on about 225 pages and consisting of approximately Twenty-Eight thousand and Two Hundred Words. 4to, half roan.... Entirely in the Autograph of Thoreau.... Among the contents may be mentioned: Translations from the French: Portion of “Confucius et Mencius ... Traduit de Chinois. Par M.G. Pauthier.” Written on 23 pages. Thoreau has translated many paragraphs, and interspersed are notes by Thoreau on the same.90

Thoreau’s translations (including that of Pauthier’s introduction) were copied fairly neatly on pages 127-49. At the head, Thoreau cited the book from which he made his translations: “Confucius et Mencius. Les Quatres Livres De Philosophie Morale Et Politique De La Chine, Traduit Du Chinois Par M.J. Pauthier. Paris, 1841” (page 127). He then translated two paragraphs from Pauthier’s Introduction (pages 127-28). The third paragraph consists of his notes on Pauthier’s other Chinese works, SPRING TIME & AUTUMN and CHOU-KING, both of which Pauthier had translated from the Chinese and published in his LIVRES SACRÉS, and DESCRIPTIONS HISTORIQUE, GEOGRAPHIQUE ET LITTÉRAIRE DE

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88. William L. Howarth, THE LITERARY MANUSCRIPTS OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1974), page 293. 89. “$32,295 Worth of Thoreau Manuscripts!” THOREAU SOCIETY BULLETIN, number 65 (Fall 1958), page 1. 90. Excluded are the translations from M.J. Pauthier’s introduction, Thoreau’s commentaries and notes.
LA CHINE (page 128). His translation of the Confucian passages begins on page 129 and continues to page 149. Thoreau has translated a total of ninety-six paragraphs of Confucius from M.J. Pauthier,⁹¹ of which five are from the Ta-hsüeh, thirteen from the Chung-yung, forty-six from the Lun-yü, and thirty-two from the Meng-tzu. On the whole, Thoreau follows the order of the French text in selecting his translations. In a few cases, however, he goes back to a previous chapter and translates one or two more items before resuming the regular order. All the translations are written in ink, but interspersed are his additions, corrections, and commentaries, mostly in pencil. A helpful clue in the manuscript is that forty-one of these passages are struck through with a light vertical line in pencil. I have succeeded in locating Thoreau’s use of twenty-seven of these marked passages: fifteen in WALDEN (one in F.B. Sanborn’s Bibliophile edition), six in A WEEK, two in “Civil Disobedience,” one in “Walking,” and three in the CORRESPONDENCE—plus nine paragraphs in a single long passage in an unpublished manuscript at the Houghton Library, Harvard University.⁹² It seems obvious that Thoreau had also intended these translations for his literary writings—like Emerson’s “savings bank,” from which he could readily withdraw ideas or quotations. Nowhere in his journals or other writings did Thoreau specify the date of these translations although he alluded to them once. On 12 December 1856, Thoreau responded to Benjamin B. Wiley’s inquiries about Confucius. After explaining what he understood as the essence of the Confucian teaching, Thoreau included three

⁹¹. The Houghton manuscript fragment is bMS Am 278.5, Folder 12a, and reads:
But suppose his digestion is sound, still we might ask, would this man, if he were at the head of affairs, do any better than those whom he condemns? We confess that we should not like to try the experiment. We lately read an anecdote of Confucius and his disciples which is to our purpose.

“Tseu-lou, Thseng-sie, Yan-yeou, Kong-si-hoa, were seated by the side of the Philosopher. The Philosopher said: make no account of my age more than if I were only a day older than you. Living apart and isolated, then you say: we are not known. If any one knew you, then what would you do?

Tseu-lou replied with a brisk but respectful air: Suppose a kingdom of a thousand war-chariots, hard-pressed between other great kingdoms, add even, by numerous armies, and that withal it suffers want and famine; let Yeou (Tseu-lou) be appointed to its administration, in less than three years I could accomplish that the people of this kingdom should recover a manly courage, and know their condition. The Philosopher smiled at these words.

And you, Khieou, what are your thoughts?
The disciple replied respectfully: Suppose a province of sixty or seventy li in extent, or even of fifty or sixty li, and that Khieou were appointed to its administration, in less than three years I could accomplish that the people should have sufficient. As to the rites and to music, I would entrust the teaching of them to a superior man.

And you, Tchi, what are your thoughts?
The disciple replied respectfully: I will not say that I can do these things; I desire to study. When the ceremonies of the temple of ancestors are performed, and great public assemblies take place, clothed in my robe of azure and other vestments proper for such a place and such ceremonies, I could wish to take part in them in the quality of a humble functionary.

And you, Tian, what are your thoughts?
The disciple did nothing but draw some rare sounds from his guitar; but these sounds prolonging themselves, he laid it aside, and rising, replied respectfully: My opinion differs entirely from those of my three fellow disciples — The Philosopher said: What prevents you from expressing it? Here each one can speak his thought. — The disciple said: spring being no more, my robe of spring laid aside, but covered with the bonnet of manhood, accompanied by five or six men, and six or seven young people, I should love to go and bathe in the waters of the -Y-, and go and take the fresh air in those woody places where they offer sacrifices to heaven to obtain rain, to moderate some airs, and then return to my abode.

The Philosopher applauding these words by a sign of satisfaction, said: I am of Tian’s mind.

The three disciples departed, but Thseng-sie remained yet some time. Thseng-sie said:

What ought one to think of the words of these three disciples? The Philosopher said: Each one of them has expressed his opinion; that is all.”

The narrator proceeds to tell why the Philosopher smiled; but that is obvious enough.

For the most part, when we listen to the conversation of the Reformers, we too [are] of Tian’s mind. [Quoted by permission of the Houghton Library.]
WAS THOREAU A CHINAMAN?

sayings, stating that these were passages he “translated from
the French.” However, he did not give any indication of when
he had done it.

There is no known record of Thoreau’s borrowing of the Pauthier
book, nor did Thoreau date the “Commonplace Book.” The
catalogues of the Wakeman and the Parke-Bernet sales both
describe the “Commonplace Book” as “in all probability” written
in Thoreau’s “Later Thirties or Early Forties,” which would
place it in the mid and late 1850s. Based on its contents,
Kenneth Walter Cameron also agrees on 1850-1855. William L.
Howarth gives the notebook two dates: 1842-1843 and 1850, while
Moldenhauer assumes a time period from the late 1830s to the
early 1840s. We need to reach a more satisfactory date than
somewhere between the late 1830s and 1850s.

Pauthier’s book was published in 1841, which establishes the
earliest year in which Thoreau could have done the translation.
The Confucian translations follow closely Thoreau’s
transcriptions of early English poets in the notebook. According
to Robert Sattelmeyer, from the second half of 1841 to the end
of 1843 Thoreau read and copied “extensively” English poetry and
verse dramas. It is very likely that these transcriptions of
early English poets were done during this period, and it might
even be probable that some of them were copied from the books
Thoreau read in New York in late 1843 when he was tutoring
William Emerson’s children. William L. Howarth’s dating of
1842-1843 undoubtedly refers to the copied English poetry. This
then leaves us two possible times for the translations: one
could be within the period of Thoreau’s transcriptions of the
English poets, as the translations follow closely after them;
the other would be any time after that, but certainly before
1850.

