

## CHAPTER 4

### Boiling Earth and Sea

TWO CELESTIAL BODIES were driven near to each other. The interior of the terrestrial globe pushed toward the exterior. The earth, disturbed in its rotation, developed heat. The land surface became hot. Various sources of many peoples describe the melting of the earth's surface and the boiling of the sea.

The earth burst and lava flowed. The Mexican sacred book, *Popol-Vuh*, the *Manuscript Cakchiquel*, the *Manuscript Troano* all record how the mountains in every part of the Western Hemisphere simultaneously gushed lava. The volcanoes that opened along the entire chain of the Cordilleras and in other mountain ranges and on flat land vomited fire, vapor, and torrents of lava. These and other Mexican sources relate how, at the closing hours of the age that was brought to an end by the rain of fire, mountains swelled under the pressure of molten masses and new ridges rose; new volcanoes sprang out of the earth, and streams of lava flowed out of the cleft earth.<sup>1</sup>

Events underlying Greek and Mexican traditions are narrated in the Scriptures. "The mountains shake with the swelling . . . the earth melted."<sup>2</sup> "Clouds and darkness . . . fire . . . the earth saw and trembled. The hills melted like wax."<sup>3</sup> "He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke."<sup>4</sup> "The earth trembled . . . the mountains melted . . . even that Sinai."<sup>5</sup> "He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers.

<sup>1</sup> See Seler, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, II, 798.    <sup>2</sup> Psalms 46 : 3-6.

<sup>3</sup> Psalms 97 : 2-5.    <sup>4</sup> Psalms 104 : 32.    <sup>5</sup> Song of Deborah, Judges 5 : 4-5.

. . . The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned . . . yea, the world, and all that dwell therein." <sup>6</sup>

The rivers steamed, and even the bottom of the sea boiled here and there. "The sea boiled, all the shores of the ocean boiled, all the middle of it boiled," says the *Zend-Avesta*. The star Tistrya made the sea boil.<sup>7</sup>

The traditions of the Indians retain the memory of this boiling of the water in river and sea. The tribes of British Columbia tell: "Great clouds appeared . . . such a great heat came, that finally the water boiled. People jumped into the streams and lakes to cool themselves, and died."<sup>8</sup> On the North Pacific coast of America the tribes insist that the ocean boiled: "It grew very hot . . . many animals jumped into the water to save themselves, but the water began to boil."<sup>9</sup> The Indians of the Southern Ute tribe in Colorado record in their legends that the rivers boiled.<sup>10</sup>

Jewish tradition, as preserved in the rabbinical sources, declares that the mire at the bottom of the Sea of Passage was heated. "The Lord fought against the Egyptians with the pillar of cloud and fire. The mire was heated to the boiling point by the pillar of fire."<sup>11</sup> The rabbinical sources say also that the pillar of fire and of smoke leveled mountains.<sup>12</sup>

Hesiod in his *Theogony*, relating the upheaval caused by a celestial collision, says: "The huge earth groaned. . . . A great part of the huge earth was scorched by the terrible vapor and melted as tin melts when heated by man's art . . . or as iron, which is hardest of all things, is softened by glowing fire in mountain glens."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Nahum 1 : 4-5.

<sup>7</sup> *The Zend-Avesta* (Pt. II, p. 95 of J. Darmesteter's translation, 1883); Carnoy, *Iranian Mythology*, p. 268.

<sup>8</sup> "Kaska Tales" collected by J. A. Teit, *Journal of American Folk-lore*, XXX (1917), 440.

<sup>9</sup> S. Thompson, *Tales of the North American Indians* (1929); H. B. Alexander, *North American Mythology* (1916), p. 255.

<sup>10</sup> R. H. Lowie, "Southern Ute," *Journal of American Folk-lore*, XXXVII (1924).

<sup>11</sup> Ginzberg, *Legends*, III, 49.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 375; III, 316; VI, 116. Tractate Berakhot, 59a-59b.

<sup>13</sup> Hesiod, *Theogony* (transl. Evelyn-White), ll. 856 ff.

