

The Doctrine of Kuei Sheng 貴生 in the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* 呂氏春秋

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I

Discounting the opening chapters which together make up the *Yueh ling* 月令, Book 1 of the twelve *chi* 十二紀 opens with the chapter "Pen sheng" 本生 and Book 2 with "Kuei sheng" 貴生. This alone would attest to the importance of the term *sheng* in the eyes of the editors, and this fact is borne out by an examination of the doctrine of *kuei sheng*, a doctrine derived from Yang Chu 楊朱. The term *sheng* means primarily "to give birth to", or "to give life to". From this, the meaning is extended to "life". There is also the cognate term *hsing* 性 which means "that with which a thing is born", in other words, "the nature of a thing". Although in the Warring States period the two terms were generally distinguished by the use of different graphs, the distinction seemed not always to have been strictly observed. In the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, for instance, we find both *yang sheng* 養生 and *yang hsing* 養性, as well as *ch'uan sheng* 全生 and *ch'uan hsing* 全性. Thus which term is meant has, in the last resort, to be decided by the demands of the context.

The paramount importance of life is stated more than once. The "Kuei sheng" chapter opens with the statement:

[1] 聖人深慮天下莫貴於生。(2.3a)^①

The sage reflected profoundly on the fact that there was nothing in the world more exalted than life. (2/2)

Life is also referred to as *ta kuei chih sheng* 大貴之生 (life that is most exalted). (2/3)

The reason life is looked upon as "most exalted" is because of the benefit it brings to us:

[2] 今吾生之爲我有而利我亦大矣。論其貴賤，爵爲天子不足以比焉；論其輕重，富有天下，不可以易之；論其安危，一曙失之，終身不復得。(1.7a)

Now great indeed is the benefit which the life that is mine brings me. In point of honour, the rank of the Emperor cannot compare with it; in point of value, the wealth of possessing the Empire is not sufficient a price to exchange for it; and in point of safety, once lost, it is never to be regained. (1/3)

The point about the importance of life is reiterated in the following passages:

[3] 天下重物也，而不以害其生。(2.3b)

^① References are to the *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* 四部叢刊 edition of the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, the *Hsün tzu* 荀子 and the *Han fei tzu* 韓非子 and to the *Shih-san ching chu-shu* 十三經注疏 edition of the *Mencius* as well as to the English translation of the *Mencius* published by Penguin Books, 1970, Harmondsworth.

The Empire is an object of great value, yet this must not be allowed to get in the way of life. (2/2)

[4] 今有人於此，以隨侯之珠彈千仞之雀，世必笑之，是何也？所用重，所要輕也。夫生豈特隨侯珠之重也哉！（2.5a）

Now here is a man who uses Marquis Sui's pearl as a pellet to bring down a bird a thousand yards up in the air. He is sure to be a laughing stock in the world. Why? Because what he uses is of far greater value than that which he is intercepting. Surely Marquis Sui's pearl is not by any means a match for life in value. (2/2)

Why is life of so great a value? Part of the answer lies in the fact that each of us has only this one life. Once lost it can never be regained. Part of the answer is in the great benefit it brings us. What is this benefit? It is the gratification of the senses or desires for which the possession of life is a *sine qua non*. In the passage on *ch'uan sheng* 全生 (the preservation of life intact), it is said,

[5] 子華子曰：「全生爲上，虧生次之，死次之，迫生爲下。」故所謂「尊生」者，全生之謂〔也〕。所謂「全生」者，六欲皆得其宜也。所謂「虧生」者，六欲分得其宜也。虧生則於其尊之者薄矣。其虧彌甚者（也），其尊彌薄。所謂「死」者，無有所以知，復其未生也。所謂「迫生」者，六欲莫得其宜（也），皆獲其所甚惡者〔也〕。（2.5a-b）

Tzu Hua Tzu said, "The best is preservation of life intact. Next comes defective life. Next comes death. The worst is

involuntary living." By "honouring life" is meant the preservation of life intact. By the "preservation of life intact" is meant getting what is congenial for all six senses. By "defective life" is meant getting partially what is congenial for the six desires. When life is defective that which makes life worth honouring is no longer ample. The more defective it is, the less ample that part of it becomes. By "death" is meant a return to the state before birth when the means of knowledge were wanting. By "involuntary living" is meant not getting what is congenial to but what is detested by the six senses. (2/2)

From this passage it can be seen that the value of life depends on its ability to win gratification for the senses. This value diminishes as the gratification life brings diminishes. Upon death when life ceases, there is no gratification as there is no longer any sensation. But the point to be noticed is that there is a state worse than death, and that is getting what is detested by the senses. Thus because the value of life is dependent on the gratification of the senses, the thwarting of the senses gives life a negative value. This would seem to mean that life is dependent on the senses for its value. In other words the value of the gratification of the senses becomes, then, primary, while the value of life becomes secondary and derivative, but this is not so, as the relationship between the two is more complex than appears at first sight. On the one hand, the value of life depends on the

possibility and extent to which one's senses and desires are gratified; on the other, life is a *sine qua non* for any gratification of one's desires at all. A dead man with no sensations is incapable of gratification. It is because life is the *sine qua non* for gratification that it is looked upon as the source of great benefit to us.

There is one point worth noting. Although the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, in dealing with desires, talks about wealth and position as if there was no difference between them and the objects of sensual gratification, such as sights and sounds, there is, of course, a difference. Wealth and position are not desirable in themselves as sights and sounds are. They are desirable only because they make possible the gratification of the desires of the senses. In other words, wealth and position belong to a different level. Although there is this distinction, what the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* says about desires is, in the main, applicable as much to wealth and position as to the senses.