In “Resistance to Civil Government,” Thoreau first makes use of
one of his translations:

“Resistance” first reached print on 14 May 1849 as Article X
“Textual Notes,” in THE WRITINGS OF HENRY D. THOREAU, ed. Walter Roy Harding et al., 12 volumes to date (Princeton:
95. E. Robert Sattelmeyer, THOREAU’S READING: A STUDY IN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY WITH BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CATALOGUE
96. The fact that Waldo Emerson
was unfamiliar with M.J. Pauthier (at this time at least) suggests that the book may not have been in Henry Thoreau’s possession in Concord. The fact that Thoreau’s translations are not reflected in the “Ethnical Scriptures” selections might argue for a date after September 1843.

“Resistance to Civil Government”: If a state is governed by the
principles of reason, poverty and misery are subjects of shame;
if a state is not governed by the principles of reason, riches
and honors are the subjects of shame.
Was Thoreau a Chinaman?

of Elizabeth Palmer Peabody’s Aesthetic Papers, after it was earlier delivered as a lecture before the Concord Lyceum on 26 January 1848. But Thoreau is known to have been in the habit of constantly revising his manuscripts until the last minute. Many of his Confucian sayings in A Week and Walden are, I find, later additions to his first drafts. We do not know whether this quotation was in the lecture as he first delivered it or whether it was added afterwards. No manuscript of the lecture survives. Thus, in so far as the external evidence indicates, Thoreau could have made these translations any time between 1841 and 1849, though late 1843 seems most likely. As we will see, most of these translations concern the nature, or inner qualities, of the Confucian superior man and with the Confucian ideal of governing. A good number are devoted to the more mysterious aspects of Neo-Confucian naturalism. Of particular interest is that lengthy Confucian anecdote—a conversation between Confucius and four of his disciples, in which Confucius asked each what he would do if he were one day famous. Three of them showed ambition in statesmanship; only Tian, the last to speak, expressed his wish to be free and to go with a few companions to the river Y, to take some fresh air and then return home singing. Hearing this, Confucius smiled and exclaimed that he agreed with Tian. Instead of a man of formality and convention, Confucius is presented here as rather a Taoist-like individual, free and unrestrained. Notice Henry Thoreau’s own comment at the end of this translation: “For the most part I too am of the opinion of Tian” (page 138). This anecdote, as has been noted, also appears in almost exactly the same form in the Houghton manuscript fragment. Since Thoreau saw fit both to translate this section and also to use it in his other work, clearly he was caught by the message the Confucian conversation insinuated. We cannot tell for sure whether it directly affected his decision to go to Walden as we have no absolute date for this translation, nor for the Harvard manuscript. But Thoreau might certainly have found his justification in it: even Confucius would consider retreating into the woods. Viewing this in light of Christy’s bold declaration that “No Confucius would


100. The fact that Emerson was unfamiliar with M.J. Pauthier (at this time at least) suggests that the book may not have been in Henry Thoreau’s possession in Concord. The fact that Thoreau’s translations are not reflected in the “Ethnical Scriptures” selections might argue for a date after September 1843. In the early 1840s, Thoreau engaged in extensive and enthusiastic studies of the Oriental scriptures under the influence of Emerson and through Emerson’s personal library. It was in 1843, as mentioned earlier, that Emerson and Thoreau made the two Confucian selections for The Dial. Pauthier and his translation s did not appear in Emerson’s journal until 1854. Neither is Pauthier’s book in Emerson’s library. It is likely that Thoreau might have encountered Pau th ier’s text himself in the latter part of 1843 in New York where he was tutoring William Emerson’s children. Bradley P. Dean, secretary of the Thoreau Society, believes, however, that 1849 is a more likely date for these translations since Thoreau began to use Confucian translations in the second drafts of A Week and Walden. Scholars generally assume that the 2nd drafts of these writings were completed in 1849 (letter to Joel Myerson, 9 February 1992).

101. A few of these passages also appear in The Dial’s Confucian selections in Marshman’s and Collie’s translations, such as [44.1]-[44.3], [76.8], [102.9], [394-395.11].

102. bMS Am 278.5, Folder 12a; click on the button for a full transcription:

103. Henry Thoreau began to live at Walden Pond in July 1845 and left there in September 1847. The whole of his Walden days falls within the time period of his Confucian translation.

ever have gone to Walden,”¹⁰⁵ we would have to question who is misrepresenting whom. Is it Thoreau who misread Confucius? Or have Thoreau scholars all along misread Thoreau’s reading of Confucius?

In their search for ultimate relations between man and God, self and nature, Transcendentalists like Waldo Emerson and Thoreau turned to the East as one of many sources for inspiration. The Neo-Confucian FOUR BOOKS became one site for their spiritual exploration and intellectual expansion. Thoreau’s translation of these texts is a typical example. Much study remains. But the recognition and publication of these translations provide us with further evidence for the Oriental influence on Transcendentalists in general, and on Henry Thoreau in particular.

VI

In the following transcription, I adopt the editorial conventions in the JOURNALS AND MISCELLANEOUS NOTEBOOKS OF RALPH WALDO EMERSON. I specify in footnotes passages which appear in Henry Thoreau’s published writings. Thoreau’s additions, cancellations, corrections, commentaries, and passages marked in pencil are also noted. All additions are above the line unless otherwise indicated. Spellings and punctuations appear as they are in the original. Manuscript page numbers are given in square brackets, while page numbers of the French text and the French titles of THE FOUR BOOKS appear in braces. All other instances of bracketing are Thoreau’s. The text, here printed for the first time, is reproduced by permission of the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, The New York Public Library, and the Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. [Austin Meredith’s note: the mode of representation of this material, here in the Kouroo Contexture, differs slightly from the mode of presentation used by Hongbo Tan for the book pages of her paper publication, since our FrameMaker tool allows for greater freedom in representation of marked-up text, and since this material here needs to be presented in the same manner as the numerous other instances of marked-up text already present in this database.]

“CONFUCIUS ET MENCNIUS. LES QUATRES LIVRES DE PHILOSOPHIE MORALE
ET POLITIQUE DE LA CHINE, TRADUIT DU CHINOIS PAR M.J. PAUTHIER.
PARIS, 1841.”

In the Introduction the Translator says — (ii-iii) “Indeed it is a phenomenon which we can call extraordinary, that of the Chinese nation and the Hindoo nation preserving themselves immoveable, from the remotest origin of human societies, on the so moveable and changing scene^stage^ of the world! One would^might^ say that their first legislators, seizing with their arms of iron these nations in their cradle, had impressed upon them an indelible form, (and) cast them, so to speak, in a mold of brass, so strong has been has been [sic] the impress^imprint^, so durable has been the form! Assuredly, there are there some vestiges of the eternal laws which govern the world.
According to Pauthier — Khoung-fou-tseu (by the missionaries Latinized Confucius) (vi-vii) “collected and put in order in the second half of the sixth century before our era, all the religious, philosophical, and political and moral documents which existed in his time, and formed of them a body of doctrines, under the title of Y-King, or Sacred Book of permutations; Chou-king, or Sacred Book par excellence; Chi-king, or Book of Verses; Li-ki, or Book of Rites. The Sse-chou, or Four Classical Books, are his sayings and maxims collected by his disciples. If one can judge of the worth of a man and of the power of his doctrines by the influence which they have exercised over populations, one can, with the Chinese, call Khoung-tseu the greatest Instructor of the human race which the ages have ever produced.”