According to the traditions of the New World, the profile of the land changed in a catastrophe, new valleys were formed, mountain ridges were torn apart, new gulfs were cut out, ancient heights were overturned and new ones sprang up. The few survivors of the ruined world were enveloped in darkness, "the sun in some way did not exist," and in intervals in the light of blazing fires they saw the silhouettes of new mountains.

The Mayan sacred book *Popol-Vuh* says that the god "rolled mountains" and "removed mountains," and "great and small mountains moved and shaken." Mountains swelled with lava. Coniraya-Viracocha, the god of the Incas raised mountains from the flat land and flattened other mountains.<sup>14</sup>

And similarly, "When Israel went out of Egypt . . . the sea saw and fled . . . the mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs. . . . Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord."<sup>15</sup>

"Which removeth the mountains . . . which overturneth them in his anger; which shaketh the earth out of her place . . . which commandeth the sun and it riseth not . . . which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea."<sup>16</sup>

## Mount Sinai

Along the eastern shore of the Red Sea there stretches a mountainous crest with a number of volcanic craters, at present extinguished; some, however, were active not many centuries ago. One of these volcanoes is usually described as the Mount of the Lawgiving: In the seventies of the last century a scholar, Charles Beke, suggested that Mount Sinai was a volcano in the Arabian Desert.<sup>1</sup> The Book of Deuteronomy (4: 11) says "the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness." Beke's idea was rejected by his contemporaries and ultimately by himself.<sup>2</sup> Modern scholars, however, agree with his original theory,

<sup>14</sup> Brasseur, *Sources de l'histoire primitive du Mexique*, pp. 30, 35, 37, 47.

<sup>15</sup> Psalms 114: 1-7.      <sup>16</sup> Job 9: 5-8.

<sup>1</sup> Beke, *Mount Sinai, a Volcano* (1873).

<sup>2</sup> *The Late Dr. Charles Beke's Discoveries of Sinai in Arabia and of Midian* (1878), pp. 436, 561.

and for this reason they look for the Mount of the Lawgiving among the volcanoes of Mount Seir and not on the traditional Sinai Peninsula where there are no volcanoes. Thus the claims of the rival peaks of the Sinai Peninsula for the honor of being the Mount of the Lawgiving<sup>3</sup> are silenced by new contestants.

It is true that it is stated "the mountains melted . . . even that Sinai,"<sup>4</sup> but this melting of summits does not necessarily mean an opening up of craters. Rocks turned into a flowing mass.

The plateau of the Sinai Peninsula is covered with formations of basalt lava;<sup>5</sup> wide stretches of the Arabian Desert also glisten with lava.<sup>6</sup> Lava formations, interspersed with extinguished volcanoes, stretch from the vicinity of Palmyra southward into Arabia as far as Mecca.<sup>7</sup> Only a few thousand years ago the deserts glowed with the beacons of many volcanoes, mountains melted, and lava flowed over the ground from numerous fissures.

The celestial body that the great Architect of nature sent close to the earth, made contact with it in electrical discharges, retreated, and approached again. If we are to believe the Scriptural data, there elapsed seven weeks, or by another computation, about two months<sup>8</sup> from the day of the Exodus to the day of the revelation at Mount Sinai.

"There were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. . . . And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke . . . and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Palmer, *Sinai: From the Fourth Egyptian Dynasty to the Present Day*.

<sup>4</sup> Song of Deborah, Judges 5 : 5.

<sup>5</sup> W. M. Flinders Petrie, "The Metals in Egypt," *Ancient Egypt* (1915), refers to "the enormous eruption of ferruginous basalt . . . which probably burnt up forests in its outflow."

<sup>6</sup> N. Glueck, *The Other Side of the Jordan* (1940), p. 34.

<sup>7</sup> C. P. Grant, *The Syrian Desert* (1937), p. 9.      <sup>8</sup> Exodus 19 : 1.

<sup>9</sup> Exodus 19 : 16-19.

