

THE WAY OF LIFE OF WU MING FU

BOOKS BY
STANWOOD COBB

THE WAY OF LIFE OF WU MING FU
CHARACTER—A SEQUENCE IN SPIRITUAL PSYCHOLOGY
PATTERNS IN JADE OF WU MING FU
SECURITY FOR A FAILING WORLD
NEW HORIZONS FOR THE CHILD
DISCOVERING THE GENIUS WITHIN YOU
THE WISDOM OF WU MING FU
THE NEW LEAVEN
SIMLA—A TALE IN VERSE
THE ESSENTIAL MYSTICISM
AYESHA OF THE BOSPHORUS—A ROMANCE
THE REAL TURK

PAMPHLET
THE MEANING OF LIFE

EDITED BY
STANWOOD COBB



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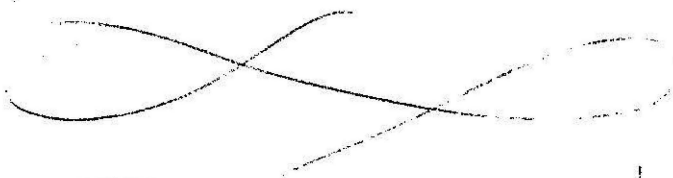
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Eric Tenenbaum

THE WAY OF LIFE

OF

WU MING FU

Best wishes



Stanwood (with)

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INTRODUCTION
TO
THE WAY OF LIFE
OF
WU MING FU

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
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A steadfast pilgrim mounts,
And gives his blessings on the way.
His frame will meet the night—
His thoughts expand to future day.



Progress and Perfection

How noble man can be! How magnificent his
creations!

Yet when examined in the mass, how puerile and
unattractive he is!

But we must not be discouraged—the exceptional
man of today will be the norm in a further
developed humanity.

The Darkest Hour Is Just Before the Dawn

The world is nearest universal peace when it is
most at war.

For through the purgation of planetary suffering
The spirit of intelligence will at last be spurred into
the arena of world-order and security.

The Judgment Day

To Cosmic Love let Earthlings find their way—
Or meet the travails of a Judgment Day!

INTRODUCTION

IN THE introduction to "The Wisdom of Wu Ming Fu," reprinted as appendix of this volume (see p. 47), I have told much about Wu, but there are always bits of wisdom I keep recalling from our many inspiring conversations.

Wu had formed the habit of viewing this planet as a unitary home of man. From his point of view all races and nations had an equal right to the pursuit of life, of happiness, of prosperity. His broad vision surveyed, as from a celestial height, the irregular pattern of human life as it manifests itself over the face of the earth. Such lamentable discrepancies between the greatest heights of human culture and living, and the lowest abyss of human misery and degradation!

"What is the typical life on our planet?" he once remarked to me. "We are used to the beauty and comfort of this urban culture that we move in. But can you take the charming standards of living of your cultured Chevy Chase as the characteristic planetary life? It may be the norm, but it is not the average.

"No. The characteristic, the stupendously prevalent life of the planet is the illiterate, ignorant, isolated rural life, such as prevails in my own

country. In Asia and Africa probably nine-tenths of the people lead this life. In Mexico and South America, four-fifths; in eastern Europe, two-thirds; and I don't think you are too proud of the miserable standards of living that prevail in your own Southern States.

"But how can this characteristically low culture of the planet be lifted up to the heights which man, at his best, is able to achieve? That, in a word, is the problem of the universal humanitarian. That is our world-pain. The cosmic idealist labors, as a woman in parturition, to bring forth a new world civilization characterized by more equity, more splendor, more planetary happiness and culture!"

Such were Wu's words, spoken before the shadows of the second World War were beginning, like witch's fingers, to steal the sunlight from our meadows. What would he have to say now? It is well, perhaps, that he did not live on into this age of planetary madness, when it is not culture that one can discuss but the possibility of existence itself.

Yet with his hereditary philosophical calm, bred in centuries of rise and fall of civilizations, Wu would probably not have been too much disturbed. "This too will pass!" he would have said. "War will pass—and by the accentuation of reaction, be the very means of establishing world peace and brotherhood."

Often our talk would run on the problem of war and peace, for Wu Ming Fu, with his natural Chinese proclivity for peace, greatly deprecated humanity's war habit.

"War isn't at all necessary," he said. "And if not necessary, then it is a madness! For certainly no one can crave war for war's sake, in these days of terrific destructiveness.

"War is inconceivable between your country and Canada. Why is that so? Because you are too consanguineous. But as a matter of fact, all in the world are consanguineous—only they don't know it. When the various peoples of the world realize the great yet simple truth of planetary brotherhood, war will cease. Confucius saw it, millenniums ago—"All men are brothers under the sun." And this world vision of his was partly responsible for the pacific character of our people, from that day to this.

"And in this day, another seer has had a great vision of the oneness of mankind—a seer in Persia who gives us the clue to existence here and in the beyond-world. I don't know of any more perfect world pattern in all history than the World State projected by Bahá'u'lláh seventy years ago.

"The oneness of mankind is the consciousness around which all principles of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order revolve. To unite all fragments of the human race, whatever their conditions, into one cosmic

family,—this was his aim and precept, the highest social and spiritual concept to which humanity has as yet attained.

"I have watched this Bahá'í Movement. It holds more promise for the world's progress than anything else on the planetary horizon."*

I THINK Wu would have been pleased at the remarkable degree to which contemporaneous world thought is expressing these same ideals of world brotherhood, world peace, an international court, international control of world trade and of basic raw materials, etc. He would have found himself at home in such an atmosphere. And in the active idealism of post-war planning for a better world† he would have found somewhat of compensation for the spiritual agonies engendered by war-craze.