There is mention of a book called “Spring time & Autumn” written by Confucius. Pauthier has translated the Chou-king in what he calls his “Livre sacres de l’Orient” from which in fact the present translation is taken. He has also printed a
“Descriptins historique, geographique et litteraire de la Chine—Didot—1837.”

**Ta Hio, La Grande Étude**

**[12.1]**

“Characters engraven on the bathing tub of the King Tching-thang said: Renew thyself completely each day; do it anew, regenerate again anew, and always anew. Thseng-tseu

**WALDEN:** Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself. I have been as sincere a worshipper of Aurora as the Greeks. I got up early and bathed in the pond; that was a religious exercise, and one of the best things which I did. They say that characters were engraven on the bathing tub of king Tching-thang to this effect: “Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again.” I can understand that. Morning brings back the heroic ages. I was as much affected by the faint hum of a mosquito making its invisible and unimaginable tour through my apartment at earliest dawn, when I was sitting with door and windows open, as I could be by any trumpet that ever sang of fame. It was Homer’s requiem; itself an Iliad and Odyssey in the air, singing its own wrath and wanderings. There was something cosmical about it; a standing advertisement, till forbidden, of the everlasting vigor and fertility of the world. The morning, which is the most memorable season of the day, is the awakening hour. Then there is least somnolence in us; and for an hour, at least, some part of us awakes, which slumbers all the rest of the day and night.

**[12.3]**

“Although the family of Tcheou may have had possessed for a long time a royal principality,
It obtained from heaven (in the person of Wen-wang) a new investiture.” Book of verses.

[13.3]

“How the virtue of Wen-wang was vast and profound! How he knew how to join splendor to the greatest sollicitude for the accomplishment of his different destinies^destinations! Book of verses.”

[19.2]

“The soul not being mistress of herself, one looks,^regarde and one does not see; one hears,^écoute and one does not understand; one eats, and one does not know the savor of food.”
WALDEN: Who has not sometimes derived an inexpressible satisfaction from his food in which appetite had no share? I have been thrilled to think that I owed a mental perception to the commonly gross sense of taste, that I have been inspired though the palate, that some berries which I had eaten on a hill-side had fed my genius. "The soul not being mistress of herself," says Thseng-tseu, "one looks, and one does not see; one listens, and one does not hear; one eats, and one does not know the savor of food." He who distinguishes the true savor of his food can never be a glutton; he who does not cannot be otherwise. A puritan may go to his brown-bread crust with as gross an appetite as ever an alderman to his turtle. Not that food which entereth into the mouth defileth a man, but the appetite with which it is eaten. It is neither the quality nor the quantity, but the devotion to sensual savors; when that which is eaten is not a viand to sustain our animal, or inspire our spiritual life, but food for the worms that possess us. If the hunter has a taste for mud-turtles, muskrats, and other such savage tid-bits, the fine lady indulges a taste for jelly made of a calf’s foot, or for sardines from over the sea, and they are even. He goes to the mill-pond, she to her preserve-pot. The wonder is how they, how you and I, can live this slimy beastly life, eating and drinking.

Thseng-tseu

[23.6]

“Conduct yourself suitably toward the persons of your family, then you will be able to instruct & to direct a nation of men.”

Thseng-tseu, in spirit of C.

Henry Thoreau’s letter to Benjamin B. Wiley:

He also said — (I translate from the French) Conduct yourself suitably toward the persons of your family, then you will be able to instruct and to direct a nation of men.”
“Of all men there is no one who does not drink and eat, but very few among them know how to distinguish savors.” C.

“The man who is out of the way of duty casts himself into a thousand rash enterprises to seek what he ought not to obtain.” Tseu-sse reporting the spirit of C.

“The archer may be, in one respect, compared to the wise man; if he misses the mark at which he aims, he enters into himself to seek the cause of it.” C.

“How the faculties of the subtle powers of Heaven & of earth are vast and profound!

One seeks to perceive them, and one does not see them; one seeks to apprehend, entendre, hear them, and one does not apprehend, hear them; identified with the substance of things,
they cannot be separated from them.

[44.3]

They cause that, in all the universe, men purify & sanctify their hearts, clothe themselves in their holiday clothes to offer sacrifices and oblations to their ancestors. It is an ocean

"It is an ocean of subtle intelligences! They are everywhere above us, on our left, on our right; they environ us on all sides!" C.\textsuperscript{106}

\textbf{WALDEN:} Any prospect of awakening or coming to life to a dead man makes indifferent all times and places. The place where that may occur is always the same, and indescribably pleasant to all our senses. For the most part we allow only outlying and transient circumstances to make our occasions. They are, in fact, the cause of our distraction. Nearest to all things is that power which fashions their being. Next to us the grandest laws are continually being executed. Next to us is not the workman whom we have hired, with whom we love so well to talk, but the workman whose work we are.

"How vast and profound is the influence of the subtile powers of Heaven and of Earth!"

"We seek to perceive them, and we do not see them; we seek to hear them, and we do not hear them; identified with the substance of things, they cannot be separated from them."

"They cause that in all the universe men purify and sanctify their hearts, and clothe themselves in their holiday garments to offer sacrifices and oblations to their ancestors. It is an ocean of subtile intelligences. They are everywhere, above us, on our left, on our right; they environ us on all sides."

\textsuperscript{106} Austin Meredith commentary: Thoreau was transliterating this not directly from the Chinese of \textit{THE DOCTRINE OF THE MEAN} (he could not read Chinese) but from the Catholic scholar Pauthier’s rendering of this into the French language. Such Catholic scholars have consistently emphasized the “transcendental” interpretation of this passage, the one which in China had been favored by the neo-Confucian Chu Hsi (born October 18, 1130-died April 23, 1200) in his 1189 CE edition of the \textit{FOUR BOOKS}. Such Protestant scholars as Professor James Legge have preferred on the other hand to interpret this passage as having to do with the later Taoist credulity about ghosts, the ubiquitous spirits of the dead. Thoreau sided with the Jesuits and with their “transcendental” reading of the text inclusion following Chu Hsi. Whichever is the more accurate reading of this Taoist inclusion in the Confucian materials, the reading preferred by Thoreau would be to all accounts obviously the far more interesting one to us.
"He who does not know how to recognize in man the mandate of heaven, has not yet arrived at perfection." Tseu-sse reporting C.’s spirit

"The perfect is the commencement and the end of all beings." Tseu-sse giving spirit of C.

"That one who is in this high condition of perfect holiness does not show himself, and yet like the earth, he reveals himself by his benefits; he does not move, and yet like the heavens, he produces numerous transformations; he does not act, and yet, like space & time, he arrives at the perfection of his work." Tseu-sse giving spirit of C.

"The conduct of the wise man is without savor as water." ibid

"The wise man knows things distant, that is to say, the world, empires, & men, by the things which touch him, by his own person;" ibid.
Virtue is light as the finest down. Book of verses. II

The actions, the secret operations of the supreme heaven\textsuperscript{107} have neither sound nor odor. Book of Verses.

The \textit{Lun-yu}

[76.8]

[This line, which is crowded between two entries and is struck through in pencil with a vertical line, apparently was Thoreau’s first version of the entry that would follow.]

Do not contract friendship with those who do not resemble you. C.