The Talmud and Midrashim describe the Mountain of the Law-giving as quaking so greatly that it appeared as if it were lifted up and shaken above the heads of the people; and the people felt as if they were no longer standing securely on the ground, but were held up by some invisible force.<sup>10</sup> The presence of a heavenly body overhead caused this phenomenon and this feeling.

"Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. . . . He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. . . . At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire. The Lord also thundered in the heavens . . . hail stones and coals of fire. . . . He shot out lightnings. . . . Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered."<sup>11</sup>

Earth and heaven participated in the cosmic convulsion. In the Fourth Book of Ezra the occurrences witnessed at Mount Sinai are described in these words: "Thou didst bow down the heavens, didst make the earth quake, and convulsed the world. Thou didst cause the deeps to tremble and didst alarm the spheres."<sup>12</sup>

The approach of a star toward the earth in the days of the revelation at Sinai is implied by the text of the Tractate Shabbat: Although the ancestors of the later proselytes were not present at the Mountain of the Lawgiving, their star was there close by.<sup>13</sup>

An author of the first century of the present era, whose work on biblical antiquities has been ascribed to Philo, the Alexandrian philosopher, thus describes the commotion on the earth below and in the sky above: "The mountain [Sinai] burned with fire and the earth shook and the hills were removed and the mountains overthrown; the depths boiled, and all the inhabitable places were shaken . . . and flames of fire shone forth and thunderings and lightnings were

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Ginzberg, *Legends*, II, 92, 95.

<sup>11</sup> Psalms 18 : 7-15. An identical text is found in 2 Samuel 22.

<sup>12</sup> IV Ezra (transl. Box), in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, ed. R. H. Charles.

<sup>13</sup> The Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat 146a. According to Midrash Shir (15a-15b) the pharaoh warned the Israelites not to leave Egypt, because they would meet the bloody star Ra (in Hebrew "Evil").

multiplied, and winds and tempests made a roaring: the stars were gathered together [collided].”<sup>14</sup> Referring to the verse, “He bowed the heavens also, and came down” (Psalms 18), Pseudo-Philo describes the events of Mount Sinai and says that the Lord “impeded the course of the stars.”<sup>15</sup> “The earth was stirred from her foundation, and the mountains and the rocks trembled in their fastenings, and the clouds lifted up their waves against the flame of the fire that it should not consume the world . . . and all the waves of the sea came together.”<sup>16</sup>

The Hindus depict the cosmic catastrophe at the end of a world age: “The whole world breaks into flames. So also a hundred thousand times ten million worlds. All the peaks of Mount Sineru, even those which are hundreds of leagues in height, crumble and disappear in the sky. The flames of fire rise up and envelop the heaven.”<sup>17</sup> The sixth sun or sun age ended. Similarly, in the Jewish tradition, with the revelation at Sinai the sixth world age was terminated and the seventh began.<sup>18</sup>

### Theophany

Earthquakes are often accompanied by a roaring noise that comes from the bowels of the earth. This phenomenon was known to early geographers. Pliny<sup>1</sup> wrote that earthquakes are “preceded or accompanied by a terrible sound.” Vaults supporting the ground give way and it seems as though the earth heaves deep sighs. The sound was attributed to the gods and called theophany.

The eruptions of volcanoes are also accompanied by loud noises. The sound produced by Krakatoa in the East Indies, during the eruption of 1883, was so loud that it was heard as far as Japan, 3,000 miles away, the farthest distance traveled by sound recorded in modern annals.<sup>2</sup>

In the days of the Exodus, when the world was shaken and rocked,

<sup>14</sup> *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo* (transl. M. R. James, 1917), Chap. XI.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, Chap. XXIII.      <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Chap. XXXII.

<sup>17</sup> Warren, *Buddhism*, p. 323.      <sup>18</sup> Midrash Rabba, Bereshit.

<sup>1</sup> Pliny, *Natural History*, ii, 82.