Wu would have been rejoiced, also, by the steadily growing rapprochement between this country and his own native China—a close working unity

* As this book goes to press, the beautiful Bahá'í Temple, on the shores of Lake Michigan, dedicated to the oneness of mankind, is just nearing completion.

Information as to the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh (which Wu described to me in some detail) can, I believe, be obtained from the Bahá'í Secretariat, Wilmette, Ill.

† The Commonwealth Foundation in a recent pamphlet, the result of research work by economic-planner George B. Galloway, lists over one hundred organizations committed in whole or in part to planning for progress and human betterment.

cemented by war which will carry over, it is to be hoped, into post-war constructive work for political equity and socio-economic progress in the West Pacific Area.

The world is not really expiring, although in the midst of a holocaust which is destroying a lot of rubble. We are at the end of a great era. But we stand at the dawn of a still greater era—that of world federation and world unity functioning in terms of human progress.

I wonder if Wu Ming Fu's benign spirit is now surveying the events of this planet from some wider and more eternal sphere, and if his comprehension of Truth can still avail, as in his sojourn here, to clear the turgid mind and lift the heavy-laden soul.

S. C.

Chevy Chase, Maryland
August 1, 1942

THE WAY OF LIFE
OF
WU MING FU

Change

The craving for stability is a childish dream.
What the universe guarantees us is not continuance,
but change.
Equilibrium which comes as the result of adaptability
to change is the only repose Destiny grants us.

To a Poet

The poet looks upon a multitudinous world,
And from this welter picks his symbols clear.
He parts the veils that guard the way to Truth
And stands at life's vast Portal as a Seer.

Unbalance

Technology is man's scientific conquest of his
environment.
Culture is man's sensitivity to beauty, goodness,
and truth.
When technology advances too far ahead of culture,
civilization goes askew.

Tragedy

In the forest of desire
A bird once flew and sang of love;
"Why mournest thou, my soul?
Its only answer—I have lost my mate!"

What You Will!

"Do you want to learn how to make everything you
wish come to pass?" the sage Yao once asked
his pupils.
"Yes!" they eagerly cried. "Tell us this magic
formula!"
"Make your will the will of Destiny," said Yao, "and
then everything will happen as you wish."

Man's Quest for Freedom

Man seeks for freedom, but Destiny is always
thwarting him in his quest.
Perhaps it is not freedom so much as proper organi-
zation that he needs.
All forward movements of humanity have been
evolutions in social control.

Let Justice Be Relentless

Reward and punishment are the twin columns
supporting the social order.
To practice sentimentality and softness toward evil
doers
Is cruelty and injustice toward the righteous.

Environment

Our environment is one of the forms of expression
of the Self.

Therefore improvement of the Self
Will unfailingly bring improvement of the environ-
ment.

Free To Be Oneself

Why have Americans such a look of self-confidence?
This national trait—characteristic of all classes—is
it due to the fact
That here at last on the planet is a race of men who
feel free to be themselves?

Love Versus Evil

How can love overcome evil, when the most dreadful
and severe punishments cannot do so?
The reason is that harshness begets harshness,
But the vibrations of love tune the heart of the
wrong-doer to similar chords.

Let's Banish the Petty!

Why are there so many petty faces on the streets?
Could there not be found some planet to which
these insufficient ones could be banished,
So that nobility would become the prevailing type
upon this Earth?

Blessed Are the Meek

Can the meek, those of pure motives, ever succeed
in inheriting the earth?

Yes, the exploitive type will fail of power,
When humans grow intuitive enough to read the
hearts of their fellows.

A Sad Loss!

Most children are lovely and charming.
Most adults are not.
What has happened in the passage of the years?

How Are the Mighty Fallen!

Destiny has a quaint and easy way of destroying the
powerful, and those that do wrongly in high
places:

It needs but a slight error of judgment on the part of
those who wield great forces to wreck the
whole edifice of their career.

Therefore, as the Greeks of old discovered, "Those
whom the Gods wish to destroy, they first
make mad."

Work

What do men work for?
Since we all have to work anyway,
How wise and noble it would be to dedicate one's
labor to the purposes of Destiny!

Planetary Reform

Why is Nature, usually benign and orderly, at times
so savage and chaotic?
Let man search his own heart for the answer.
Perhaps Nature would cease her disorder upon this
planet, if humanity first reformed itself.

What Is Man?

Do we really know ourselves?
There is the surface man, the unreal person as seen
from without.
There is the self we live with daily and come to
like as one likes an old glove.
And then there is the greater Self that is ready
miraculously to direct our lives when we divert
our attention from the surface and begin to
exist inwardly.

War Will Be Outlawed!

Some say that war will always be!
But so, in the Middle Ages, they might have said
that pestilence and poverty would always be.
As Science has found a way to abolish these two
dread foes of humanity,
So intelligence and good will can find a way to
eliminate the curse of war.

The Clue

The thinker thinks his intellect the goal,
But the wise know better.
They know that love is the clue to existence.

Success

What is success?
The ignorant deem it to be attainment—
But the enlightened know it as poise.

Similar

Like begets like.
Injustice begets discord,
And justice begets peace.

Distant Goals

The fundamental law of the Cosmos is growth; in
fact, life has no other purpose than through
struggle to find expression and fulfilment.
Therefore the goal we envision may never be
attained,
But in so far as it inspires effort and achievement it is
an ever present reality—more actual than the
obstacles that would thwart our purpose.

This Changing Cosmos

Everything that is born must die.
Every form changes, yielding place to new and other
forms.
Nothing is immortal, except life itself.

Man's Imperfections

Nature is refreshing when humans pall upon us.
Flowers are comforting to gaze at when we are
discouraged, because they have so radiantly
attained the perfection designed for them by
the Planetary Spirit.
Man alone, of all creation, is devastatingly imperfect.
What has interfered with Destiny's plan for him?