There is one other vital connection between gratification of desires and life. We must not indulge to excess in gratification as this is harmful to life. This comes under the subject of *yang sheng* 養生 (the nurturing of life). The *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* has a great deal to say about this. For instance,

[6] 耳雖欲聲，目雖欲色，鼻雖欲芬香，口雖欲滋味，害於生則止。

(2.3b)

Although the ear desires sounds, the eye desires colours, the

nose desires fragrance, and the mouth desires tastes, they stop desiring them when these get in the way of life. (2/2)

[7] 畢數之務，在乎去害。何謂去害？大甘、大酸、大苦、大辛、大鹹，五者充形，則生害矣。(3.4a)

In order to live out one's span one must devote one's efforts to ridding what gets in the way. What does "ridding what gets in the way" mean? Excessive sweetness, excessive acidity, excessive bitterness, excessive pungency, excessive salinity, when all five fill the body this will get in the way of life. (3/2)

How do we know where the right measure is? In discussing this question, we have to bring in two other notions, *wu* 物 (external objects) and *hsin* 心 (the mind). A man has a mind as well as desires. The answer to the question whether both are part of his nature, depends on the way "nature" (or "human nature") is defined. If we define "nature" as what one is born with, as Mencius did, then both are part of nature, but if we follow Hsün Tzu who required anything that forms part of nature to be uniform throughout the species, then desires are part of human nature, but not the mind. In Hsün Tzu's words "*t'ien chih yi yu* 天之一欲" (the uniformity of the Heaven-endowed desires) are to be distinguished from "*hsin chih tuo ch'iu* 心之多[求]" (the multifariousness of the mind-endowed seeking). (ch. 22 "Cheng ming") This difference between Mencius and Hsün Tzu is not very important in the present context. Far more important is

what the two philosophers have in common. They both believe that the mind, in contrast to the senses, is capable of thought.

While in the *Mencius* we find

[8] 耳目之官不思。……心之官則思。

The offices of the ear and the eye do not think. ...The office of the heart, on the other hand, thinks, (VI. A. 15)

in the *Hsün tzu* we also find

[9] 生之所以然者謂之性。……性之好惡喜怒哀樂謂之情。情然而心爲之擇謂之慮。（《正名》，16.1b-2a）

That which is so by birth is called nature. ...The likes and dislikes, pleasure and anger, sorrow and joy that are in nature are called its contents. Given the contents as they are, the exercise of choice by the mind is called reflection. (ch. 22 "Cheng ming")

Hsin is contrasted with *wu*. *Hsin* is our own mind which stands in opposition to external object. In contrast to our mind, everything else in the universe is external object. In the words of the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*,

[10] 夫國，重物也。（25.7a）

A state is an object of great value. (25/4)

Again, it is said,

[11] 天下，重物也。（2.3b）

The Empire is an object of great value. (2/2)

Even though there are objects of such value, they are, nevertheless, inferior in value to life. To sacrifice one's life in order to pursue

objects is known as “*wei shen ch'i sheng yi hsün wu* 危身棄生以殉物” (2.4b) (to allow one's person to be led by objects to the danger of one's person and the abandonment of one's life) (2/2), in other words, allowing objects to take precedence over one's person. This goes against the principle stated in the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*,

[12] 物物而不物於物。(14.22a)

To look on objects as objects and not to be made objects by objects. (14/8)

This is stated in even clearer terms in the *Hsün tzu*.

[13] 君子役物，小人役於物。(《修身》，1.13b)

The gentleman makes objects subservient to him. The small man makes himself subservient to objects. (ch. 2 “Hsiu shen”)

The *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* also says,

[14] 夫耳目鼻口，生之役也。(2.3a-b)

Now the ear, the eye, the nose and the mouth are servants of life. (2/2)

This amounts to the same thing. If the ear, the eye, the nose and the mouth are servants of life, then objects which gratify the senses are, *a fortiori*, servants of life.

Why is it, then, that some people follow the dictates of their desires to the detriment of life? This is because they fail to see that the value of life is far greater than that of the objects of gratification. But even if we were to be able to see this, is there

a way to rein in our desires? In order to answer this we have to examine the nature of desires. It is not an exaggeration to say that ancient Chinese thought was man-centred, while the study of man was desire-centred. Thus the notion of desires is at the heart of most of Chinese thought. The *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* is no exception. In order to examine desires, we have first to examine *hsing* 性 (human nature). Let us begin with its characterisation.

[15] 性者所受於天也，非人之所能爲也。(7.3a)

Nature is that which is derived from Heaven, not that about which man can do anything. (7/2)

[16] 石可破也，而不可奪堅；丹可磨也，而不可奪赤。堅與赤，性之有〔也〕。性也者，所受於天也，非擇取而爲之也。(12.6b)

A stone can be shattered but cannot be robbed of its hardness. Cinnabar can be ground but cannot be robbed of its redness. This is because hardness and redness are part of a thing's nature. By "nature" is meant that which is derived from Heaven and not what a thing chooses to be. (12/4)

Thus a thing receives its nature from Heaven and it is not something man can do anything about. Hardness and redness are singled out as examples. A stone may be shattered, but it will retain its hardness. A piece of cinnabar may be ground into a powder, but it will retain its redness. What is nature cannot be changed by the action of man.

About desires the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* has this to say,

[17] 欲與惡所受於天也，人不得與焉，不可變，不可易。(5.4a-b)

Desire and aversion are that which is derived from Heaven.

With what is derived from Heaven man is debarred from interfering. It cannot be altered; it cannot be changed. (5/2)

What is said of desire is the same as what is said about nature. Even the wording is the same. What is lacking is an explicit statement that desire is, or forms part of, nature. We can fill this gap with a passage from the *Hsün tzu*. The “Cheng ming” 正名 chapter says,

[18] 性者，天之就也。情者，性之質也。欲者，情之應也。(16.14b)

Nature is the accomplishment of Heaven. *Ch'ing* is the substance of nature. Desires are the response of the *ch'ing* to external objects. (ch. 22)

In the same chapter, it also says,

[19] 生之所以然者謂之性。……性之好惡喜怒哀樂謂之情。(16.1b)

That which is so by birth is called nature. ...The likes and dislikes, pleasure and anger, sorrow and joy that are in nature are called its contents.

To say that the contents of nature consist of likes and dislikes, pleasure and anger, sorrow and joy not only shows that by “nature”, in the *Hsün tzu* as well as in the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, is often meant specifically human nature, but also that *ch'ing* is the contents of human nature and consists of propensities and emotions which manifest themselves, in response to external objects, as desires and aversions.

As desire is what we receive from Heaven, it follows that there is nothing we can do about it. The *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* says,
〔20〕 天使人有欲，人弗得不求；天使人有惡，人弗得不辟。(5.4a)

Heaven causes man to have desires, and man cannot but seek their objects. Heaven causes man to have aversions, and man cannot but shun their objects. (5/2)

This is true of all men, including sages.

〔21〕 故耳之欲五聲，目之欲五色，口之欲五味，情也。此三者，貴賤愚智賢不肖，欲之若一，雖神農黃帝其與桀紂同。(2.6a)

Hence it is the case that the ear desires the five notes, the eye desires the five colours, and the mouth desires the five tastes. These three categories are desired by all men alike, irrespective of whether they are exalted or lowly, stupid or intelligent, excellent or no good. Even Shen Nung and the Yellow Emperor were no different from the tyrants Chieh and Chou. (2/3)

Although this passage mentions *ch'iu* 求 (seeking) in connection with *yü* 欲 (desires), the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* does not make use particularly of this distinction. By contrast, Mencius and Hsün Tzu both resort to this distinction in their attempt to deal with desires.