<sup>2</sup> G. J. Symons (ed.), *The Eruption of Krakatoa: Report of the Krakatoa Committee of the Royal Society* (of London) (1888).

and all volcanoes vomited lava and all continents quaked, the earth groaned almost unceasingly. At an initial stage of the catastrophe, according to Hebrew tradition, Moses heard in the silence of the desert the sound which he interpreted to mean, "I am that I am."<sup>3</sup> "I am Yahweh," heard the people in the frightful night at the Mountain of the Lawgiving.<sup>4</sup> "The whole mount quaked greatly" and "the voice of the trumpet sounded long."<sup>5</sup> "And all the people saw the roars, and the torches, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they trembled, and stood afar off."<sup>6</sup>

It was a perfect setting for hearing words in the voice of nature in an uproar. An inspired leader interpreted the voice he heard, ten long, trumpetlike blasts. The earth groaned: for weeks now all its strata had been disarranged, its orbit distorted, its world quarters displaced, its oceans thrown upon its continents, its seas turned into deserts, its mountains upheaved, its islands submerged, its rivers running upstream—a world flowing with lava, shattered by meteorites, with yawning chasms, burning naphtha, vomiting volcanoes, shaking ground, a world enshrouded in an atmosphere filled with smoke and vapor.

Twisting of strata and building of mountains, earthquakes and rumbling of volcanoes joined in an infernal din. It was a voice not only in the desert of Sinai; the entire world must have heard it. "The sky and the earth resounded . . . mountains and hills were moved," says the Midrash. "Loud did the firmament roar, and earth with echo resounded," says the epic of Gilgamesh.<sup>7</sup> In Hesiod "the huge earth groaned" when Zeus lashed Typhon with his bolts—"the earth resounded terribly, and the wide heaven above."<sup>8</sup>

The approach of two charged globes toward each other could also produce trumpetlike sounds, varying as the distance between them increased or lessened.<sup>9</sup> It appears that this phenomenon is described

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 3 : 14.    <sup>4</sup> Exodus 20 : 1.    <sup>5</sup> Exodus 19 : 18-19.

<sup>6</sup> Exodus 20 : 18; "the thunderings and the lightnings" of the King James Version is not an exact translation of *Kolot* and *Lapidim*.

<sup>7</sup> *Epic of Gilgamesh* (transl. Thompson).    <sup>8</sup> *Theogony*, ll. 820 ff., 852 ff.

<sup>9</sup> This phenomenon of sound between two charged bodies changing with distance is utilized for musical effect by Theremin.

by Pseudo-Philo as "testimony of the trumpets between the stars and their Lord."<sup>10</sup> Here we can trace the origin of the Pythagorean notion of the "music of the spheres" and the idea that stars make music. In Babylonia the spheres of the planets were called "voices" and they were supposed to produce music.<sup>11</sup> According to Midrashic literature, the trumpet sounding at Mount Sinai had seven different pitches (or notes), and the rabbinical literature speaks of "the heavenly music" heard at the revelation. "At the first sound the sky and the earth moved, the seas and the rivers turned to flight, mountains and hills were loosened in their foundations."<sup>12</sup>

Homer depicts a similar occurrence in these words: "The wide earth rang, and round about great heaven pealed as with a trumpet."<sup>13</sup> "The world all burns at the blast of the horn," is said in the *Völuspa*.<sup>14</sup>

According to the Hebrew tradition, all the nations heard the roaring of the lawgiving. It appears that at Mount Sinai the sound that "sounded long" rose ten times; in this roaring the Hebrews heard the Decalogue.

"Thou shalt not kill" (*Lo tirzah*); "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (*Lo tin'af*); "Thou shalt not steal" (*Lo tignov*). . . . "These words [of the Decalogue] . . . were not heard by Israel alone, but by the inhabitants of all the earth. The Divine voice divided itself into the seventy tongues of men, so that all might understand it. . . . The souls of the heathens almost fled from them when they heard it."<sup>15</sup>

The din caused by the groaning earth repeated itself again and again, but not so loud, as subterranean strata readjusted themselves after being dislocated; earthquakes incessantly shook the ground for years. The Papyrus Ipuwer calls these years "years of noise." "Years

<sup>10</sup> *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo*, Chap. XXXII.