Escape

As a dreamer escapes insuperable difficulties by
awaking from his nightmare,
So one might evade a dilemma in real life
By moving to another plane of consciousness.

A Rich Friendship

How can one be lonely
Who has learned how to make friends with himself?
Destiny constantly deprives us of other friends until
we learn this art.

War Is Too Late

The planet Earth, once a vast domain of savage
humans each confined to special areas,
Is now a narrow street where all men are neighbors.
Therefore war must cease, for its conflagrations have
now no empty spaces to waste themselves in.

The Hidden Friend

Whom do we consult when we say, "Shall I do this,
or not?"
We never see this hidden friend,
But nevertheless we are often in communication
with him, and his counsel is wise.

Ideas Are Magic

Perception, the fruit of observation, is shared by
men and animals alike.
But conception, the rich harvest of abstract thought,
is a gift of the Cosmic Mind to man alone,
Lifting him to the plane of creation where his
achievements are as magic.

A Return to Infancy

As I get older I think more and I know less.
Once I was sure of many things, now I am sure of
nothing.
I am becoming a child again, waiting to be taught.

Choice

Youth is romantic because it stands at the fork of many roads, down which adventure and fair hopes beckon.

Age is less entrancing, because the road one travels on has become one's master.

How important then, in youth, to read the signboards carefully and step forth upon the right road!

The Unconquerables

In India is the most pitiful group in the world, the Untouchables.

While in America most men, in whatever walk of life, have discovered the unconquerable truth That the only defeat is in ourselves; the only victory, the effective assertion of our abilities.

The Unconscious

If an inebriate in falling is protected from damage because he is in a sub-conscious state,

How much more will the spiritually-minded man be protected

When he learns how to move and act on the plane of the Superconscious!

The Effect of Good

"The possessor of sincerity develops not only himself, but with it he also develops others."*

Thus the contagion of nobility spreads around the world,

And fortunately for humanity, is more abiding than the contagion of evil.

A Perfect Society

"A competent provision for the security of the aged, employment for the able bodied, and the proper means of training for the young"—

This was the socio-economic order of ancient China as idealized by Confucius in his book, "Li Ki,"

And all the wisdom of the moderns cannot conceive a more perfect order.

Destiny Is America

Perhaps what makes people of so many racial backgrounds true Americans

Is not so much that they were born in America,

As that the spirit of America was born in them and in their pioneer-adventuring ancestors.

* Confucius.

Let Man Forgive—but Let Society Punish

Man can forgive an injustice or a cruelty against himself,
But society must render justice.
The wicked must be dealt with as we deal with a man-killing tiger.

Life Is Like That

The tide drains out of the cove at sunset. What do I see, mud flats?
No—little iridescent pools I see, reflecting each the lustre of the skies.
So it is not the ugliness below the surface in us that is important; it is the glories we can reflect from above that really matter.

How To Control the Controller

Since our actions are controlled by our desire-nature Rather than by our intelligence, which we use as an instrument for attaining our desires,
It is vastly important that we train our desire-nature heavenward, so-to-speak.

Happiness

Why search around the world
For that which constantly eludes you?
Happiness is where you find it.

Evensong

The birds sing at twilight as happily as they do at dawn.
What is wrong with man's work and play,
That he should be too weary at eventide to sing?

The Years of Our Youth

How old are you? Earth years do not count.
There are those who age and decay with time,
And there are those who grow younger in spirit as they acquire ampler years of wisdom.

The Chosen People

Which is the chosen race?
There is no chosen race,
But the *chosen people* are those who do God's will.

Time and Space

Is there a life after death?
What difference does it make whether there is or is not?
As for eternity, you can experience that now if you learn how to live above time and space.

What Is God?

God is the sum of all existence, and yet no part of it;
He is both the source and the product, yet He is not
contained in the product.

We cannot exist without God, but He can exist
without us.

He is the Infinite, we are the finite.

What is God? The answer must be, we do not know.

Why Do the Wicked Flourish?

The wicked flourish for a time because they have
strong wills, ample initiative, and no inhibitions.
Evil that is powerful can overcome the Good that is
weak

Until the Good that is weak is prodded and stimu-
lated into power surpassing the power of Evil.

Patience

Patience is a precious and almost divine virtue, for it
requires a complete spiritual control of ego-
centric urges.

Man would like to be as imperious as he thinks the
Gods are; he finds it difficult to be as patient as
the Gods really are.

That is why, with humans, patience is a rare and
late-acquired virtue.

The Upward Climb

He climbs well who places the weight of self upon
the Ladder,

And mounts with the upward urge of the greater
Self

Beckoning from above.

Try Religion

Religion is the only permanent source of security
for the world,

Because it is the only power that can bestow upon
humans sufficient self-restraint

To regulate their lives in conformity with social
order.

Where Earth and Heaven Meet

Heaven touches the earth only at distant horizons,
Which constantly recede as approached and are
never attained.

So the Infinite contacts the finite only in mystic
regions of the soul, to which the mind can
never win.

Perturbations

If our troubles spring from pride of ego,

The sooner we achieve selflessness

The sooner we shall arrive at tranquillity.

Experience

Man is more than the mere sum total of his experiences;
Rather are his experiences part of the extension of his inner self—
For matter is but the tool of man's adventurous soul.

The Philosopher

For him there is no great nor less,
No failure or success—
The path he follows as the vision leads.

For time, there is eternity to roam;
For space, the universe his home,
Content to go as Destiny him speeds.

Needless Decadence

Why is man past middle life a star that is setting,
When he might be a Star that is rising?
Can we not teach the soul to draw lustre from the
Eternal Splendor?

A Writer's Epitaph

To bring the beauty of that other World to this
Was all his life's effort, and his bliss!

Reformers

The way of the reformer is hard, for whom can he
find willing to be persuaded?
The good do not need reform, and the bad do not
want it.
If there could be found some elixir to change human
hearts, the world might be improved.