[76.8] Do not contract bonds of friendship with persons inferior to yourself morally, et pour les connaissances.” C.

107. “the secret ... heaven” is connected by a pencil line to Thoreau’s comment in pencil “It is not material”.
A WEEK: Confucius said, “Never contract Friendship with a man who is not better than thyself.” It is the merit and preservation of Friendship, that it takes place on a level higher than the actual characters of the parties would seem to warrant. The rays of light come to us in such a curve that every man whom we meet appears to be taller than he actually is. Such foundation has civility. My Friend is that one whom I can associate with my choicest thought. I always assign to him a nobler employment in my absence than I ever find him engaged in; and I imagine that the hours which he devotes to me were snatched from a higher society. The sorest insult which I ever received from a Friend was, when he behaved with the license which only long and cheap acquaintance allows to one’s faults, in my presence, without shame, and still addressed me in friendly accents. Beware, lest thy Friend learn at last to tolerate one frailty of thine, and so an obstacle be raised to the progress of thy love. There are times when we have had enough even of our Friends, when we begin inevitably to profane one another, and must withdraw religiously into solitude and silence, the better to prepare ourselves for a loftier intimacy. Silence is the ambrosial night in the intercourse of Friends, in which their sincerity is recruited and takes deeper root.

[82.17]

To know that one knows what one knows, and to know that one does not know what one does not know: behold that is true science. C.
WALDEN: I think that we may safely trust a good deal more than we do. We may waive just so much care of ourselves as we honestly bestow elsewhere. Nature is as well adapted to our weakness as to our strength. The incessant anxiety and strain of some is a well nigh incurable form of disease. We are made to exaggerate the importance of what work we do; and yet how much is not done by us! or, what if we had been taken sick? How vigilant we are! determined not to live by faith if we can avoid it; all the day long on the alert, at night we unwillingly say our prayers and commit ourselves to uncertainties. So thoroughly and sincerely are we compelled to live, reverencing our life, and denying the possibility of change. This is the only way, we say; but there are as many ways as there can be drawn radii from one centre. All change is a miracle to contemplate; but it is a miracle which is taking place every instant. Confucius said, “To know that we know what we know, and that we do not know what we do not know, that is true knowledge.” When one man has reduced a fact of the imagination to be a fact to his understanding, I foresee that all men will at length establish their lives on that basis.

If in the morning you have heard the voice of celestial reason, in the evening you will be able to die.” C.

The doctrine of our master (C.) consists only in having soundness (droiture, rectitude) of heart, and in loving his neighbor as himself.

Tseu-Koung put a question in these terms: Is there a word in the language which one could limit oneself to
practice alone even to the end of existence? The Philosopher said: There is the word chou, of which the sense is: That which we do not desire should be done to us, we (must) not do to others. C.

Virtue does not remain as an abandoned orphan; it must of necessity have neighbors. C.

The Philosopher said that Tseu-tsien (one of his disciples) was a man of a superior virtue. If the Kingdom of Lou possessed no man superior, where could this one have taken his eminent virtue? C.

Tseu-lou had hears (in the teachings of his master [C.]) some moral maxim which he had not yet practised; he feared to hear more like it. C. 108

108. This item is struck through in pencil with a vertical line, Thoreau’s usual notation indicating that he had accessed the item for use somewhere. (Nobody has managed as yet to figure out where. Is there a Thoreau writing still to be recovered?)
The Philosopher said: Alas! I have not yet seen a man who has been able to perceive his faults, and who has blamed himself for them interiorly. C.

The Philosopher said: O how Was he was wise (was) Hoei; he had a vase of bamboo to take his nourishment, a cup to drink, and he dwelt in the humble nook of a narrow and abandoned street; another man than he would not have been able to support his privations and his sufferings. That did not change however the serenity of Hoei; O how he was wise, Hoei! C.

When Tseu-yeou was governor of the city of Wou, the Philosopher said to him: Have you men of merit? He answered: We have Tan-tai, surnamed Mei-ming, who in travelling does not take a cross road, and who, except when public affairs are engage him, has never set foot in the dwelling of Yen (Tse-yeou). C.
**WAS THOREAU A CHINAMAN?**

**[108.15]**

The Philosopher said to nourish one’s self with a little rice, to drink water, to have only his bended arm to support his head, is a state which has also its satisfaction. To be rich & honored by iniquitous means, is for me as the floating cloud which passes. C.

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**Henry Thoreau’s letter to Benjamin B. Wiley:**

“To nourish ones self with a little rice, to drink water, to have only his bended arm to support his head, is a state which has also its satisfaction. To be rich and honored by iniquitous means, is for me as the floating cloud which passes.”

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**[111.34-112]**

The Philosopher being very sick, Tseu-lou begged him to permit his disciples to address for him their prayers to the spirits and genii. The Philosopher said. Is that proper^fit.expedient? Tseu-lou answered with respect: It is suitable.convenient. It is said in the book entitled Loui: “Address your prayers to the spirits and genii above & below. (of heaven & earth)” The Philosopher said the prayer of Khieou (himself) is permanent.e.

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**[115.13]**

If a state is governed by the principles of reason, poverty
WAS THOREAU A CHINAMAN?

and misery are a subject of shame; if a state is not governed by the principles of reason, riches and honors are then the subjects of shame.

“RESISTANCE TO CIVIL GOVERNMENT”: When I converse with the freest of my neighbors, I perceive that, whatever they may say about the magnitude and seriousness of the question, and their regard for the public tranquillity, the long and the short of the matter is, that they cannot spare the protection of the existing government, and they dread the consequences to their property and families of disobedience to it. For my own part, I should not like to think that I ever rely on the protection of the State. But, if I deny the authority of the State when it presents its tax-bill, it will soon take and waste all my property, and so harass me and my children without end. This is hard. This makes it impossible for a man to live honestly, and at the same time comfortably in outward respects. It will not be worth the while to accumulate property; that would be sure to go again. You must hire or squat somewhere, and raise but a small crop, and eat that soon. You must live within yourself, and depend upon yourself always tucked up and ready for a start, and not have many affairs. A man may grow rich in Turkey even, if he will be in all respects a good subject of the Turkish government. Confucius said, “If a state is governed by the principles of reason, poverty and misery are subjects of shame; if a state is not governed by the principles of reason, riches and honors are the subjects of shame.” No: until I want the protection of Massachusetts to be extended to me in some distant Southern port, where my liberty is endangered, or until I am bent solely on building up an estate at home by peaceful enterprise, I can afford to refuse allegiance to Massachusetts, and her right to my property and life. It costs me less in every sense to incur the penalty of disobedience to the State than it would to obey. I should feel as if I were worth less in that case.

[121.22]

As soon as a child is born (it is necessary to) we should respect its faculties; the knowledge which will come to it (in course) by and by does not resemble at all its present state. If it arrives at the age of forty or fifty years, without having learned anything, it is no more worthy of any respect.
From an army of three divisions one can take away its general, and put it in disorder; from the man the most abject or vulgar one cannot take away his thought.

Henry Thoreau's letter to Benjamin B. Wiley:

“As soon as a child is born we must respect its faculties; the knowledge which will come to it by & by does not resemble at all its present state. If it arrives at the age of 40 or 50 years, without having learned any thing, it is no more worthy of any respect.”
If there is any one who clothed in the humblest and coarsest dress could seat himself without blushing by the side of those who wear the most precious clothes, and the finest furs,
it is Yeou!