Mencius says,

〔22〕 求則得之，舍則失之，是求有益於得也，求在我者也。求之有道，得之有命，是求無益於得也，求在外者也。

Seek and you will get it; let go and you will lose it. If

this is the case, then seeking is of use to getting and what is sought is within yourself. But if there is a proper way to seek it and whether you get it or not depends on Destiny, then seeking is of no use to getting and what is sought lies outside yourself. (VII. A. 3)

For Mencius, time and energy should not be wasted on seeking objects of desire, as success or failure depend not on seeking but on Destiny, whereas benevolence ought to be pursued as, in this case, the seeking itself constitutes success. We divert our efforts from the pursuit of the objects of desire by realising the futility of seeking.

Hsün Tzu takes a different line. He emphasises the power of the mind in urging us on or restraining us in our pursuit of the objects of desire. He says,

[23] 故欲過之而動不及，心止之也。……欲不及而動過之，心使之也。

(《正名》，16.14a)

Hence when our action falls short of our desires, this is because it is restrained by our mind. ...When our action goes beyond our desires, this is because it is egged on by our mind. (ch. 22 "Cheng ming")

Here is the reason the mind has this power.

[24] 欲不待可得，而求者從所可。欲不待可得，所受乎天也；求者從所可，〔所〕受乎心也。所受乎天之一欲，制於所受乎心之多〔求〕，固難類所受乎天也。(《正名》，16.13b)

Desire is independent of whether what is desired is possible

and permissible while in seeking one seeks what is possible and permissible. Desire is independent of whether what is desired is possible and permissible. This is because desire is derived from Heaven. In seeking one seeks what is possible and permissible. This is because seeking is derived from the mind. The uniformity of the Heaven-endowed desires are controlled by the multifariousness of the mind-endowed seeking. Hence this cannot be expected to be similar to what is Heaven-endowed. (ch. 22 "Cheng ming")

For Mencius, there is no point in seeking when success depends on Destiny. For Hsün Tzu there is no point in seeking when what is sought is judged to be impossible and impermissible (*pu k'e* 不可). It should be noted that *k'e* in Chinese refers not only to what is physically impossible but also to what is morally impermissible. Hence both Mencius and Hsün Tzu resort to morality to guide the mind in its attempt to control the promptings of desire.

The *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* does not bring in the mind. Indeed there is no serious attempt in the work to deal systematically with the phenomenon of the mind as in the *Hsün tzu*. Nevertheless, just as in the *Hsün tzu*, the problem of strife which is the inevitable outcome of uncontrolled desire is solved by morality, an invention of the sage (or sages), so in the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, the problem of controlling desire is solved by a discovery of measure by the sage in the nature of desire. Although the sage shares

with the common man the desire for sensual gratification, he realises that

[25] 欲有情，情有節，聖人（修）〔循〕節以止欲，故不過行其情也。
(2.6a)

Desire has an actual nature, and its actual nature has a measure. The sage follows this measure in order to restrain desire. Hence he does not go in excess of the natural state. (2/3)

The sage is unique in this.

[26] 聖人之所以異者，得其情。(2.6a)

What marks the sage from other men is that he apprehends the natural state, and therefore, the measure of desire. (2/3)

The significance of *chieh* 節 has been missed by commentators as they tend to take *chieh* and *shih* 適 as synonymous. Here are some of Kao Yu's 高誘 comments.

[27] 故聖人必先適欲。(1.8a-b)

Hence the sage first of all gives desires what is congenial.
(1/3)

Kao Yu's comment is

適猶節也。

Shih is comparable to *chieh*.

[28] 欲有情，情有節。(2.6a)

Desire has an actual nature, and its actual nature has a measure. (2/3)

Kao Yu's comment is

節，適也。

Chieh is *shih*.

[29] 適耳目，節嗜欲。(3.8a)

Suit the ear and the eye and regulate the desires. (3/4)

Kao Yu does not give *chieh* a gloss in this passage, but Ch'en Ch'i-yu 陳奇猷 repeats Kao's gloss in [25] and says

適亦節也。②

[30] 成樂有具，必節嗜欲。(5.3b)

There is a prerequisite for the accomplishment of music.

One must regulate one's desires. (5/2)

Kao Yu's comment is,

節，止〔也〕。

Chieh is *chih*.

Again Ch'en Ch'i-yu takes Kao to task on the gloss of *chieh* as *chih* and this time refers to Kao's gloss in [28]. (p. 261)

From the following passage, partly quoted above in [25], it is clear that *chieh* means "measure".

[31] 天生人而使有貪有欲。欲有情，情有節。聖人（修）〔循〕節以止欲，故不過行其情也。(2.6a)

Heaven, in creating man, endows him with greed and desire.

Desire has an actual nature, and its actual nature has a measure. The sage follows this measure in order to restrain desire. Hence he does not go in excess of the

② Ch'en Ch'i-yu, *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu chiao shih* 呂氏春秋校釋 (Shanghai: Hsueh-lin ch'u-pan-she 學林出版社, 1984), p. 162.

natural state. (2/3)

Chieh is to follow the measure and not to overstep it.

Again,

[32] 樂……有節有侈。(5.8a)

There is a right measure and there is excess in…music.

(5/5)

Here, *chieh*, being contrasted with excess, can only mean the right measure. From these two examples, we can see that *chieh*, in relation to desire, has to do with guarding against excess and overindulgence.

Shih is never used to mean “measure”. As a word, it is generally used to mean “congenial”. In passage [29] quoted above 適耳目 is contrasted with 節嗜欲, and *shih* 適 means “to suit” while *chieh* 節 means “to regulate”.

We find the same use of *shih* in another passage:

[33] 譬之若釣者，魚有小大，餌有宜適。(19.3a)

It is like angling. There are small fish and there are big fish, for each of which there is a suitable bait. (19/1)

Here *yi shih* 宜適 refers to the suitable and has nothing to do with the notion of overindulgence and its avoidance. In this passage *shih* is coupled with *yi*, a near synonym, to form a binome. *Yi* is more often used to mean “suitable” and “congenial” with reference to desires than *shih*. There is passage [5] about *ch'uan sheng* where we find

所謂「全生」者，六欲皆得其宜也。所謂「虧生」者，六欲分得其

宜也。……所謂「迫生」者，六欲莫得其宜（也）。

六欲莫得其宜 is further explained as 皆獲其所甚惡者 (getting...what is detested by the six desires). Thus *yi* 宜 is to get what is congenial to our senses, while *bu yi* 不宜 is to get what is uncongenial to our senses.