Neither Here nor There

Those who have the most power to do good seldom
do it;
While those who are most zealous in idealism lack
the reins of power.
So the world jogs along its intermediate course,
halfway between heaven and hell.

Idealism

No thought, no deed of idealism is wasted.
It becomes a part of the eternal fabric of things,
Forming in combination with other contributions
exceptional patterns of truth and perfection.

Divorce

The wise man believes in divorce:—
That is, he believes in the efficacy of divorcing love
from passion,
And of separating self-interest from conjugal
affection.

Extension of the Soul

Books, paintings, great works of music created by
man
Are a sort of extension of his soul,
Spreading its influence far beyond the confines of his
immediate presence.

Infinitude

Is it to be expected that the riddles of the Cosmos
will ever become apparent to our finite gaze?
We penetrate immensely into mysteries of space,
analyze far distant stars and even designate
their term of life.
But why is it that each new telescope, more gigantic
than the last, makes our petty planet still seem
the center of the Universe?

Abandon the Ego

As the inebriate converts everything that comes to
hand into means for indulging in alcohol,
So the ego turns all success into an intoxication of
the lower self.
Not until the ego is abandoned can man function
nobly and wholesomely.

Formalism

Precepts, dogmas, ritual—
These are but the stalks and foliage
Of a plant which should also bear blossom and fruit.

Consecration

Pleasure and success, like butterflies, are ephemeral.
Power comes only through dedication.
The great men of the world are those who serve
worth-while goals with consecrated energy.

Existence

The value of the thing-in-itself is dependent on the
state of intelligence reached by the mind.
Existence does not change Its nature,
But It reveals new meanings and values as the soul
gains in experience and wisdom.

Scholasticism

The great scholars of academic halls are correct in
detail,
But often wrong in their assumption of truth
Because they depart too much from the basis of
simplicity.

Cupid Recks Not!

Among earth's fair ones we pick and choose,
This one for intellect, that for wit.
But Love does not enquire whom his arrows hit,
Nor upon whom to cast his noose!

Has Man a Discoverable Orbit?

The laws of the Cosmos are discoverable and its
behavior predictable,
But human behavior is for the most part unpre-
dictable.
What is the hidden clue to the taming of this
wandering comet—Man?

Truth

Intuition is the direct apprehension of truth,
What the intellect laboriously strives for and never
completely attains,
The soul perceives with a strange immediacy and
perfection.

The Science of Life

There are sciences pregnant with truth—
There are arts bestowing beauty upon life—
But the greatest science and the most sublime art lie
in the perfecting of human behavior.

Oracular

There is a talk that drifts from mind to mind,
There is a talk that strengthens as it goes;
But rare the talk to which all lend their ears
In eager tribute to a voice that knows.

Faulty Appreciation

There are externals and there are internals.
It does not need a monument to make a man great.
Many a hero sleeps in an unknown grave.

Equality

It may not be true that men are born equal, but it is
true that they have equal rights.
It is the duty of government to deploy these equal
rights
So as to lift up the lowly, rescue the down-trodden
and suppress the exploiter.

The Prods of Destiny

Let us not bewail life's troubles.
The most painful crisis is followed by improvement.
So we humans do not make progressive changes until
our past situations become unbearable.

Occult Causes

Man must first master that which is within
Before he can master that which is without.
It is the hidden creative force that is the moulder of
all external forms.

Serenity

Nature is always serene,
Because she is too busy fulfilling herself
To have any energy for misplaced desires.

Magic!

It would be pleasant to do whatever we wanted
And to possess whatever we craved—
Yet even this is possible, provided we know how to
purify our desires.

Why Scold at Sickness!

A temporary illness is like the rest-note in music,
A tranquil contrast to agitation—
A pause to make us enjoy more the onward move-
ment of life.

Avoid Elation

It is best to take life measuredly.
He who is too much inebriated by the brightness of
the dawn
Is apt to sink into melancholy before nightfall.

Felicity

The more one seeks the more one loses.
The heart that craves nothing and fears nothing
Can be said to possess felicity.

The Lesson of Life

Why should I seek anything?
That which I gave, I have; that which I grasped,
I lost.
How infinitely better to be a transmitter of values
than a treasure-chest which Time has rifled.

Three Ages of Man

In childhood we call upon the world to give us its
attention.
In middle age attention is given absorbingly to our
profession.
In mature years we are able to behold life's drama
objectively, yet with generous warmth of out-
flowing sympathy.

True Society

The coming together of kindred souls around a hospitable table
Where talk rises to high levels and inspiration flows
from soul to soul,—
This is what social functions might be, but seldom
are!

New Friends

Can life's unfoldment ever fail of romance
Whilst yet a single friendly soul
Awaits encounter on the stage of Destiny?

Love's Vision

Is that beautiful and perfect being we see through
love's fond eyes
Only a biological illusion?
Or is it a true glimpse of the Reality which mirrors
in everyone perfection?

An Infinite Process

As life is never finished,
So character building is never finished.
Its details are as infinite as the details of life itself.

Ownership but Not Possession

Money brings ownership but not possession.
For he only who loves beauty more than money
Possesses those things of beauty which the rich man
boasts of owning.

Vanity

There is a large percentage of vanity in every human
being;
It has its value, as a stimulus to achievement and a
stabilizer of self-awareness—
But it must constantly be held in check, or it will
become a disease impairing the wholesomeness
of life.

The Truth About Ourselves

Those who show us how to improve ourselves are a
blessing in disguise.
The criticism may hurt,
But it is a curative agent.

Something of Sorrow

Something of sorrow there must be in every life,
Something to annoy—
That from these birth-pangs there burst suddenly
Some new and splendid joy.

Disintegration

That which stops growing loses the power of integration—
And in thus ceasing to attract life-force to itself
Must finally yield up its inert form to feed the living
forms around it.