<sup>11</sup> E. F. Weidner, *Handbuch der Babylonischen Astronomie* (1915), I, 75.

<sup>12</sup> *Sefer Pirkei Rabbi Elieser*.

<sup>13</sup> *The Iliad*, xxi, 385 ff. (transl. A. T. Murray, 1924).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. W. Bousset, *The Antichrist Legend* (transl. A. H. Keane, 1896), p. 113.

<sup>15</sup> Ginzberg, *Legends*, III, 97; the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat 88b.



of noise. There is no end to noise," and again, "Oh, that the earth would cease from noise, and tumult (uproar) be no more."<sup>16</sup>

The sound probably had the same pitch all over the world as it came from the deep interior of the earth, all of whose strata were dislocated when it was thrown from its orbit and forced from its axis.

The great king-lawgiver of China, in whose time a dreadful cataclysm took place and the order of nature was disturbed, bore the name Yahu.<sup>17</sup> In the Preface to the *Shu King*, attributed to Confucius, it is written: "Examining into antiquity, we find that the Emperor Yaou was called Fang-heun."<sup>18</sup> Yahu was a surname given to him in the time following the flood, apparently inspired by the sound of the earth's groaning.

The same sound was heard in those years in the Western Hemisphere or wherever the ancestors of the Indians then lived. They relate that once when the heavens were very close to the earth, all mankind lifted the sky little by little at the repeated shouting "Yahu," which rang all over the world.<sup>19</sup>

In Indonesia an oath is accompanied by the invocation of the heavenly bodies. An arrow is shot toward the sky, "while all present raise a cry of 'ju ju huwe.'"<sup>20</sup> The same sound is heard in the very name Jo, Jove (Jupiter). The name Yahweh is preserved in shorter

<sup>16</sup> Papyrus Ipuwer 4 : 2, 4-5.

<sup>17</sup> For the Chinese pronunciation of this name see R. van Bergen, *Story of China* (1902), p. 112: "At the time of the flood, the Emperor of China was named Yau (Yah-oo)."

<sup>18</sup> *Shoo-king, the Canon of Yaou* (transl. James Legge), Vol. III, Pt. 1 of *The Chinese Classics* (Hongkong, 1865). In this edition Legge used this spelling of the name of the book and of the name of the king; his later spelling is different.

In Volume LX of the *Universal Lexicon* (Leipzig and Halle, 1732-1754), s.v. "Yao," it is said that some call Yao by the name Tam and also Tao. This is curious because in my reconstruction of ancient history I come to the conclusion that the name of the pharaoh of the Exodus was Tauithom (Greek "Tau Timaeus") of the Thirteenth Dynasty, the last of the Middle Kingdom. He was a contemporary of this Chinese king.

<sup>19</sup> F. Shelton, "Mythology of Puget Sound: Origin of the Exclamation 'Yahu,'" *Journal of American Folk-lore*, XXXVII (1924).

<sup>20</sup> J. G. Frazer, *The Worship of Nature* (1926), p. 665. F. Boas, *Kwakiutl Culture as Reflected in Mythology* (1935), p. 130, tells of *Yuwe gendayusens na lax* ("the wind edge of our world"), from where also come "death-bringing arrows that set mountains on fire."

forms, as well, Yahou and Yo,<sup>21</sup> as the name of the Deity in the Bible.<sup>22</sup> Diodorus wrote of Moses that he had received his laws from the God invoked by the name Iao.<sup>23</sup>

In Mexico, Yao or Yaotl is the god of war; the similarity of sound has already been noted.<sup>24</sup>

*Nihongi*, chronicles of Japan from the earliest times, begins with a reference to the time when "of old, heaven and earth were not yet separated, and the In and Yo not yet divided." Yo is the earth. The time when the sky touched the earth is the time when the heavy dust and vapor-charged clouds of the comet enveloped the globe and lay very close to the ground.