[122.26] Without envy to injure and
without ambitious desires,
For what simple & virtuous action is not one fit?

Book of Verses.

[140.8]

The ornaments of education are as the natural parts; the
natural parts as the ornaments of education. The skins of the
tiger & the leopard, when they are tanned, are as the skins of
the dog and the sheep tanned. Tseu-koung.

“WALKING”: I rejoice that horses and steers have to be broken
before they can be made the slaves of men, and that men themselves
have some wild oats still left to sow before they become
submissive members of society. Undoubtedly, all men are not
equally fit subjects for civilization, and because the majority,
like dogs and sheep are tame by inherited disposition, is no
reason why the others should have their natures broken that they
may be reduced to the same level. Men are in the main alike, but
they were made several in order that they might be various. If a
low use is to be served, one man will do nearly or quite as well
as another; if a high one, individual excellence is to be
regarded. Any man can stop a hole to keep the wind away, but no
other man could serve so rare a use as the author of this
illustration did. Confucius says “The skins of the tiger and the
leopard when they are tanned, are as the skins of the dog and the
sheep tanned.” But it is not the part of a true culture to tame
tigers, any more than it is to make sheep ferocious, and tanning
their skins for shoes is not the best use to which they can be put.

[142.16]

The superior man perfects or develops the good qualities of
other men; he does not perfect nor develop their bad tendencies;
the vulgar\textsuperscript{common} man is the opposite to this.

[142.19]

You who govern public affairs, what need have you to employ punishments? Love virtue & the people will be virtuous. The virtues of a superior man are like the wind; the virtues of a common man are like the grass; the grass, when the wind passes
Thoreau did not cite his source:

**WALDEN:** I was never molested by any person but those who represented the state. I had no lock nor bolt but for the desk which held my papers, not even a nail to put over my latch or windows. I never fastened my door night or day, though I was to be absent several days; not even when the next fall I spent a fortnight in the woods of Maine. And yet my house was more respected than if it had been surrounded by a file of soldiers. The tired rambler could rest and warm himself by my fire, the literary amuse himself with the few books on my table, or the curious, by opening my closet door, see what was left of my dinner, and what prospect I had of a supper. Yet, though many people of every class came this way to the pond, I suffered no serious inconvenience from these sources, and I never missed any thing but one small book, a volume of Homer, which perhaps was improperly gilded and this I trust a soldier of our camp has found by this time. I am convinced, that if all men were to live as simply as I then did, thieving and robbery would be unknown. These take place only in communities where some have got more than is sufficient while others have not enough. The Pope’s Homers would soon get properly distributed.

> “Nec bella fuerunt,  
> Faginus astabat dum scyphus ante dapes.”

> “Nor wars did men molest,  
> When only beechen bowls were in request.”

“You who govern public affairs, what need have you to employ punishments? Love virtue, and the people will be virtuous. The virtues of a superior man are like the wind; the virtues of a common man are like the grass; the grass, when the wind passes over it, bends.”

**ALEXANDER POPE**

**ALBIUS TIBULLUS**

**ALEK THERIEN**

**LYGDAMUS**

**CONFUCIUS**

**MENCUS**

**HOMER**
This brought about an interesting episode of source tracing over half a century later. In 1894, Charles Francis Adams came across this quote in WALDEN. Struck by its “figure of speech,” and its “mystical Eastern turn,” he “appropriated” it in his own writing. Thirteen years later, in delivering an address on General Robert E. Lee at Lexington, Virginia, he again employed this quote. But, as he could not remember the exact source, he simply drew it from his own earlier writing. It was then that he received a letter from R.V. Lancaster, telling him that the saying he used in his speech had been quoted by a Professor Hogue of Washington and Lee University in an account of Adams’s address, in which the quote was attributed to a “disciple of Emerson.” Lancaster explained to Adams that this saying should be ultimately attributed to Confucius. Surprised at this, Adams wrote back to Lancaster, “reiterating” his “own surmise” that the saying, if not original with Thoreau, “went back at furthest only to Emerson.” Lancaster, a missionary to China for 15 years, showed him the source of the passage in Confucius’s *LUN-YÜ*. Complaining that “Thoreau had not in any way indicated the source from whence he drew [it],” Adams resolved the case by writing to the *Nation* (“From Thoreau to Confucius, Via Washington Co., Virginia,” 21 April 1910, pages 399-400):

I presume I do not stand alone in having on more than one occasion, lost sleep over the effort to place some quotation which had stuck, so to speak, in memory’s crop, and in the placing of which no collection of quotations offered any assistance or supplied a clue. In the present case I hold it to have been a notable coincidence that a poetical figure of speech found in Thoreau’s work, and assumed to be taken from those of Emerson, should thus be correctly placed as attributable to Confucius by a modest Presbyterian clergyman, living in an obscure village nestled in the Virginia Alleghanies; he having a knowledge of the writings of Confucius solely as he had studied them in the Chinese tongue. Such a coincidence seems to merit mention among the Curiosities of Literature.

In response to Adams’s correspondence, F.B. Sanborn verified Adams’s finding, stating that “early readers of the Dial” would realize that Thoreau in Emerson’s absence edited the magazine’s “Ethnical Scriptures,” which made Confucius and Mencius first “known” to “most New England readers.” He confirmed Adams’s source found in Thoreau as well, agreeing that “No author was named by Thoreau in citing it.” But he supposed that to those “familiar with” Thoreau’s *Dial* chapters “the turn of the phrases disclosed it as attributed to Confucius” (“Thoreau and Confucius,” *Nation*, 12 May 1910, page 481).

**[158.25-159]**

In antiquity those who devoted themselves to study did it for themselves; now those who devote themselves to study do it for others (to appear learned in the eyes of others). C.

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**WALDEN:** “In antiquity,” said Confucius, “those who devoted themselves to study, did it for themselves; now, those who devote themselves to study, do it for others;” as a commentator says, “to appear learned in the eyes of others.” Now, it appears to me, those who devote themselves to charity, do it for others.
Kieou-pe-yu (great dignitary of the state of Wei) sent a man to Khoung-tseu to know his news. Khoung-tseu made the messenger be seated near him, and questioned him in these terms: What is your master doing? The messenger answered with respect: My master desires to diminish the number of his faults, but he cannot come to the end of them. The messenger being gone, the Philosopher said: What a worthy messenger! what a worthy messenger!

**WALDEN:** What news! how much more important to know what that is which was never old! “Kieou-pe-yu (great dignitary of the state of Wei) sent a man to Khoung-tseu to know his news. Khoung-tseu caused the messenger to be seated near him, and questioned him in these terms: What is your master doing? The messenger answered with respect: My master desires to diminish the number of his faults, but he cannot accomplish it. The messenger being gone, the philosopher remarked: What a worthy messenger! What a worthy messenger!” The preacher, instead of vexing the ears of drowsy farmers on their day of rest at the end of the week,—for Sunday is the fit conclusion of an ill-spent week, and not the fresh and brave beginning of a new one,—with this one other draggle-tail of a sermon, should shout with thundering voice,—“Pause! Avast! Why so seeming fast, but deadly slow?”

