

The Limits of Transcendence. In 0249, when Chǔ took the other half of Lǔ, and Sywǎndž exercised his authority as governor of the area, not only the Dàu/Dó Jīng enterprise, but the Analects school, the Mician ethicists, and both Mencian groups, ceased to think and write. In the Jwāngdž groups which still remained active, we see a new assertiveness: no longer hiding from the world, but soaring above it. This piece was put at the head of the Jwāngdž text:

7:73 (JZ 1:1, excerpt, c0236). In the northern deep there is a fish whose name is the Kūn. The size of the Kūn is I know not how many thousand leagues. It transforms itself into a bird whose name is the Pǎng. The wing span of the Pǎng is I know not how many thousand leagues. When it launches into flight, its wings are like clouds draped across the heavens. This bird, when the ocean currents shift, sets out for the southern deep.

It makes a brave show, and no doubt about it. But it must be added, and be it noted to their credit that the Jwāngdž compilers *do* add it, that not everyone, whether in the story or out of it, really believes in this stuff. It continues:

. . . The cicada and the dove laugh at this; they say, When we rise up and fly toward yonder green elm tree, sometimes we don't make it, but drop back to earth again. What is this about nine myriad leagues to the south?

Here, finally, is Lyèdž (a different Lyèdž than the one we met on page 195, but the Jwāngdž is a very diverse text), displaying his own supernatural powers:

7:74 (JZ 1:2, excerpt, c0236). Lyèdž traveled on the wind, perfectly content with himself, and only returned after a week and five days.

Those supernatural powers the author immediately qualifies:

. . . As far as good fortune went, he had nothing to complain of. But though he was spared the trouble of walking, he still had to depend on *something*. Now, had he mounted the regularities of Heaven and Earth, driven the chariot of Six Breaths, and traveled to the Limitless, on what need he have depended? Therefore it is said, The highest man has no self, the divine man has no achievement, the sagely man has no fame.

No achievement indeed. The doubts of the little birds, and the limitations of Lyèdž the Magician, are ridiculed, but to replace them, we have only a highest man who has no powers of his own, and simply vanishes into the universe.

There is a yearning quality to these animal or human flights of fancy; a reaching beyond the possible into some higher realm where human limits do not apply, and worldly dangers no longer threaten. The imagery was powerful. But the Jwāngdž ends with no more substantial appeal than that of imagery.

At bottom, the meditationist attitude to the hazards of the time was not to dispute the ground with them, but to rise above it all. This has just one defect: it leaves the ground open to those who are prepared to take it over.

And with the ultimate triumph of those stronger spirits, the makers of war and the architects of Empire, we will conclude.