



square. These farmers cultivate the public field collectively and their own fields individually. The produce of the public field goes to the government, while each family keeps for itself what it raises from its own field. The arrangement of the nine squares resembles in form the Chinese character for "well", which is why it is called the "well-field system." (*Mencius* IIIa, 3.)

Describing this system further, Mencius states that each family should plant mulberry trees around its five-acre homestead in its own field so that its aged members may be clothed with silk. Each family should also raise fowls and pigs, so that its aged members may be nourished with meat. If this is done, everyone under the kingly government can "nourish the living and bury the dead without the least dissatisfaction, which marks the beginning of the kingly way." (*Mencius*, Ia, 3.)

It marks, however, only the "beginning," because it is an exclusively economic basis for the higher culture of the people. Only when everyone has received some education and come to an understanding of the human relationships, does the kingly way become complete.

The practice of this kingly way is not something alien to human nature, but is rather the direct outcome of the development by the sage-king of his own "feeling of commiseration." As Mencius says: "All men have a mind which cannot bear [to see the suffering of] others. The early kings, having this unbearing mind, thereby had likewise an unbearing government." (*Mencius*, IIa, 6.) The "unbearing mind" and feeling of commiseration are one in Mencius' thought. As we have seen, the virtue of human-heartedness, according to the Confucianists, is nothing but the development of this feeling of commiseration; this feeling in its turn cannot be

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developed save through the practice of love; and the practice of love is nothing more than the “extension of one’s scope of activity to include others,” which is the way of *chung* and *shu*. The kingly way or kingly government is