Aspiration

As a lofty tree lifts its nourishment from the soil to
feed leaves that face the sun,
So by aspiration we can reach up and out for strength
And draw to us from the Cosmos that which we
need in the way of guidance and power.

How the World Goes Round

After events come thoughts,
After thoughts comes action, and this action causes
new events.
That is how the world goes round.

How To Live Happily

To live among friends and those who esteem us,
To flow measuredly like a stream that does not over-
flow its course,
To practice "ying" and "yang,"—this is to live
happily.

Evolution

Nature has patiently toiled until she has evolved
Man—a creature capable of thought and inde-
pendent action.
And now, like the mother bird with her young, she
pushes him out into the void to fly his own
course:—
In other words, all that man is to develop henceforth
in order to become Man must be by his own
efforts and will-to-perfection.

True Religion

If the sense of union with the Divine is the flower of
religion,
Noble deeds are the perfect fruit.
With most people, however, religion is a dry stalk
bearing neither fruit nor flower.

Fertility

It is mathematically possible for a pair of house flies
to augment to 2,000,000,000,000 during a single
season.
This exhaustless fertility of nature is astounding.
But the eternally expanding influence of a noble idea
is beyond calculation.

How To Avoid Troubles

There are no accidents!
Troubles flow from ourselves—from our mistakes,
faults, and flaws.
Therefore learn to know thyself, and avoid these
troubles.

Rising Above Failure

Failure is falling short of perfection.
If one could but reach the plane where Spirit moves
as Cause,
One would exist in atmosphere charged with perfec-
tion where failure is unknown.

Be Gracious in Success

An unpredictable borderline of hazard divides the
domain of success from failure.
Those who cross this border into victory
Should remain humble in their good fortune and be
gracious to those who remain perforce behind.

Milk before Cream

How can you expect to sip cream until you have at
least earned enough to buy milk?
The good things of life are a reward to the able.
Better to act and earn than to dream and envy.

Let Us Defy Time

Time, the Ruthless, leaves to us from the phantasma-
goria of phenomenal life but an empty shell of
memory,
Save to those who know how to rise to the plane of
the Universal and the Eternal,
Expending their efforts daily in an ever-progressing,
ever-expanding energy and consciousness.

Become a Child

Become a child,
For children understand;
And in their wise, old ways
Know more than men by learning strive to gain.

A Ladder

Would you rise in life, or remain on ignoble levels?
Then fear not the early struggles of life,
For obstacles are given us as a ladder to climb by.

Where To Apply Effort

If we spent as much energy in sincere regret of our
faults and in the endeavor to correct them
As we do in complaining about our lives and our
outer circumstances,
We should better rule both ourselves and our affairs.

Winds of Destiny

A great wind surges through the night, tearing the
fetid air to tatters --
So it seems to me a Cosmic Wind, purging the air of
pestilence,
Is ushering in something new and wholesome for
humanity.

What Is Man?

A crow is but a crow.
But man comes afar,
Down glittering light-ways
From some distant Star—
A power-seedling that with proper tending
Will bear rich fruit beyond all spending.

Ever Verdant

Do not let your channels of energy become choked.
The same Life Force which is back of all growing
things
Is at your disposal, that you may remain ever verdant.

Loyalty

Loyalty is devotion to a Cause, persistent even when
the Cause is failing.
Is such blind loyalty, then, a wasted effort?
No! Pure devotion is a gold that pays one's way in
Heaven.

Homoculture

Just as agriculture is the perfecting of the earth's
ability to produce,
Or as horticulture is the training of trees to bear the
highest of fruitage,
So education should be the scientific cultivation of
man to the point of his most complete perfec-
tability.

Gossip

Gossip is maliciousness parading in the disguise of
sociability.
Those who so injure the character and lives of others
Are forming a tomb of eternal corruption for them-
selves.

Gratitude

Best be thankful at all times for whatever blessings
are yours.
Gratitude is one of the rarest of human virtues,
And the sages tell us it is a special and certain road
to further favors.

Like Breeds Like

Hatred sent forth breeds hatred.
Love sent forth inspires the return of love.
Harmony sent forth creates a little world of harmony
around us.

Accumulative Achievement

Just as money put out at compound interest
Steadily increases its foundations as well as its
income,
So our activities, if of value to society, will build up
over a course of years a constantly increasing
potentiality of success.

Discouragement

Do not fear or fight discouragement.
Like sleep, it is part of the universal rhythm of life.
From it take reposeful strength for further battle
and achievement.

Is Life a Circle or a Spiral?

As the years roll by the limitations of infancy yield
to the bright powers and strength of manhood.
A few more terms of years, and the glorious pride of
manhood shrinks to the cautious limitations of
a declining age.
And finally there comes a roll-call which finds the
bed as empty as was the baby's cradle before its
birth.

* * *

What is the meaning of all this?
Is life a circle that eventually closes, arriving at
nowhere,
Or does it go on eternally in unending spirals?

Music

What is it in music that moves us?
Music dispenses with words, yet it speaks to us
with potent eloquence.
Is there, likewise, a wordless and unexpressed wis-
dom in the Cosmos which might be ours if we
had capacity to listen?

The One Who Sings

The sunshine lay on flower and grass,
On insects that did brightly pass;
Through nature there rang one vast stroke
From the heart of the buttercup to the oak—
And he who had eyes for the essence of things
Sought behind all the One who sings.

Progress

To have something to strive for is the normal life
for every human being.
Happiness does not consist so much in what we
already have
As in the successful struggle to climb to greater
heights.

The Cart before the Horse

He who gives as an alibi, "I am irritable because I
am tired"—
If he knew the cosmic law, would realize,
"I am tired because I am irritable."

A Cosmic Magnet

"Filling our hearts with the love of God is a magnet
to attract to us the things we need,"
Came to Miss Magman in a dream.
A salesman having hard luck practised it with
success.