Not to resist being deceived by them, not to fortify oneself against their want of faith when one has foreseen it, is not that to be wise?
Tseu-lou, Thseng-sie, Yan-yeou, Kong-si-hoa, were seated by the side of the Philosopher.
The Philosopher said: Make no account of my age more than if I were only a day older than you.
Living apart and isolated, then you say: We are not known.
If any one knew you, then what would you do?
Tseu-lou replied with a brisk but respectful air: Suppose a kingdom of a thousand war-chariots, hard-pressed between other great kingdoms, add even, by numerous armies, and that withal it suffers want and famine; let Yeou (Tseu-lou) be appointed to its administration, in less than three years I could accomplish that the people of this kingdom should recover a manly courage, and know their condition. The Philosopher smiled at these words.
And you, Khieou, what do you think?
The disciple replied respectfully: Suppose a province of sixty or seventy li in extent, or even of fifty or sixty li, and that Khieou were appointed to its administration, in less than three years I could accomplish that the people should have sufficient. As to the rites and to music, I would entrust the teaching of them to a superior man.
And you, Tchi, what do you think?
The disciple replied respectfully: I will not say that I can do these things; I desire to study. When the ceremonies of the temple of ancestors are performed, and great public assemblies take place, clothed in my robe of azure and other vestments proper for such a place and such ceremonies, I could wish to take part in them in the quality of a humble functionary.
And you, Tian, what do you think?
The disciple did nothing but draw some rare sounds from his guitar; but these sounds prolonging themselves, he laid it
aside, and rising, replied respectfully: My opinion differs entirely from those of my three fellow disciples. — The Philosopher said: What prevents you from expressing it? Each one here can speak his thought. The disciple said: Spring time being no more, my robe of spring laid aside, but covered with the bonnet of manhood, accompanied by five or six men, and six or seven young people, I should love to go and bathe in the waters of the -Y-, to go and take the fresh air in those woody places where they offer sacrifices to heaven to obtain rain, to moderate some airs, and then return to my abode. The Philosopher applauding these words by a sign of satisfaction, said: I am of (the opinion of) Tian.('s mind.) The three disciples departed, but Thseng-sie remained yet some time.

Thseng-sie said:
What ought one to think of the words of these three disciples?
The Philosopher said: Each one of them has expressed his opinion; that is et viola tout.—
—He added: Master, why did you smile at the words of Yeou?
The Philosopher said: Each one ought to administer a kingdom according to the established laws and customs; the words of Yeou were not modest; that is the reason I smiled. But Khieou himself, did not he also express the desire to administer a state? How should se see that in a province of sixty or seventy li, or even of fifty or sixty li in extent? that is not a kingdom.
And Tchi, was it not of the affairs of a kingdom that he meant to speak? Those ceremonies of the temple of ancestors, those public assemblies, are they not the privilege of the grandest of all the orders? And Tchi how could he take part in them in the quality of a humble functionary? Who then could perform the great function?
For the most part, I too am of the opinion of Tian. &(am of Tian’s mind.)
T’seu-lou demanded what was the superior man. The Philosopher replied: He exerts himself constantly to improve himself in order to draw to himself respect. —Is that all he does? —He improves constantly himself in order to procure for others repose and tranquility. —Is that all he does? —He improves constantly himself in order to render happy all people. Yao and Chun themselves did thus.

Youan-jang (an ancient friend of the Philosopher) more aged than he, was seated on the road with legs crossed. The...
Philosopher said to him: Being a child, not to have had fraternal deference; in mature age, to have done nothing praiseworthy; arrived at old age, not to die; it is to be a good-for-nothing wretch. [a worthless fellow—vaurien] And he struck his legs with his sticks (to make him get up).

The superior man demands nothing but of himself; the common man and without merit demands everything of others.

I have almost seen the day when the historian of the empire left blancs in his narratives [where he was not sure of the facts].

The superior man does not occupy himself but with the right way; he does not occupy himself with eating and drinking. If you cultivate the earth, hunger is often found in the midst of you, if you study, happiness is found in the very bosom of study. The superior man is not troubled because he does not obtain the right way; he is not troubled because of poverty.
The superior man cannot be known and appreciated suitably in little things, because he is capable of undertaking great ones. The common man, on the contrary, not being capable of undertaking great things, can be known and appreciated in little ones.

Have precepts [enseignements] for all the world, without distinction of classes or ranks.

They say that Lieou-hia-hoei and Chao-lien did not sustain to the end their resolutions, and that they dishonored their character. Their language was in harmony with reason & justice; while their acts were in harmony with the sentiments of men.
A Week: Most men have no inclination, no rapids, no cascades, but marshes, and alligators, and miasma instead. We read that when in the expedition of Alexander, Onesicritus was sent forward to meet certain of the Indian sect of Gymnosophists, and he had told them of those new philosophers of the West, Pythagoras, Socrates, and Diogenes, and their doctrines, one of them named Dandamis answered, that "They appeared to him to have been men of genius, but to have lived with too passive a regard for the laws." The philosophers of the West are liable to this rebuke still. "They say that Lieou-hia-hoei, and Chao-lien did not sustain to the end their resolutions, and that they dishonored their character. Their language was in harmony with reason and justice; while their acts were in harmony with the sentiments of men."

What follows is from Mencius.

Mencius

[209.7]

Another man had a thought;
I, I have divined it, and given it measure.

Book of Verses

Mencius about a century after C.

[235.14-236]

Wen-kong, prince of Teng, put another question in these terms: The men of Thsi are on the point of surrounding with walls the state of Sie; I experience great fear at it. What ought I to do in this case?

Mencius replied with respect: Formerly Tai-wang inhabited the land of Pin; the barbarians of the north, named Joung,
troubled him without ceasing by their incursions; he quitted
this residence and betook himself to the foot of mount Khi, where
he fixed himself; it is not from choice and deliberate purpose
that he did this, it is because he could not do otherwise.
If any one practises constantly virtue, in the course of
generations there will be found always among his sons and
grandsons a man who will be elevated to royalty. The superior
man who wishes to found a dynasty, with the intention of
transmitting the sovereign authority to his descendants,
acts so that his enterprise can be continued. If this
superior man accomplishes his work, then heaven has pronounced.
Prince, what is this kingdom of Thsi to you? Exert yourself to
practise virtue [which opens the road to royalty] and confine
yourself to that. [Mencius]

[256.8]

The ancient emperor Yu heard pronounce words of wisdom &
virtue, he bowed in sighs of veneration for
receiving them.¹¹⁰

[257.9]

Lieou-hia-hoei said What you do belongs to you, and what I do
belongs to me. If ever you should be arms named and body naked
to my side, how could you soil me? Mencius does not
quite approve of this.

¹¹⁰. This item is struck through in pencil with a vertical line, Thoreau’s usual notation indicating that he had accessed the item for
use somewhere. (Nobody has managed as yet to figure out where. Is there a Thoreau writing still to be recovered?)
WAS THOREAU A CHINAMAN?

[258.1]

It is said — It is not necessary to place the limits of a people in frontiers wholly material, nor the strength of a kingdom in the obstacles which mountains and watercourses present to the enemy, nor the imposing majesty of the empire in a great military equipage. That one who has attained to govern according to the principles of humanity & justice, will find an immeasurable^incalculable support in the heart of the people.

