

Mozi. *Basic Writings*. Translated by Burton Watson. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

The Mozi consists in writings of Mo's (Chinese 5th Century B.C.) students, said to reflect Mo's thought. Mo was among the great philosopher's of China's "hundred philosophers," among whom one counts Confucius, Lao Tzu, and Mencius. Master Mo wrote in a bland, even pedantic, style. Mo supported governmental meritocracy. Mo advocated love of all humans and peoples as one loves one's own family and nation. All are people of the Lord of Heaven. Universal love, in views of Mo's philosophical critics, portended the collapse of filial devotion, a Chinese core value.

Honoring the Worthy. *Part I, §8.* Why do rulers' kingdoms suffer poverty, falling populations, and chaos? Rulers fail to employ worthy men, regardless of class, in their administrations. Aristocrats take positions for which they have no competence. Worthy men, people of virtue and rhetoric and education, know no single class. If a man is a competent shopkeeper, promote him to government service. Demote someone who lacks skill. Hiring worthy men to run a government makes that administration good. *Part II, §9.* If the stupid and humble rule, government will fail. Promote the wise. The sage kings of old practiced no nepotism, did not promote their friends, avoided the rich and famous, and did not favor beautiful people. They hired people able to govern, people who work hard and attend their assigned duties. To honor these people, give them positions and titles commensurate with their abilities, pay them well, and enforce their orders. Where means to reward the worthy and punish evildoers cannot be found, kingdoms fall. When earth follows Heaven, all prospers. Heaven knows no distinction between rich and poor, proud and humble, local or distant folk, family members and strangers; Heaven rewards worth and rejects defect. Mo cites examples of humble men promoted to leadership by the sage kings.

Identifying with One's Superior. *Part I, §2.* In the mythic past, before rulers, every man had an opinion that differed from that of every other man. All thought themselves right. Hatreds brewed, and soon no man would cooperate with another. So the people chose the most benevolent man as Son of Heaven. He created an administration under himself, and required all to report to their superiors and adopt the opinions of their superiors. In this way, order was established. Heaven requires that the people venerate Heaven itself, not just the Son of Heaven. The sage kings devised the five punishments [probably tattooing, severing the nose, severing the feet, castration, death] to rein in those failing to adopt the attitudes of superiors.

Universal Love. *Part III, §16.* The benevolent man seeks benefit for all and opposes what harms. Harm derives from aggression, oppression, overreaching, disparagement, miserliness, bad faith, senseless harshness, ignoring customs, and assaults. Evils emerge from hatred and prejudices. One who criticizes must suggest an alternative. One replaces prejudice with universality by considering the welfare of others as one's own. In a community, people with skills employ them for the benefit of those lacking those skills. As applied to rulers, the good ruler thinks first of his citizens, and last of himself. Some criticize universal love as a principle: they say it cannot be practiced with normal people, it applies to normal men but not rulers, it cannot be realistically practiced (the writings of Wen, Yu, Tang, and Zhou support Mo, so Mo says), it may lead one to neglect one's own parents. Being benevolent can be done. Populations change their habits in one generation to please their rulers. The reason universal love is not the habit of the people is that no ruler has demanded such.

Against Offensive Warfare. *Part I, §17.* When thieves steal or murderers kill, their crimes injure others and demonstrate deficient benevolence. The greater the victim's loss, the more serious the crime. Among injuries to others, offensive warfare is the greatest. Yet, most people do not condemn offensive warfare, but rather praise it. A murderer who kills one man forfeits his own life in punishment. What ought we to do with offensive warriors who kill hundreds? If a person calls a little color black but a lot white, or a little taste bitter but a tremendous taste sweet, one concludes the person does not know the meanings of the words. So, when a person calls offensive warfare right, one concludes that the speaker is morally confused. *Part III, §19.* Men

praise what benefits god and spirits and man. Some make war, but fail to examine their motives. They are blind, imagining themselves sighted. Wise people seek what benefits god and spirits and man. Benevolent men of the past sought international peace, leading toward world harmony. For this, they are revered. Today's rulers create great and rapacious armies, destroying all in their path. They lie to their soldiers, telling them that to die for duty is the highest honor. Such war defeats the labor of centuries of sages. War impoverishes nations and benefits none. The generals justify their war-readiness by citing the preparations of neighbors for similar war. Mere preparation cripples the nation. Hundreds of thousands abandon their necessary occupations. Leaders neglect governing. Farmers fail to sow and reap. Women make few clothes. Much of war supplies will be utterly lost. And many just die. Those who make offensive war injure mankind. They are morally bankrupt. The warlords criticize Master Mo. Mo explains the acts of the sage kings, who were punishing corrupt lieges and neighbors, not warring. Over and over, the warlords sought to make their wars sound better to the ear. Mo recommends that large states keep the small state well-functioning. This helps keep peace. The small states will be grateful. The large state can devote its resources to internal successes, good government, and a light hand with respect to citizens. All will go well. Offensive war deeply harms the world.

Moderation in Expenditure. *Part I, §20.* Rulers double well-being in their states, not by acquiring neighbor's territory, but by ceasing needless expenditures at home. Nothing useless should be purchased. Clothing weaves warmth, not decoration. Houses should shelter and secure, not impress. Weapons defend against rebels and lawless people; they should not look beautiful. Boats and carts transport; do not dress them up. Expenditures must contribute to utility. So, the people avoid excessive weariness from too much labor. Increasing population is difficult. People should marry young and have many babies. Rulers take actions that make populations decrease. They tax. They war. Welfare declines. People die. Let all expenditures benefit the world.