Yi 宜, and its synonym *shih* 適, meaning congenial, are, then, to be distinguished from *chieh* 節, meaning measure. What, then, is this measure? This turns out to be none other than the doctrine of *kuei sheng*.

〔34〕 由貴生動，則得其情矣；不由貴生動，則失其情矣。(2.6a)

Move in accordance with *kuei sheng*, and you will apprehend your actual nature. If you fail to move in accordance with *kuei sheng*, and you will not apprehend your actual nature.

(2/3)

The principle of *kuei sheng* is straightforward. Do what promotes life, and desist from what is harmful to or interferes with life. The two crucial passages in the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* are as follows:

〔35〕 聖人深慮天下莫貴於生。夫耳目鼻口，生之役也。耳雖欲聲，目雖欲色，鼻雖欲芬香，口雖欲滋味，害於生則止。在四官者不欲，利於生者則（弗）爲。由此觀之，耳目鼻口，不得擅行，必有所制。譬之若官職，不得擅爲，必有所制。此貴生之術也。(2.3a-b)

The sage reflected profoundly on the fact that there was nothing in the world more exalted than life. Now the ear, the eye, the nose and the mouth are servants of life. Although the ear desires sounds, the eye desires colours,

the nose desires fragrance, and the mouth desires tastes, they stop desiring them when these get in the way of life. What the four offices (*kuan* 官) do not desire they will do provided that these are of benefit to life. Judging from this, the ear, the eye, the nose and the mouth are subject to higher authority and must not take it on themselves to initiate action, just as holders of offices are subject to higher authority and must not take it on themselves to initiate action. This is the doctrine of *kuei sheng*. (2/2)

- [36] 今有聲於此，耳聽之，必慊已，聽之；〔聽之〕，則使人聾，必弗聽。有色於此，目視之，必慊已，視之；〔視之〕，則使人盲，必弗視。有味於此，口食之，必慊已，食之；〔食之〕，則使人瘡，必弗食。是故聖人之於聲色滋味也，利於性則取之，害於性則舍之。此全性之道也。③ (1.4b-5a)

Now here is a sound. If, by listening to it, the ear is sure to find gratification, then listen to it by all means. If, however, listening to it will lead to deafness, then one is sure not to listen to it. Here is a colour. If, by looking at it, the eye is sure to find gratification, then look at it by all means. If, however, looking at it will lead to blindness,

③ There have been attempts at emending this text. It seems to me that the simplest emendation is the repetition of the three short clauses: 聽之, 視之, and 食之. This will render the whole passage intelligible. As is well known, in ancient manuscripts, repetition was indicated by the sign = which it is easy for the scribe to overlook, and there are numerous cases of such omissions.

then one is sure not to look at it. Here is something tasty. If, by eating it, the mouth is sure to find gratification, then eat it by all means. If, however, eating it will lead to dumbness, then one is sure not to eat it. Hence, the sage, in relation to sounds, colours and tastes, will accept them if they are of benefit to life and reject them if they are harmful to life. This is the way of preserving life intact. (1/2)

This solution offered by the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* is naturalistic and does not rest on any moral basis. Desires have, by their nature, a measure, which can be determined by an appeal to the *kuei sheng* principle which in turn rests on the supremacy of life over external objects in value. This contrasts markedly with the solutions of Mencius and Hsün Tzu both of which are based on morality.

II

Since the doctrine of *kuei sheng* teaches us that we should lead our lives in accordance with the principle of pursuing whatever is conducive to and desisting from whatever is detrimental to life, given the universality of desire in man, it would seem pointless to ask to what audience the doctrine addresses itself. But this is in fact not the case. The question turns out to be a meaningful one. There are, of course, places where the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* seems to say that the doctrine is valid for every man, whatever his station in society.

〔37〕 今世之（人）惑者，多以性養物，則不知輕重也。……以此爲君悖，以此爲臣亂，以此爲子狂。（1.4b）

Now the majority of perplexed men in the world, use their lives to nourish external objects. This shows an ignorance of values. ...Of those who live by such a principle, the ruler will be irrational, the subject will be disorderly, and the son will be demented. (1/2)

Between them, the ruler, the subject and the son covers wellnigh everyone in society, but this passage is by no means typical. Elsewhere, the ruler is much more prominent.

〔38〕 始生之者，天（地）〔也〕；養成之者，人也。能養天之所生而勿撓之〔之〕謂天子。天子之動也，以全天爲故者也。此官之所自立也。立官者，以全生也。今世之惑主，多官而反以害生，則失所爲立之矣。譬之若修兵者，以備寇也。今修兵而反以自攻，則亦失所爲修之矣。（1.4a-b）

That which gives it life in the first instance was Heaven. That which rears it is man. One who can nurture what Heaven gives life to and not thwart it is called the Son of Heaven. In his every action, the Son of Heaven has as his purpose the preservation intact of the Heaven-endowed. This is why offices were established in the first place. The establishment of offices was for the preservation of life intact. The perplexed rulers of today multiply the number of offices only to achieve the opposite end of harming life. This is to lose sight of the original purpose. It is like the

improvement of armament. This was meant for defence against invaders in the first instance, but it ends up by being used to attack oneself. This is to lose sight of the original purpose. (1/2)

In this passage, the Son of Heaven is contrasted with the perplexed ruler in the use they put offices to. In a further passage it is said,

[39] 天生人而使有貪有欲。欲有情，情有節。聖人（修）〔循〕節以止欲，故不過行其情也。故耳之欲五聲，目之欲五色，口之欲五味，情也。此三者，貴賤愚智賢不肖，欲之若一，雖神農黃帝其與桀紂同。聖人之所以異者，得其情也。由貴生動，則得其情矣；不由貴生動，則失其情矣。此二者，死生存亡之本也。俗主虧情，故每動（爲）亡〔不〕敗。④ (2.6a)

Heaven, in creating man, endows him with greed and desire. Desire has an actual nature, and its actual nature has a measure. The sage follows this measure in order to restrain desire. Hence he does not go in excess of the actual nature. Hence it is the case that the ear desires the five notes, the eye desires the five colours, and the mouth desires the five tastes. These three categories are desired by all men alike, irrespective of whether they are exalted or lowly, stupid or intelligent, excellent or no good. Even Shen Nung and the Yellow Emperor were no different from

④ Emended according to 每動無不敗 which appears in 1/2.

the tyrants Chieh and Chou. What marks the sage from other men is that he apprehends his actual nature, and therefore, the measure of desire. Move in accordance with *kuei sheng*, and you will apprehend your actual nature.