[302.7]

Yang-ho desired to see Khoung-tseu, but he feared lest he should not observe the rites. [It is said in the Book of Rites] “When the first functionary carried a present to a learned man, if it happens that the last is not in his house to receive it, than [sic?] he presents himself at the abode of the functionary to thank him for it.”

Yang-ho informed himself of a moment when Khoung-tseu was absent from his house, and he chose this moment to go and carry to Khong-tseu [sic?] a little salt here [sic?]. Khoung-tseu on his side, informed himself of a moment when Yang-ho was absent from his house to go and thank him for it. In this case Yang-ho was the first to make advances; how could Khoung-txeu have avoided going to visit him?

[315.5]

Mencius said — Men have a constant way of speaking [without
very well understanding it]. All say: the empire, the kingdom, the family. The basis of the empire exists in the kingdom; the basis of the kingdom exists in the family; the basis of the family exists in the person.

"Resistance to Civil Government": The authority of government, even such as I am willing to submit to —for I will cheerfully obey those who know and can do better than I, and in many things even those who neither know nor can do so well— is still an impure one: to be strictly just, it must have the sanction and consent of the governed. It can have no pure right over my person and property but what I concede to it. The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy, from a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual. Even the Chinese philosopher was wise enough to regard the individual as the basis of the empire. Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government? Is it not possible to take a step further towards recognizing and organizing the rights of man? There will never be a really free and enlightened State until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly. I please myself with imagining a State at least which can afford to be just to all men, and to treat the individual with respect as a neighbor; which even would not think it inconsistent with its own repose if a few were to live aloof from it, not meddling with it, nor embraced by it, who fulfilled all the duties of neighbors and fellow-men. A State which bore this kind of fruit, and suffered it to drop off as fast as it ripened, would prepare the way for a still more perfect and glorious State, which also I have imagined, but not yet anywhere seen.

Mencius said: Can one converse and speak the language of reason with cruel and inhuman princes. Dangers the most menacing are for them motives of tranquility, calamities the most disastrous are for them subjects of profit; they rejoice at that which causes their ruin. If one could converse and speak the language of reason with inhuman and cruel princes, would there be so great a number of kingdoms which perish, and of families
which fall?
There was a young child who sang, saying:
"The water of the river Thsang-lang is it pure,
I can wash there the fillets which bind my head;
The water of the river Thsang-lang is it troubled,
I can wash there my feet."
Khoung-tseu said: My little children, hearken to these words:
If the water is pure, he will wash there the fillets which bind
his head; if it is troubled, then he will wash there his feet;
it is itself which will decide it.
Men certainly despise themselves before other men despise them.
Families certainly destroy themselves before men destroy them.
Kingdom certainly attack themselves before men attack them.
The Tai-kia* says: "One can preserve himself from the calamities
sent by heaven; one cannot support those which he has brought
upon himself." These words say exactly what I wished to express.

*A Chapter of the Chou-king.

[323.15]

If you listen attentively to the words of a man; if you
consider the pupils of his eyes, how can he conceal himself from
you?

[333.19]

That in which men differ from brute beasts is a thing very
inconsiderable; the common herd lose it very soon superior men
preserve it carefully.
**WALDEN**: The other day I picked up the lower jaw of a hog, with white and sound teeth and tusks, which suggested that there was an animal health and vigor distinct from the spiritual. This creature succeeded by other means than temperance and purity. "That in which men differ from brute beasts," says Mencius, "is a thing very inconsiderable; the common herd lose it very soon; superior men preserve it carefully." Who knows what sort of life would result if we had attained to purity? If I knew so wise a man as could teach me purity I would go to seek him forthwith. "A command over our passions, and over the external senses of the body, and good acts, are declared by the Ved to be indispensable in the mind’s approximation to God." Yet the spirit can for the time pervade and control every member and function of the body, and transmute what in form is the grossest sensuality into purity and devotion. The generative energy, which, when we are loose, dissipates and makes us unclean, when we are continent invigorates and inspires us. Chastity is the flowering of man; and what are called Genius, Heroism, Holiness, and the like, are but various fruits which succeed it. Man flows at once to God when the channel of purity is open. By turns our purity inspires and our impurity casts us down. He is blessed who is assured that the animal is dying out in him day by day, and the divine being established. Perhaps there is none but has cause for shame on account of the inferior and brutish nature to which he is allied. I fear that we are such gods or demigods only as fauns and satyrs, the divine allied to beasts, the creatures of appetite, and that, to some extent, our very life is our disgrace.

“How happy’s he who hath due place assigned
To his beasts and disaforested his mind!
*   *   *
Can use his horse, goat, wolf, and ev’ry beast,
And is not ass himself to all the rest!
Else man not only is the herd of swine,
But he’s those devils too which did incline
Them to a headlong rage, and made them worse.”

All sensuality is one, though it takes many forms; all purity is one. It is the same whether a man eat, or drink, or cohabit, or sleep sensually. They are but one appetite, and we only need to see a person do any one of these things to know how great a sensualist he is. The impure can neither stand nor sit with purity. When the reptile is attacked at one mouth of his burrow, he shows himself at another. If you would be chaste, you must be temperate. What is chastity? How shall a man know if he is chaste? He shall not know it. We have heard of this virtue, but we know not what it is. We speak conformably to the rumor which we have heard. From exertion come wisdom and purity; from sloth ignorance and sensuality. In the student sensuality is a sluggish habit of mind. An unclean person is universally a slothful one, one who sits by a stove, whom the sun shines on prostrate, who reposes without being fatigued. If you would avoid uncleanness, and all the sins, work earnestly, thought it be at cleaning a stable. Nature is hard to be overcome, but she must be overcome. What avails it that you are Christian, if you are not purer than the heathen, if you deny yourself no more, if you are not more religious? I know of many systems of religion esteemed heathenish whose precepts fill the reader with shame, and provoke him to new endeavors, though it be to the performance of rites merely.
I hesitate to say these things, but it is not because of the subject, -I care not how obscene my words are,- but because I cannot speak of them without betraying my impurity. We discourse freely without shame of one form of sensuality, and are silent about another. We are so degraded that we cannot speak simply of the necessary functions of human nature. In earlier ages, in some countries, every function was reverently spoken of and regulated by law. Nothing was too trivial for the Hindoo lawgiver, however offensive it may be to modern taste. He teaches how to eat, drink, cohabit, void excrement and urine, and the like, elevating what is mean, and does not falsely excuse himself by calling these things trifles.

That which operates or produces effects without apparent action, is heaven; that which happens without one’s causing it to come, is destiny.

To contract ties of friendship with any one, is to contract friendship with his virtue. There ought not to be any other motive in friendship. But men wish that he should contract friendship with their vice.
The effect of a return to goodness, (produced) brought forth each day (in) to the tranquil and beneficial breath of the morning, cause that in respect to the love of virtue and the hatred of vice, one approaches a little the primitive nature of man [as in the sprouts of the forest which has been cut]. In like circumstances, what the evil which one does in the interval of a day prevents the germs of virtues which began to spring up again from developing themselves and destroys them. After having thus prevented many times the germs of virtue which began to spring up again from developing themselves, then the beneficent breath of evening does not suffice to preserve them. As soon as the beneficent breath of evening does not suffice to preserve them, then the nature of man does not differ much from that of the brute. Men seeing the nature of this man like that
WALDEN: "A return to goodness produced each day in the tranquil and beneficent breath of the morning, causes that in respect to the love of virtue and the hatred of vice one approaches a little the primitive nature of man, as the sprouts of the forest which has been felled. In like manner the evil which one does in the interval of a day prevents the germs of virtues which began to spring up again from developing themselves and destroys them. "After the germs of virtue have thus been prevented many times from developing themselves, then the beneficent breath of evening does not suffice to preserve them. As soon as the breath of evening does not suffice longer to preserve them, then the nature of man does not differ much from that of the brute. Men seeing the nature of this man like that of the brute, think that he has never possessed the innate faculty of reason. Are those the true and natural sentiments of man?