Great Artists

The mediocre artist plays successfully on an instru-
ment, be it piano, violin or flute.
But the great artist makes the instrument an exten-
sion of his soul,
And pours forth his emotions and his visions to the
listening world.

Purity

Purity is a positive value.
The extinction of lust is not all that is demanded of
spiritual man.
He must achieve the refined distinction of cosmic
affection.

Pleasures

The pleasures we pay most for are the least needed.
Those we pay least for are the most wholesome.
But the pleasures which cost nothing, though unap-
preciated by the majority of men, are the most
heavenly and beneficial.

A Twofold Penalty

Men who have erred deserve the utmost of com-
passion.
It is true that those who fail through no fault of
their own have nothing to regret;
But those who suffer through their own mistakes
pay not only the penalty of failure but also of
illimitable remorse.

Nature

The farmer sees Nature as the source of food and
comfort.
The hunter and the athlete see Nature as a spacious
playground created for their pleasure.
But the mystic sees Nature as the Power of God,
and as the unsullied reflection of His Beauty.

The Hidden Jewel

The child is not a mere bundle of heredity and
environmental factors.
It is a living entity, born each with its own distinc-
tive pattern for achievement.
What that inherent pattern is, becomes the busi-
ness of parents and educators to discover.

The Plane of Causation

It is hard for mortals to perceive the inner laws that mould their lives.

The easy way is to blame our troubles on external circumstances.

In reality the soul of man is the source of all his experiences.

The Paradox of Life

First comes self-expression and self-fulfillment;
Subsequently the life-process demands escape from the claims of self and mergence in the Ocean of Existence.

This is a hard problem to solve—a cosmic paradox that baffles all but the bravest.

Character

Character is destiny
Far from the source of character deeds flow,
And our deeds create our destiny.

Righteousness

Self-indulgence and sin are illusionary paths to joy.
Righteousness is the only way to permanent happiness and success
In a Universe founded upon moral law.

Only the Few Can Use Wings

The creative person dislikes routine,
For he wants to get somewhere fast—
And routine moves slowly and sometimes reaches nowhere.

What Is Education?

Education is the handing over to the rising generation of the necessary vital experience of the human race.

It is a study of the past such as can throw light on the problems of the present.

And finally, it is the study by man of his own nature, that through wisdom he may find expression and fulfillment.

Earth's Dearest Treasure

The *new child* is the most precious thing the planet produces.

Here are treasures of advanced perfections waiting to be developed—new values in and for humanity.

Thus the value of the child born to this present age outweighs the value of all other wealth upon the planet.

Reluctant Feet

We mortals are little inclined to use our full powers,
Unless stimulated thereto by some sort of outward
pressure.

Happy is the man whom inward determination,
rather than the pricks and spurs of fortune,
can lead on to success.

Man Is Not God

It is true that man is given the power to lose his soul.
But what he may not and can not do is to assert his
private will
In defiance or obstruction to that Unitary will which
creates, sustains, and rules the universe.

Immortality

Someone has said that we are never really young
until we grow old.
Is it that the world and its affairs weigh less heavily
upon us in mature years,
For the reason that we are already adventuring
toward Eternal Shores?

Man

Man is a Being of wondrous potentiality.
Though, like animals, from the womb of time,
He can become a denizen of Eternity.

The Way of Good

Develop your intellect, and you will uncover Truth.
Develop your discernment, and you will find Beauty
everywhere.
Develop your soul, and you will travel the Good
Way.

Opportunity

Opportunity knocks at every door
And brings gifts suited to each person.
We must be swift in opening the door to this regal
unheralded visitor, who tarries not long at any
portal.

At the Bottom

The bottom is a good place to be—
Because there is the comforting assurance that one
can sink no lower;
And because exertion, then confined to one direction,
is bound to raise one's destinies.

The Stream of Life

What matters our individual careers, whether suc-
cess or failure?
The great life of humanity flows on, past all obstruc-
tions, to infinite God-given goals.
If we can further this progress even infinitesimally,
we should be content.

Why Speculate?

Why speculate about the nature of existence,
When every hour calls for action and decision?
He who justifies his existence by his deeds penetrates
 closely to the heart of Truth.

Above Time and Space

Though distance keeps us all too far apart
We can explore Elysium at will,
And traverse pleasant places of the heart
While time, in silent ecstasy, stands still.

Life and Art

The artist-soul, struggling to express truth and
 beauty in his creative work,
Falls short of perfection because he must use
 material forms--
And these obdurate mediums resist his effort to
 organize them into terms of spirit.

Ever Strive

Never are the weak of will advanced by Destiny.
Effort in itself is ennobling,
And cannot fail of definite rewards.

The Mystery of Nature

Wouldst know the meaning of the sea and sky,
Of sunshine that on flowers doth lie?
Go, seek this mystery not in space--
Thine own heart is its resting place.

Avoid a Selfish Old-Age

If egoism is unlikable in youth
It is little less than repulsive in age.
To grow old wisely one must become universal.

Why Preach?

What is the use of urging people to be good?
If we can open their eyes to the fateful consequences
 of unrighteous and of righteous action,
Maybe they will themselves take the first earnest
 steps toward reform.

Eternal Youth

With increasing age we could become ever more vital
If during the ebbing of our physical forces
We knew how to avail ourselves of spiritual tides.

Karma

What happens to us fits us, whether we like it or no.
It would be an incredible universe
If mere accident could buffet the soul's dignity.

Wisdom

Quiet! Let the sunshine sink
O'er thy forehead, o'er thy mind.
Stop, forget—yea, cease to think!
For wisdom is of higher kind.

Knowledge

"We must have pure men, and then only can we
have pure knowledge."*
True knowledge comes from the Divine Threshold,
And only the pure in heart have access to that
Treasured Sanctuary.