If you fail to move in accordance with *kuei sheng*, and you will not apprehend your actual nature. These two are the basis on which death and life, preservation and annihilation rest. The vulgar ruler truncates his actual nature of his desires and so his every move ends in failure. (2/3)

Here the *sheng jen* 聖人 is said to understand the actual nature of desire. The term seems, on the face of it, to refer to the wise man in general, but as it is contrasted with *su chu* 俗主 (vulgar rulers), it must be taken to mean *sheng wang* 聖王 (sage kings), a term which appears numerous times in the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*.

There is the term *kuan* 官 used in [38] whose significance may easily be overlooked. If this term is used literally then the doctrine is likely to have to do with the edification of the ruler. Before we discuss this, let us look at it in the light of another passage:

[40] 夫耳目鼻口，生之役也。耳雖欲聲，目雖欲色，鼻雖欲芬香，口雖欲滋味，害於生則止。在四官者不欲，利於生者則（弗）爲。由此觀之，耳目鼻口，不得擅行，必有所制。譬之若官職，不得擅爲，必有所制。此貴生之術也。(2.3a-b)

Now the ear, the eye, the nose and the mouth are servants of life. Although the ear desires sounds, the eye desires

colours, the nose desires fragrance, and the mouth desires tastes, they stop desiring them when these get in the way of life. What the four offices (*kuan* 官) do not desire they will do provided that these are of benefit to life. Judging from this, the ear, the eye, the nose and the mouth are subject to higher authority and must not take it on themselves to initiate action, just as holders of offices are subject to higher authority and must not take it on themselves to initiate action. This is the doctrine of *kuei sheng*. (2/2)

In this passage the senses are not only referred to as *ssu kuan* 四官, but are compared to offices specifically on the point that they are acting under authority.

The earliest use of *kuan* for the senses is to be found in the *Mencius*.

[41] 耳目之官不思。……心之官則思。

The offices of the ear and the eye do not think. ...The office of the heart, on the other hand, thinks. (VI. A. 15)

Here although the ear and the nose on the one hand, and the mind on the other are contrasted, they are all referred to as offices, except that the mind is capable of the unique function of thinking. There is a similar contrast in a passage in the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*.

[42] 君臣不定，耳雖聞不可以聽，目雖見不可以視，心雖知不可以舉，^⑤

⑤ The word 舉 is problematical.

勢使之也。凡耳之聞也藉於靜，目之見也藉於昭，心之知也藉於理。君臣易操，則上之三官者廢矣。(17.7b)

When it is not firmly settled which is ruler and which is subject, the ear even when it hears is incapable of listening, the eye even when it sees is incapable of looking, and the mind even when it knows is incapable of citing. This is made so by circumstances. Now in hearing, the ear depends on an absence of noise, in seeing, the eye depends on light and in knowing, the mind depends on the reasonable. When the ruler and subject exchange duties, then the above three offices will not function. (17/3)

At first sight, one may get the impression that the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* is following the same line as the *Mencius* in looking upon the mind as just another office. But this is not the case. In [40] we saw that "the ear, the eye, the nose and the mouth are subject to higher authority and must not take it on themselves to initiate action". It is the mind that constitutes this authority. Thus the mind is not on a par with the senses. It is not just another office with a unique function but is *the* office exercising authority over the senses. The relation between the mind and the senses is, thus, similar to that between ruler and subject. Only when we grasp this that *chün ch'en pu ting* 君臣不定 and again *chün ch'en yi ts'ao* 君臣易操 in [42] begin to make sense. What is meant is that if the authority of the mind is not firmly established over the ear and the eye and that the latter is

allowed to exchange duties with the former, then the three will not function. That the mind is included in "the three offices" can only be put down to loose writing.

The notion that the mind is the ruler and the senses are the subjects seems to have derived from the *Hsün tzu* where it is said,

[43] 耳目鼻口形能各有接而不相能也，夫是之謂天官。心居中虛以治五官，夫是之謂天君。（《天論》，11.17b）

The ear, the eye, the nose, the mouth and the body are each able to make contact but each is not able to exercise the function of the others, and these are known as the Heaven-appointed offices. The mind occupies the central void and therefrom exercises authority over the five offices, and it is known as the Heaven-appointed ruler. (ch. 17 "T'ien lun")

Here it is clear that the mind is called "Heaven-appointed ruler" and the senses "Heaven-appointed offices" on the analogy of the Emperor and the offices under him. But there is more to it than a simple rhetorical device in the eyes of the editors of the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* who took this over.

[44] 天子之動也，以全天爲故者也。此官之所自立也。立官者，以全生也。今世之惑主，多官而反以害生，則失所爲立之矣。（1.4a）

In his every action, the Son of Heaven has as his purpose the preservation intact of the Heaven-endowed. This is why offices were established in the first place. The establishment of offices was for the preservation of life intact. The perplexed rulers of today multiply the number

of offices only to achieve the opposite end of harming life.

This is to lose sight of the original purpose. (1/2)

Here as *kuan* 官 is mentioned with “the Son of Heaven” and “perplexed rulers”, it is obvious that it meant offices under the ruler. Why then is it said that the offices have been established with the express purpose of preserving intact what is derived from Heaven, in other words, that the offices have been established for the preservation of life intact. In the Ch'in 秦, the offices ranking next to the *san kung* 三公 were the *chiu ch'ing* 九卿, and these continued into the Han 漢. The *chiu ch'ing* were (1) the *t'ai ch'ang* 太常 (*feng ch'ang* 奉常), (2) the *kuang lu hsün* 光祿勳, (3) the *wei wei* 衛尉, (4) the *t'ai p'u* 太僕, (5) the *t'ing wei* 廷尉, (6) the *ta hung lu* 大鴻臚, (7) the *tsung cheng* 宗正, (8) the *ta ssu nung* 大司農, and (9) the *shao fu* 少府. Apart from (5) the *t'ing wei* in charge of criminal justice, (6) the *ta hung lu* in charge of foreign visitors and (8) the *ta ssu nung* in charge of state finances, the chief purpose of the remaining offices was to cater to various needs in the daily life of the Emperor, and the Royal Household. There are the *shui heng tu wei* 水衡都尉 who supervised the royal parks, *chiang tsuo ta Chiang* 將作大匠 who supervised the maintenance of the royal residences, and the *ta ch'ang ch'iu* 大長秋 and the *chan shih* 詹事 who served the Empress and the Crown Prince falling outside the *chiu ch'ing* still to be counted.⑥ This

⑥ See Huang Pen-chi 黃本驥 (ed.), *Li-tai chih-kuan piao* 歷代職官表 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü 中華書局, 1965), pp. 2-3.

gives point to the remark that “the perplexed rulers of today multiply the number of offices only to achieve the opposite end of harming life”.