“The Golden Age was first created, which without any avenger Spontaneously without law cherished fidelity and rectitude. Punishment and fear were not; nor were threatening words read On suspended brass; nor did the suppliant crowd fear The words of their judge; but were safe without an avenger. Not yet the pine felled on its mountains had descended To the liquid waves that it might see a foreign world, And mortals knew no shores but their own.

* * *

There was eternal spring, and placid zephyrs with warm Blasts soothed the flowers born without seed.”

If one loses a fowl or dog, he knows well how to seek them again; if one loses the sentiments of his heart, he does not know how to seek them again!
The duties of practical philosophy consist only in seeking after those sentiments of the heart which we have lost; that is all.
A WEEK: Mencius says: “If one loses a fowl or a dog, he knows well how to seek them again; if one loses the sentiments of his heart, he does not know how to seek them again.... The duties of practical philosophy consist only in seeking after those sentiments of the heart which we have lost; that is all.”

WALDEN: In any weather, at any hour of the day or night, I have been anxious to improve the nick of time, and notch it on my stick too; to stand on the meeting of two eternities, the past and future, which is precisely the present moment; to toe that line. You will pardon some obscurities, for there are more secrets in my trade than in most men’s, and yet not voluntarily kept, but inseparable from its very nature. I would gladly tell all that I know about it, and never paint “No Admittance” on my gate.

I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtle-dove, and am still on their trail. Many are the travellers I have spoken concerning them, describing their tracks and what calls they answered to. I have met one or two who had heard the hound, and the tramp of the horse, and even seen the dove disappear behind a cloud, and they seemed as anxious to recover them as if they had lost them themselves.

To anticipate, not the sunrise and the dawn merely, but, if possible, Nature herself! How many mornings, summer and winter, before yet any neighbor was stirring about his business, have I been about mine! No doubt many of my townsmen have met me returning from this enterprise, farmers starting for Boston in the twilight, or woodchoppers going to their work. It is true, I never assisted the sun materially in his rising, but, doubt not, it was of the last importance only to be present at it.
Khoung-tou-tseu put a question in these terms: All men resemble one another. Some are however great men, others little men; how so?
Mencius said: If one follows the inspirations of the great parts of himself, he is a great man; if one follows the inclinations of the little parts of himself, he is a little man.

Each man possess nobleness in himself; only he does not think to seek it in himself.
What men regard as nobleness, is not true and noble nobleness. Those whom Tchao-meng [first minister of the king of Thsi] has made noble, Thcha Tchao-meng can make. degrade abase

If one gives an entire and absolute faith to [the historical] books, then he is not in so advantageous off a condition as if he was without them.
I, in the Chapter of the Chou-king entitled Wou-tching, take only two or three articles and no more.

The most honest of all the village are the pest of virtue. C.
If you wish to find fault with them, you will not know where to take them; if you wish to attack them in one place, you will not succeed. They share in the degenerate manners and the corruption of their age. That which dwells in their heart resembles rectitude and sincerity; what they practise resembles acts of temperance and integrity. As all the population of their village boast of them without ceasing, they think themselves perfect men, and they cannot enter into the way of Yao and Chun. That is why Khoung-tseu regarded them as the pest of virtue.

Mencius

[285.4]

It is said, ‘Some work with their intellect, others work with their hands. Those who work with their intellect govern men; those who work with their hands are governed by men. Those who are governed by men nourish men; those who govern men are nourished by men.’ That is the universal law of the world.
John James Clarke, on page 86 of his *Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter Between Asian and Western Thought*, denigrated Thoreau as having an approach to the East that was, in contrast to the approach made by Emerson:

- less choosy
- altogether less intellectual
- much shorter lasting
Clark displays a colossal “blind spot” in regard to China as part of the Orient, or in regard to Thoreau as a separate person, in that he make no mention whatever of any influence by Confucius or by the Chinese THE FOUR BOOKS on Thoreau. He has apparently been unable to see over the tops of the Himalayas with Thoreau, to notice that on the other side of this mountain chain there are also a certain number of enlightened Orientals.

Hu Yamin’s “Thoreau’s WALDEN and the Confucian Classical Four Books” appeared in the Journal of PLA Institute of Foreign Languages (this “PLA” is the People’s Liberation Army of China).

At the four-gate pagoda on the grounds of a monastery in Shandong province, facing in the four cardinal directions, were four massive imperturbable seated statues of the Akshobhya Buddha, that had been created in the year 611 CE.
In this year the Buddha facing east, which was the best preserved of the four, was assaulted twice by a gang who swaddled the head in blankets and attempted to cut it free with a diamond saw. On their 2nd attempt they succeeded in knocking the head from the torso with a sledgehammer. When the Chinese police caught with these people, several local government officials became suddenly unemployed, and their ringleader was sent to prison for life, which in China, which has a plenty of people, actually does mean for-life-and-be-grateful-we-didn’t-just-shoot-you-in-the-back-of-your-neck-and-harvest-your-warm-kidneys. However, the imperturbable 159-pound head was nowhere to be found, presumably having been spirited out of the country via Hong Kong. (In 2002 the head would turn up, as a gift to a Buddhist master on the island of Taiwan, and he would cause it to be returned to the Shandong monastery, where it would be reconnected with its torso by means of an iron rod down the neck.)

Here are the provenances of the illustrations I plan eventually to use, from the series “Asiapac Comic Series: Chinese Philosophers in Comics” issued by Asiapac Books & Educational Aids (S) PTE, Ltd., a publisher in Singapore, and by Princeton University Press, in describing Thoreau’s use of Chinese materials:

- **The Sayings of Mencius: Wisdom in a Chaotic Era.** Edited and illustrated by Tsai Chih Chung, translated by Mary Ng En Tzu. Asiapac Books & Educational Aids (S) PTE, Limited, 1991
- **Da Xue: The Great Learning.** Edited and illustrated by Tsai Chih Chung, translated by Mary Ng En Tzu. Asiapac Books & Educational Aids (S) PTE, Limited, 1992
- **Zhong Yong: The Doctrine of the Mean.** Edited and illustrated by Tsai Chih Chung, translated by Mary Ng En Tzu. Asiapac Books & Educational Aids (S) PTE, Limited, 1992
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“It’s all now you see. Yesterday won’t be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago.”
- Remark by character “Garin Stevens” in William Faulkner’s Intruder in the Dust

Prepared: April 6, 2017
This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, someone has requested that we pull it out of the hat of a pirate who has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot “Laura” (as above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture (this is data mining). To respond to such a request for information we merely push a button.
Commonly, the first output of the algorithm has obvious deficiencies and we need to go back into the modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and recompile the chronology—but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place requests with <kouroo@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.