Equilibrium

"A turmoil is never the result of wisdom."†
All that is needed flows from the regular operation
of universal laws;
Therefore trust ever in the Cosmos and let it
operate for thee.

* Chang Tzu, the greatest apostle of Taoism.

† Hindoo Wisdom.

Greatness

True greatness implies some access to the Cosmic
Force—
This is granted only to men and women of supreme
consecration to their task or vision.
Suffering is a requisite step for attainment to this
lofty station.

The Way of Life

To find the Way of Life ourselves and leave the trail
a little clearer for those, who come behind us,—
This is to fulfill our highest destiny on earth,
And to achieve immortality there where the trail
ends.

Recurrence

To meet one, after a lapse of many years, who was
surpassing fair and heart-enticing—
What a dramatic moment, what a test of reality!
Yet we need not fear disillusionment, for essential
values are permanent like the stars and great
waters.

Let Time Efface Your Woe

A new year is at hand,
Then let the old one go—
As waves erase the patterns in the sand
Let Time relieve your woe!

Why Poverty?

Abundance is the most characteristic quality of the
Cosmos—

Why then does it not characterize human life upon
this planet?

Is it because man's ignorance and greed shut off the
supplies of the Infinite?

War

When man hates man,
War brews a murky death!
When Brotherhood becomes the plan,
Earth will first draw a healthful breath.

Angels in Our Midst

The young child is angelic, because untainted—
It might become almost anything.
What it does finally become is a tragic reflection on
the present level of planetary influence.

Trials

Do not complain at your trials, for they are a neces-
sary process of refinement.
What Destiny is trying to do for us by these mis-
fortunes
Is to purge us of self-seeking and attach us to the
Celestial plane of action.

The Test of Deeds

"Pure deeds must appear in the Temple of Man, for
in words all men are partners."*

Yes, it is fairly easy and comfortable to think noble
thoughts.

It is more difficult to express such ideals in noble
language of prose or poetry.

But it is most difficult of all, and most estimable, to
express nobility in action.

A Managed Universe

Not even on shipboard can order be maintained
without the subordination of every will to the
will of the captain.

How then can the Universe be managed with
harmony,

Unless all wills are effectively subordinated to the
Great Executive?

Altruism

Human society at present is so constituted
As to make the daily practice of altruism difficult.
Nevertheless, a universally practised altruism, or
cosmic love, is the goal to which humanity will
eventually attain.

* Babá'u'lláh.

Genius

What is genius?
How is it attained?
By submerging the creative self in the Ocean of Life.

The Spiritual Climb

The spiritual climb is not in reality a harsh and painful journey.
It is an ascent, like mountain-climbing,
Full of upper sunshine and of joy.

Sacrifice

Do not be alarmed by the necessity for chronic sacrifice enjoined upon us by existence.
For sacrifice is in reality nothing but choice—we have to relinquish one course of action in order to achieve another.
The wise see to it that their choice is for things of true worth, and that what they relinquish is unworthiness.

Humans

If human personality were flawless,
One would not have to outgrow it
In order to attain to the supreme station of human perfection.

Three Planes of Being

Those who reflect the emotions about them live on the plane of earth.
Those who deliberately give forth hatred live on the plane of hell.
Those who habitually practice love live on the plane of heaven and know its joys.

Clear the Ways!

Destiny strives to supply our needs,
But we are constantly obstructing Its workings.
Let us learn how to keep the Ways clear!

The Lightning Operator

The workings of the mind are labored and prone to error,
But our intuitive processes have immediacy and a hundred percent perfection.
Why, then, do humans so neglect this marvelous gift of the Gods?

APPENDIX

THE LIFE AND PERSONALITY
OF
WU MING FU

REPRINTED FROM
THE WISDOM OF WU MING FU

WU MING FU

WU MING FU was a true cosmopolite, as much at home in the civilization of the Occident as in that of the Orient. Deeply versed in Asiatic philosophy,* he was also the product of the American University.

I shall never forget, on the occasion of my first meeting with him, how deeply impressed I was with the quality of his terse observations on American life and on world affairs. I felt here a mentality such as Occidental heredity and training alone could not have formed, a method of approach and a tranquil grasp of fundamental truth which was the result of millenniums of culture in the blood. Certainly American brain cells have not yet evolved to such a normal capacity for high thought.

It was while I was looking up commentaries on Laotze in the Library of Congress that I ran into Wu Ming Fu, figuratively speaking. I was searching one morning in the stacks, to which I had the privilege of access, and found Wu, who was also in the same section and had noticed my desire for something I could not find. He courteously came to my

* Wu Ming Fu was a graduate of the last class in the Imperial University of Peking to follow the Confucian curriculum. He continued his education in this country, taking up graduate work in several of our leading universities.

assistance and showed me some rare books of which I had not known. We got to chatting, and I was so taken with his personality that I invited him to lunch with me at the Cosmos Club. In those few hours our conversation ran the gamut of all existence, so it seemed. Yet there must have been things we did not cover, for we always found subjects for rich and inspiring talk in the many hours we subsequently spent together at the club.

Wu Ming Fu, I discovered, was a voluntary exile from his native land. Unable to form free exercise of his intellect and will in behalf of the New China (was it because of his too great probity and idealism, untempered to political ways?), he had taken up his abode in Washington. Here he lived in semi-retirement, it seemed, more concerned with his self-chosen scholarly pursuits than with the diplomatic or social life of Washington. Hence my golden opportunity for the forging of a rare friendship.

I came to know Wu well. Perhaps, as well as any Occidental has known any Oriental. And knowledge in this case bred high respect on my part, and a love which I am happy to believe was mutual.