Moderation in Funerals. *Part III, §25.* A benevolent man is to the world as a son is to his parents. A son seeks to make his family wealthy, numerous, and ordered. So too the benevolent man seeks to benefit the world. One may fall short, but dares not cease until he has run out of energy and ideas. This is how the sage kings behaved. Elaborate funerals waste resources without increasing societal wealth, number, or order. Mo describes the elaborate and expensive burial and three-year mourning rituals of his day, which he criticizes for their distraction from productive enterprise and pointless destruction of wealth. It is a rule like forbidding farmers to plant, but expecting a crop. Such death rituals create no wealth, increase no population, and establish no order. States will weaken, tempting rapacious neighbors to war. Offerings to gods will thin. Mo describes the burial and mourning practices of the sage kings, which were simple. People continue elaborate funerals only because they confuse the habitual with the right. All manner of foolishness has been deemed right by virtue of long habit. Rulers should seek moderation in the matter of funerals and mourning.

The Will of Heaven. *Part I, §26.* Heaven sees all; there is no place to hide. Heaven wants righteousness, because such action brings life, wealth, and order. Heaven determines what is right; all simply adopt Heaven's rule. Love all men, work for their benefit: this is Heaven's rule. The good kings loved all men and benefitted them; bad kings did the opposite. One knows Heaven loves all men because it accepts sacrifices from all, and ill befalls murderers everywhere. Good kings value right action over coercion. They do not attack or bully small states. Though cunning, they do not deceive stupid people. As measured by the will of Heaven, most men are neither righteous nor benevolent. *Part II, §27.* Doing right originates in Heaven. Heaven demands good order. Heaven hates interstate war, inter-familial bickering, fraud by the cunning, and arrogance. Heaven desires the strong to work for the weak, those with understanding to teach, those with wealth to share, and persistent diligence from all. If all conform to these rules, all will have whatever they need. Heaven loves the world and seeks the mutual benefit of all creatures. Heaven punishes those who resist, and rewards those who comply. Sage kings love universally; evil kings demonstrate partiality. Heaven is like a carpenter's square; one measures by it. What conforms is good; what does not is bad.

Explaining Ghosts. *Part III, §31.* Many current lords take might as right, and so, render the world disordered due to crime and insecurity. All such disorder exists because people doubt the existence of ghosts who dispense rewards and punishments. Ghosts exist because people see and hear them. Mo tells the story of Du Bo, wrongly executed, who returned after death to kill King Xuan, his malefactor. Mo reports several anecdotes of spectral encounters. Ghosts see all every man does, and recompense him. The sage kings believed in ghosts. When people believe ghosts are watching, then they avoid evil acts. Mo recounts that Heaven sent Wu to destroy evil king Zhou. Ghosts reward and punish great and small goods and evils. Ghosts are of three sorts: heavenly, those of mountains and rivers, and dead men. Even if ghosts do not exist, sacrificing to them gives people a chance to make friends of one another. If ghosts do exist, I am making friends as well as feeding my ancestors. Is this not beneficial? So, believe in ghosts and honor them.

Against Music. *Part I, §32.* Mozi argues against the musical extravaganzas of the wealthy. The benevolent man aims to improve the world, to further what is helpful and hinder what is harmful, and to offer a model for living to the world. These events fail to help common people. The sage kings held no such musical events. Common people do not complain when taxed to provide things that benefit the people. They object to expenditures for luxuries for rich people. Common people worry about food, shelter, and rest. Making music does not restore order from chaos. Musicians could be working productively. Audiences are not being productive. Humans cannot live, unlike many animals, without productive labor. The sage kings forbade dancing and music at court.

Against Fatalism. *Part I, §35.* Fatalistic people impoverish the nation, diminish its population, and jumble the affairs of state. Fatalists imagine good outcomes lie in forces beyond human control. So fatalistic people do not pursue beneficial tasks. One judges a theory by its conformity to the practices of the sage kings, the people's experience when employing the theory, and its utility to the good administration of the state. The sage kings were not fatalists, nor did they recommend such. Fatalism creates worry, which destroys people. The sage kings rewarded desired behavior and punished ill behavior. Fate did not intervene; kings did. Those who fail morally seek to claim fate's intervention. Fatalism is a flawed thought form; it brings disorder, poverty, and lack of worship. No gentleman adopts a fatalistic attitude.

Against Confucians. *Part I, §39.* Confucian ritualists advocate treating people differently, depending upon their merit and degree of relatedness. Mo criticizes oddities in Confucian mourning and marriage rituals. Mo criticizes Confucian teachings that appear fatalistic. Mo criticizes the moral penury of many Confucians, especially their self-indulgence and lack of productive work. Mo criticizes Confucian insistence on ancient forms of speech and dress, and their general affection for old things. Confucians advocate fighting until the enemy turns, then helping him withdraw. Mo argues that this allows the evil ruler to go on ruling with malevolence. Confucians advocate speaking only when personally offended. Mo says one should praise and correct all men liberally. Superior men act according to principle, seeking always to benefit the world and avoid what lacks merit. This is not Confucius's rule. Mo alleges [probably wrongly] that Confucius encouraged a rebellion by Bo and Shi Qi against the state of Jing. Confucians support the corrupt practices of bad kings. Mo argues that Confucius colluded behind the scenes in a number of corrupt usurpations and personal peccadilloes. Be wary of Confucian scholars; they model their teacher.