### Emperor Yahou

The history of China is commonly supposed to extend back to gray antiquity. But in reality the sources of the ancient period of the Chinese past are very scanty, for they were destroyed by the Emperor Tsin-chi-hoang (246-209 before the present era). He ordered all books on history and astronomy, as well as works of classic literature, to be burned. Search for these books was made throughout the empire for this purpose. The story persists that a few remnants of the old literature were again put into writing from the memory of an old man; some were said to have been found hidden in the sepulcher of Confucius, and are ascribed to his pen.

Of these few remains of the old lore, the most cherished are those which tell of the Emperor Yahou and his times. His personality and his period are considered as "the most auspicious in the Chinese annals."<sup>1</sup> The history of China preceding his reign is ascribed to the

<sup>21</sup> Psalms 68 : 4.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. R. A. Bowman, "Yahweh the Speaker," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, III (1944). H. Torczyner, *Die Bundeslade und die Anfänge der Religion Israels* (1930), p. iii, sees a connection between the name *jhw* and the Arab word *wahwa*, to roar.

<sup>23</sup> Diodorus of Sicily, *Library of History*, I, 94.

<sup>24</sup> Brasseur, *Quatre lettres sur le Mexique*, p. 374.

<sup>1</sup> H. Murray, J. Crawford, and others, *An Historical and Descriptive Account of China*.

mythical period of the Chinese past. In the days of Yahou the event occurred which separates the almost obliterated and very dim past of China from the period that is considered historical: China was overwhelmed by an immense catastrophe.

"At that time the miracle is said to have happened that the sun during a span of ten days did not set, the forests were ignited, and a multitude of abominable vermin was brought forth." <sup>2</sup> "In the lifetime of Yao [Yahou] the sun did not set for ten full days and the entire land was flooded." <sup>3</sup>

An immense wave "that reached the sky" fell down on the land of China. "The water was well up on the high mountains, and the foothills could not be seen at all." <sup>4</sup> (This recalls Psalm 104: "The waters stood above the mountains . . . they go up by the mountains" and Psalm 107: "The waves mount up to the heaven.")

"Destructive in their overflow are the waters of the inundation," said the emperor. "In their vast extent they embrace the hills and overtop the great heights, threatening the heavens with their floods." The emperor ordered that all efforts be made to open outlets for the waters that were caught in the valleys between the mountains. For many years the population labored, trying to free the plains and valleys of the waters of the flood by digging channels and draining the fields. For a considerable number of years all efforts were in vain. The minister who was in charge of this urgent and immense work, Khwan, was sentenced to death because of his failure— "For nine years he labored, but the work was unaccomplished" <sup>5</sup>—and only his son Yu succeeded in draining the land. This achievement was so highly rated that Yu became emperor of China after King Shun, first successor to Yahou. This Yu was the founder of the new and notable dynasty called by his name.

The chronicles of modern China preserve records of one million

<sup>2</sup> "Yao," *Universal Lexicon*, Vol. LX (1749).

<sup>3</sup> J. Hübner, *Kurze Fragen aus der politischen Historie* (1729).

<sup>4</sup> *The Shu King, the Canon of Yao* (transl. Legge, 1879). See also C. L. J. de Guignes, *Le Chou-king* (1770), Pt. 1, Chap. 1, and J. Moryniac, *Histoire générale de la Chine* (1877), I, 53.

<sup>5</sup> *The Shu King*.

lives lost in a single overflow of the Yellow River.<sup>6</sup> Another natural catastrophe—the earthquake—also caused great devastation in China at various times: it is estimated that in the year 1556 the quaking earth took 830,000 lives and 3,000,000 in 1662.<sup>7</sup> Was not the catastrophe of the time of Yehou one of the major inundations of rivers, as modern scholars suppose it to have been? But the fact that this catastrophe has been vivid in traditions for thousands of years, while neither the overflow of the Yellow River, when a million people perished, nor the great earthquakes, play a conspicuous part in the recollections of the nation, is an argument against the established interpretation.

Rivers do not overflow in the form of a sky-high wave. The overflowing rivers of China subside in a few weeks, and the water does not remain in the plains until the following spring, but flows away, and the ground dries in a few more weeks. The flood of Yehou required draining for many years, and during all this period water covered the lower part of the country.