Thus the services of these offices being a likely source of overindulgence to the detriment of life for the ruler is of vital importance to the doctrine of *kuei sheng* and it supports our view that this doctrine was meant for the edification of the ruler.

Even if the doctrine of *kuei sheng* was primarily directed towards the ruler, there is no reason to think that this ruled out its application to the ordinary man who shares with the ruler the possession of life and so of desires. It is, therefore, worth while examining the part desire plays in the life of the ordinary man. As the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* was, as a whole, written for the benefit of the ruler, it is only natural that it should be interested in the common man from the point of view of government. In the chapter “Yung min” 用民 we find

[45] 民之用也有故。得其故，民無所不用。用民有紀有綱。壹引其紀，萬目皆起；壹引其綱，萬目皆張。爲民紀綱者何也？欲也惡也。何欲何惡？欲榮利，惡辱害。辱害所以爲罰充也，榮利所以爲賞實也。賞罰皆有充實，則民無不用矣。(19.10b)

That the common people can be employed has its basis. If one gets of hold of the basis, there is no way in which the common people cannot be employed. In employing the common people there are equivalents to the *chi* rope and the *kang* cable. In the case of a fishing net, when the *chi*

rope is drawn in the meshes of the net are drawn up, when the *kang* cable is drawn in the meshes of the net open up. What are the *chi* and the *kang* in the case of the common people? They are desire and aversion. What do the common people desire, and what are they averse to? They desire honour and profit and are averse to disgrace and harm. Disgrace and harm are the substance of punishment; honour and profit are the substance of reward. When reward and punishment have substance, then there is no way in which the common people cannot be employed. (19/4)

The common people can be controlled through reward and punishment and concrete rewards and punishments consist of what the common people desire and are averse to. Hence the control of the common people rests on their possession of desires. The *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* goes on to say in the "Wei yü" 爲欲 chapter, [46] 使民無欲，上雖賢猶不能用。夫無欲者，其視爲天子也與爲興隸同，其視有天下也與無立錐之地同，其視爲彭祖也與爲殤子同。天子至貴也，天下至富也，彭祖至壽也。誠無欲，則是三者不足以勸。興隸至賤也，無立錐之地，至貧也，殤子至夭也，誠無欲，則是三者不足以禁。會有一欲，則北至大夏，南至北戶，西至三危，東至扶木，不敢亂矣；犯白刃，冒流矢，趣水火，不敢卻也；晨寤興，（務耕）疾庸樸，⑦爲煩辱，不敢休矣。

⑦ Taking 樸 as 耕 as suggested by Kao Yu.

故人之欲多者，其可得用亦多；人之欲少者，其〔可〕得用亦少；無欲者，不可得用也。人之欲雖多，而上無以令之，人雖得欲，人猶不可〔得〕用也。令人得欲之道不可不審矣。(19.14b-15a)

Were the common people to be devoid of desire, even an excellent ruler cannot exploit them. Now the desireless looks on being an Emperor and being a menial servant as the same, on possessing the Empire and not having even the ground to stand on as the same, on being P'eng Tsu and being one who dies as a baby as the same.

The Emperor is most exalted in position; the Empire is the richest possession; P'eng Tsu was the longest lived. Were one to be devoid of desire, none of these three things can act as an inducement.

The menial servant is the most lowly. Not to have even the ground to stand on is the acme of poverty. To die as a baby is the shortest lived. Were one to be devoid of desire, none of these three things can act as a deterrent.

As soon as it is granted a man had even one desire, then whether he be in the northernmost part in Ta Hsia, southernmost part in Pei Hu, westernmost part in San Wei or easternmost part in Fu Mu, he would not dare to be rebellious. He would face the blade of swords and knives, brave arrows from all directions and rush into fire and water, without daring to turn back. He would not dare rest, but get up early in the morning, be quick about his

work in the field as a hired hand, and toil at base and tedious chores.

Hence if a man has many desires one can exploit him in many ways; if a man has few desires, one can exploit him in few ways; if a man is devoid of desires, one cannot exploit him in any way. Even if a man were to have many desires, should those in authority fail to satisfy his desires in the right way, he could not be exploited even after having had his desires satisfied. One must be cognizant of the way by which one should satisfy the desires of the common man. (19/6)

This states very clearly that the hold of those in authority over the common people is in their having desires and aversions. The more desires they have the easier it is to control them. The less desires they have the harder it is to control them. When they have no desires, they cannot be controlled at all. Hence, if they were to be converted to the doctrine of *kuei sheng*, they would no longer be controllable. It is up to the thinker who is in the service of the ruler not to propagate this enlightened doctrine amongst them. That the common people are controllable shows that the doctrine of *kuei sheng* can make little impact on them. This may be due to various reasons. First, *kuei sheng* may be too difficult a doctrine to live by. It demands of the common people a self-discipline they do not possess. It may also be due to the difference in station between the ruler and the common

people. The ruler does not have to worry about the basic necessities of life. The only danger he is in is overindulgence, and so he needs the restraining influence of the doctrine of *kuei sheng* to guard against harming his life. The common people, on the other hand, is fully occupied with trying to satisfy his basic needs. In such a state, the dangers of excessive indulgence may seem too remote to be a source of worry. Whatever the reasons there is not much point in addressing the doctrine of *kuei sheng* to them.

If the *kuei sheng* principle is not directed towards the *min* 民 (common people), neither does it have much appeal to the *shih* 士 (Gentleman) of a certain persuasion.

[47] 天下輕於身，而士以身爲人。(12.8a)

The Empire pales into insignificance beside one's person, yet the Gentleman puts his person at the disposal of another. (12/5)

According to the doctrine of *kuei sheng*, nothing, not even the Empire, is of as great a value as life. This passage draws our attention to the fact that there are, nevertheless, Gentlemen who put their lives at the disposal of others. It is not made clear why they do this. It is reasonable to conjecture that they do so either out of friendship or loyalty or because they are men of principle.