On one occasion, I asked Wu why he did not write down some of those pithy statements of truth with which he so often regaled me. He did not answer at the time, but one day brought me a note book bound in beautifully carved ivory covers, from

which he read to me, rather slowly, some original poetry. Glancing toward the book, I saw to my surprise that the poems were written in Chinese and that he was translating them into English as he went along.

"Here are the results of my life of thought," he said smilingly. "Not much show for a lifetime, is it?"

One who did not know Wu might think he spoke censoriously of himself. But in reality, I well knew that he little valued quantity—often, in fact, he had gently derided the quantitative basis of our Occidental life. In a country where a man may spend years carving a piece of ivory, the collection of stimulating poems which my friend held in his hand did not seem too slight a life achievement, and I told him so. He seemed relieved that I had not, as an Occidental, jumped at the bait he held out and swallowed it.*

"But why don't you write them in English?" I enquired:

"Remember, my original education was in Chinese. My philosophic thoughts flow better in that ancient form than in English."

"At any rate, translate them into English," I urged.

* It was because of such close understanding of his ways of feeling and thinking and because of my realized appreciation of his ideals, that he later enjoined upon me a great trust of which I shall subsequently speak.

He smiled and made no reply. But from then on, I found, he cultivated the habit of writing bilingually, so to speak. That is, as soon as a poem was composed in Chinese he immediately, while the inspiration was still warm, reset it into English.

Thus he jotted down from day to day his observations of the universe, in the form of a philosophic diary rather than as a conscious literary effort. I often urged Wu to seek publication for these aphoristic poems, but he would not.

"I seek nothing," he said. "That is my philosophy of life." And he quoted Laotze—"The ocean, by lying low, receives all waters into it."

"But let me seek for you, then," I persisted.

"Some day, perhaps—not now"—that was his unchangeable deferring answer.

And some years passed by, years of close spiritual friendship, made the more vital and complete because of differences of race and outlook upon life.

Wu loved children and he used often to visit our school to chat and play with the youngsters, with whom he lived on equal terms. Once he spent a few days at our summer camp, which he called "The Garden of Children by the Sea."

"The artist and the philosopher keep young hearts, and that is why they love children so," he used to say.

And how the children loved him! I can see

them now gathered around him before the fireplace, faces enrapt and lit by the force of his love and genius, as he told stories of ancient China and recited simple yet philosophic verses.

Wu was a keen critic of life, but like all who loved and understood children, not a cynic. He had faith in the essential nobility of men. But he often lamented to me the trivial patterns into which man weaves, as it were, the thread of life on this planet.

"Surely life on other worlds (I suppose there are other inhabited worlds) must be more admirable than on this sad old planet," he once remarked to me.

I shall never forget the last time I saw Wu Ming Fu. He was a little discouraged—a state of mind rather exceptional to his philosophic and ever-buoyant spirit. He had attained to nothing of those things which the world applauds as success, and hitherto he had not at all cared. But now some physical depression, some news perhaps from the home land, or some sudden realization of how apparently helpless he lay before the buffets of Destiny—made life seem momentarily less than bright to him.

It was no use my trying to cheer him up. For his was the greater soul, not easily to be lifted or led either one way or the other by a comrade soul. So we talked as usual of men and things; philosophized about this petty-living world and the innumerable splendor of the stars. When at last I went to go, I

felt an unusual warmth and clinging pressure in his hand clasp. A lingering desire for assurance of some human anchorage? I do not know. He never would verbally admit such needs. Yet perhaps the hand expressed here what the tongue would not.

Poor Wu! A week later, as I was on a lecture trip, the sad news came to me of his sudden death. Pneumonia had carried him off in forty-eight hours. Upon my return I found to my surprise that Wu had made me his literary executor. And I now had freedom to bring before the world this rich body of poetic thought which during his lifetime Wu had consistently refused to publish. The last entry in his poetic journal was symbolic:

The artist is ever victorious,
For what matters all else in the world
If one's life is being poured forth in beauty!

As for the quality of Wu Ming Fu's verse, I will leave the reader to judge. To me it has a peculiar flavor, the result of a coalescence of Oriental with Occidental modes.

The intricate formality and rigor of Chinese poetry did not appeal to Wu, who was in all respects a liberal and a creator rather than a traditionalist. So he invented a form of verse all his own—what America might call free verse, and yet it had a form

more or less deliberate, in that each picture or thought was condensed into three lines.

This triplicate form of poetic expression Wu used with a relentless logic that makes his terse philosophic statements seem almost syllogistic. They have that "mathematical precision" which he himself describes:

"Truth can be stated clearly
And with mathematical precision,
But how few manage life in obedience to Its laws."

Above all, Wu Ming Fu aimed at brevity and succinctness. "The greater the truth, the more briefly it can be expressed," he used to say. "It is only halftruths that need a lot of explaining." He made it a habit to employ the minimum number of words required for conveying thought; and he succeeded so well in this that his style appears to be chiseled to the point of perfection.

The result is not only depth, but also lucidity. For superfluous words only confuse the thought. As he once pointed out when we were discussing style: "How can one, by adding more words, improve the statement—Two and two make four?"

This was his ideal, to demonstrate truth with the brevity and finality of mathematical expression. "Both philosophy and mathematics seek truly to describe the universe," he once said. "The only

difference is that mathematics makes quantitative statements, while philosophy makes qualitative statements."

What place these philosophic poems of Wu Ming Fu will find in world literature, I know not. But I take great pleasure in presenting them to the public, thus fulfilling a desire strongly held by me during Wu's lifetime, to see these poetic aphorisms find permanence of form. The miracle of print is to confer a sort of immortality. For in the wide dissemination made possible by publication, though many of the seeds may fall on stony or thorny ground others may chance to fall on fruitful soil and so perpetuate themselves.

May the spirit of Wu Ming Fu graciously accept this service in his honor, and find satisfaction in it.

S. C.

Chevy Chase, Maryland,

April 19, 1931