Yehou's reign is remembered for the following undertaking: This emperor sent scholars to different parts of China, and even to Indo-China, to find out the location of north, west, east, and south by observing the direction of the sun's rising and setting and the motion of the stars. He also charged his astronomers to find out the duration of seasons, and to draw up a new calendar. *The Shu King* is called the oldest book of Chinese chronicles, rewritten from memory or from some hidden manuscript after the burning of books by Tsin-chi-hoang. In its oldest section, the canon of Yaou [Yehou], it is written:

"Thereupon Yaou [Yehou] commanded He and Ho, in reverent accordance with the wide heavens, to calculate and delineate the movements and appearances of the sun, the moon, the stars, and the zodiacal spaces; and to deliver respectfully the seasons to the people."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Andree, *Die Flutsagen*, p. 36; C. Deckert, "Der Hoangho und seine Stromlaufänderung," *Globus, Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde*, LIII (1888), 129, concerning the flood of 1887.

<sup>7</sup> Daly, *Our Mobile Earth*, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> *The Shoo-king* (Hong Kong edition).

The necessity, soon after the flood, of finding anew the four directions and learning anew the movements of the sun and the moon, of delineating the zodiacal signs, of compiling the calendar, of informing the population of China of the sequence of the seasons, creates the impression that during the catastrophe the orbit of the earth and the year, the inclination of the axis and the seasons, the orbit of the moon and the month, changed. We are not told what caused the cataclysm, but it is written in ancient annals that during the reign of Yehou "a brilliant star issued from the constellation Yin."<sup>9</sup>

According to the old Tibetan traditions, the highlands of Tibet, too, were flooded in a great cataclysm.<sup>10</sup> The traditions of the Tibetans speak also of terrifying comets that caused great upheavals.<sup>11</sup>

Calculations were undertaken to establish the dates of the Emperor Yehou. On the basis of a remark that the constellation Niao, thought to be the constellation Hydra, culminated at sunset on the day of the vernal equinox in the time of Yehou, it was reckoned that the flood occurred in the twenty-third century before the present era, but this date has been questioned by many. Sometimes it has also been supposed that the "Flood of Yehou" was the Chinese story of the universal flood, but this point of view has been abandoned. The story of the deluge of Noah has its parallel in a Chinese tradition about a universal flood in prehistoric times, in the days of Fo-hi, who alone of all the country was saved. The flood of Yehou is sometimes regarded as simultaneous with the flood of Ogyges.

The flood of Ogyges did not occur in the third millennium, but in the middle of the second millennium before this era. In the section entitled "The Floods of Deucalion and Ogyges," the synchronism of these devastations with the catastrophes of the days of Moses and Joshua will be demonstrated and supported by ancient and chronological sources.

When we summarize what has been told about the time of Yehou,

<sup>9</sup> *The Annals of the Bamboo Books*, Vol. 3, Pt. 1 of *The Chinese Classics* (transl. Legge), p. 112.

<sup>10</sup> Andree, *Die Flutsagen*, quoting S. Turner, *An Account of an Embassy to the Court of the Teshoo Lama in Tibet* (1800).

<sup>11</sup> Eckstein, *Sur les Sources de la cosmogonie du Sanchoniathon* (1860), p. 227.

we have the following data: the sun did not set for a number of days, the forests were set on fire, vermin filled the country, a high wave "reaching the sky" poured over the face of the land and swept water over the mountain peaks and filled the valleys for many years; in the days of Yahou the four quarters of the heaven were established anew, and observations of the duration of the year and month and of the order of the seasons were made. The history of China in the period before this catastrophe is quite obliterated.

All these data are in accord with the traditions of the Jewish people about the events connected with the Exodus: the sun disappeared for a number of days; the land was filled with vermin; gigantic sky-high tidal waves divided the sea; the world burned. As we shall see, the Hebrew sources, too, reveal that a new calendar was established reckoning from the days of the catastrophe and that the seasons and the four quarters of the heaven were no longer the same.