[48] 士之爲人，當理不避其難，臨患忘利，遺生行義，視死如歸。(12.

3a-b)

A Gentleman is a man who, when he is in accord with principle, does not try to avoid danger, and, in face of difficulty, puts profit out of his mind; he does what is right at the expense of his life and looks upon death simply as going home. (12/2)

Again, after an account of Po-yi 伯夷 and Shu-ch'i 叔齊 starving themselves to death, appears the comment

[49] 人之情莫不有重，莫不有輕。有所重則欲全之，有所輕則以養所重。伯夷、叔齊，此二士者，皆出身棄生以立其（意）〔志〕，輕重先定也。(12.7b)

A man's actual nature is such that there is always something he looks upon as of great value as well as something he looks upon as of slight value. When he has something of great value he wants to preserve it intact. When he has something of slight value, he uses it to nurture what is of great value. The two gentlemen, Po-yi and Shu-ch'i, dedicated their persons and abandoned their lives in order to remain firm in their purpose. This is because they had long since settled their priorities. (12/4)

The Gentleman also does what is right at the expense of his life. According to Mencius,

[50] 生亦我所欲也，義亦我所欲也；二者不可得兼，舍生而取義者也。Life is what I want; dutifulness is also what I want. If I cannot have both, I would rather take dutifulness than life. (VI. A. 10)

That morality constitutes an alternative to the preservation of life puts a limitation on the doctrine of *kuei sheng*. This doctrine rests on certain presuppositions. First, it is natural for desires to seek gratification in their objects, and although gratification is of benefit to life, without life, gratification cannot be enjoyed. Thus life takes precedence over desires and the value of desires is not only inferior to that of life but derivative from it. It is never clearly stated in the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* that investing life with supreme value is a matter of choice. It is only when we are told that there are Gentlemen who sacrifice their lives for the sake of morality that we realise it is possible to consider some things to be superior in value than even life. We see that we can follow different kinds of ethic which elevate different ends to supremacy in value. The editors of the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* occasionally showed that they were not unaware of this possibility. [49] ends with the sentence 輕重先定也 (the priorities in value had long since been settled). This notion is echoed elsewhere in the work.

[51] 古（人）〔之〕得道者，生以壽長，聲色滋味，能久樂之，奚故？
論早定也。(2.7a)

In antiquity, those who got hold of the Way lived to a ripe old age, enjoying over long years the pleasures of sights and sounds as well as delicious tastes. Why? Because they had long since settled their priorities. (2/3)

In order to live a long life of pleasure, not only must a ruler follow the principle of *kuei sheng*, but also adopt this as a policy

early in life. It would seem equally to be the case with someone who wishes to pursue morality with single-minded devotion. The kind of life a man leads is the result of conscious choice early in life. The *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* may have given the impression that there is something natural in the *kuei sheng* doctrine, but this turns out to be nothing more than our inborn tendency to try to secure the most enjoyment from life.

Apart from the Gentleman who would sacrifice his life for friendship, loyalty or morality, there is also the Gentleman who would push the doctrine of *kuei sheng* to its logical conclusion. In the "Jang wang" 讓王 chapter of the *Chuang tzu* 莊子 there are a number of stories of men who refused to be rulers and of eremitic Gentlemen. Practically everything in this chapter is paralleled in the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*. There are grounds for thinking that the *Chuang tzu* took the material from the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* rather than the other way round.^⑧ The characters in the stories would lead the simplest and often hard life just to avoid the harm that is liable to accompany wealth and position. This is at odds with the *kuei sheng* doctrine of the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, according to which one should try to get the greatest gratification of one's desires so long as this

^⑧ See D.C. Lau, "On the Expression *Zai You* 在宥", in *Chinese Texts and Philosophical Contexts: Essays dedicated to Angus C. Graham*, edited by Henry Rosemont, Jr. (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1991), pp. 10-13.

proves beneficial to life. It is possible that the abdication stories reflect a tendency of thought closer to the teachings of Yang Chu. To this we shall return in the next section.

That the doctrine of *kuei sheng* should be at odds with what is to be found in other parts of the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* is only to be expected. It serves to show no more than that the work is eclectic.

III

In antiquity the name of Yang Chu was mainly associated with the doctrine of *wei wo* 爲我 (for oneself). The *Mencius* says,

[52] 楊子取爲我，拔一毛而利天下，不爲也。

Yang Tzu chooses the doctrine of everyone for himself. Even if he could benefit the Empire by pulling out one hair he would not do it. (VII. A. 26)

And again,

[53] 楊氏爲我，是無君也。

Yang Chu advocates the doctrine of everyone for himself, and this amounts to a denial of one's prince. (III. B. 9)

The *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* says,

[54] 陽生貴己。(17.18b)

Yang Sheng gives the self the highest place. (17/7)

There is no doubt at all that it is Yang Chu that is referred to. Thus Yang Sheng is the same as Yang Chu, and *kuei chi* 貴己 is the same as *wei wo* 爲我.

The *Han fei tzu* says,

[55] 今有人於此，義不入危城，不處軍旅，不以天下大利易其脛一毛，世主必從而禮之，貴其智而高其行，以爲輕物重生之士也。（《顯學》，19.8b）

Now here is a man who, out of principle, does not enter a city in peril, does not serve in the army on the march, does not give a hair on his shin in exchange for the great gain that is the Empire. The average ruler is sure to treat him with courtesy and exalt his wisdom and consider lofty his conduct, looking upon him as a Gentleman who values life above external objects. (ch. 50 "Hsien hsieh")

Although no name is mentioned in the passage, the close resemblance the sentence 不以天下大利易其脛一毛 bears to the sentence 拔一毛而利天下，不爲也 leaves no doubt that it is about Yang Chu. The *Han fei tzu* passage throws light on the doctrine of *wei wo*. Whereas according to the *Mencius* and the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, Yang Chu advocated *wei wo*, or *kuei chi*, the *Han fei tzu* describes the man who would not give a hair on his shin in exchange for the great gain that is the Empire as *ch'ing wu chung sheng chih shi* 輕物重生之士. This shows *ch'ing wu chung sheng* (valuing life above external objects) to be the practice of advocates of *wei wo*. This linking of *chung sheng* 重生 with *kuei chi* 貴己 gives point to the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* where the chapter "Pen sheng" 本生 is followed by the chapter "Chung chi" 重己. Thus the doctrine of *kuei sheng* must be closely related to the teachings of Yang Chu, but as Yang Chu flourished before

Mencius while the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* dates from after Hsün Tzu, we cannot expect the teachings of Yang Chu not to have undergone modifications with the changing philosophical climate. It is worth while, therefore, to look into such changes as far as is feasible, if for no other purpose than as an exercise in the study of the history of ancient Chinese thought.

We have seen that the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* gives the doctrine of *kuei sheng* a basis in human nature, which it characterises in the following way,

[56] 性者所受於天也，非人之所能爲也。(7.3a)

Nature is that which is derived from Heaven, not that about which man can do anything. (7/2)

This is, to all intents and purposes, the same as the characterisation in the *Hsün tzu*.

[57] 凡性者天之就也，不可學，不可事。(《性惡》，17.2b)

Nature is the accomplishment of Heaven. It cannot be learned and is not the subject of application. (ch. 23 "Hsing E")

Both agree that since human nature is what is accomplished by Heaven and given to us, it is not something about which man can do anything. We cannot learn what is part of nature and we cannot improve on our natural endowments through application.

The *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* goes on to give examples of nature.

[58] 石可破也，而不可奪堅；丹可磨也，而不可奪赤。堅與赤，性之有也。(12.6b)

A stone can be shattered but cannot be robbed of its hardness. Cinnabar can be ground but cannot be robbed of its redness. This is because hardness and redness are part of a thing's nature. (12/4)

The *Hsün tzu* also says,

[59] 今人之性，目可以見，耳可以聽。夫可以見之明不離目，可以聽之聰不離耳，目明而耳聰，不可學明矣。（《性惡》，17.3a）

Now the nature of man is such that his eye has sight capable of seeing, that his ear has hearing capable of hearing. Now the sight capable of seeing is inseparable from the eye and the hearing capable of hearing is inseparable from the ear. It is then clear that the sight of the eye and the hearing of the ear cannot be learned. (ch. 23 "Hsing E")

As desires are the contents of nature, the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* also says,

[60] 欲與惡所受於天也，人不得與焉，不可變，不可易。（5.4a-b）

Desire and aversion are that which is derived from Heaven. With what is derived from Heaven man is debarred from interfering. It cannot be altered; it cannot be changed. (5/2)

The *Hsün tzu* says,

[61] 性者，天之就也。情者，性之質也。欲者，情之應。（《正名》，16.14b）

Nature is the accomplishment of Heaven. *Ch'ing* is the substance of nature. Desires are the response of the *ch'ing*

to external objects. (ch. 16 "Cheng ming")

As nature is accomplished by Heaven and desires are the response to external objects of the contents of nature, it is obvious that desire, too, is accomplished by Heaven. Thus it is also said

[62] 欲不待可得，所受乎天也。 (《正名》，16.13b)

Desire is independent of whether what is desired is possible and permissible. This is because desire is derived from Heaven.

Furthermore, we have mentioned above that the use in the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* of the term *kuan* 官 for the senses is likely to be based on Hsün Tzu who called the senses *t'ien kuan* 天官. Enough has been said to show that the treatment of human nature and its contents—desire and aversion—in the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* follows closely the *Hsün tzu*. The doctrine of *kuei sheng* was the result of grafting Yang Chu's teachings on to a theory of human nature derived from Hsün Tzu. What we know of Yang Chu's original teachings is very scanty. There is the remark in the *Mencius*, "*Pa yi mao er li t'ien-hsia, pu wei ye* 拔一毛而利天下，不爲也." Here *li t'ien-hsia* is ambiguous. It can mean "to benefit the Empire". It can also mean "to take advantage of the Empire". Nevertheless, the first interpretation seems more natural. But the variant of this remark in the *Han fei tzu*, "*Pu yi t'ien-hsia ta-li yi ch'i ching yi mao* 不以天下大利易其脛一毛" is unambiguous. It can only mean "the benefit of gaining the Empire". The two versions of the remark taken together make it likely that Yang

Chu probably taught that one should not give one hair either for the benefit of the Empire or in exchange for the Empire. One can conclude that what he taught was an extreme form of egoism. As "the Empire" is said in the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* to be "the richest possession", a refusal to exchange a hair for the Empire would point to the rejection of hedonism. The abdication stories we mentioned in the last section seem, on this point, to be true to the spirit of Yang Chu's teachings. It is as a result of grafting Yang Chu's egoistic teachings on to Hsün Tzu's theory of human nature that the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* succeeded in producing a brand of hedonism that reaps the best of both worlds. A doctrine that promises enjoyment of the senses as well as living out one's natural span of life is, indeed, fit for the ear of an Emperor.

《呂氏春秋》的貴生思想

劉 殿 爵

中文提要

第一節闡述貴生思想的內容。《呂氏春秋》開宗明義說：「天下莫貴於生。」這是因為「吾生之……利我亦大矣」。大利指的是六欲的滿足，但欲望追求滿足便很容易危害生命，因此必須加以控制。但欲望是人性的內容而「性者所受於天也，非人之所能為也」。幸而「欲有情，情有節」而「聖人」「異」於常人，能夠「得其情」，這就是說「得其節」。「節」就是「合理的限度」，什麼是合理的限度，是由「貴生」原則來決定的，所謂「由貴生動，則得其情矣；不由貴生動，則失其情矣」。既然認為「生」貴於天下，所以欲望追求滿足時，「利於生者則為」，「害於生者則止」。

第二節提出「貴生」是為誰說法的問題，結論是為人君說法，這由以下一點可以看得出來。《呂氏春秋》稱耳目鼻口為四官，又說「立官者，以全生也。今世之惑主，多官而反以害生，則失所為立之矣。」可見《呂氏春秋》著眼於兩者共同之處。四官追求的是心的享受，官的職責是提供人君的享受，兩者都很容易導致生命受到危害，人君要避免「害生」的後果，就要「由貴生動」。至於人民，則與人君不同。人民可以統治，是因為有欲，欲愈多愈容易統治，所以不能讓他們明白「貴生」的道理。士人之中有「以身為人」的，這樣的人就是不承認「天下莫貴於生」。對這樣

的人講「貴生」是不會有影響的。

第三節認為「貴生」確是源出楊朱，但楊朱原來的學說是極端的爲己主義，不肯拔一毛去「利天下」，也不肯用「一毛」去換取天下。《呂氏春秋》的編者拿楊朱的「爲我」和荀子的性論結合起來，變成了一種合理化的享樂主義。