

on, it becomes remote. Having become remote, it returns. Therefore the Tâo is great; Heaven is great; Earth is great; and the (sage) king is also great. In the universe there are four that are great, and the (sage) king is one of them.

4. Man takes his law from the Earth; the Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from the Tâo. The law of the Tâo is its being what it is.

象立, 'Representations of the Mystery.' In this chapter Lâo approaches very near to give an answer to the question as to what the Tâo is, and yet leaves the reader disappointed. He commences by calling it 'a thing (物);' but that term does not necessitate our regarding it as 'material.' We have seen in the preceding chapter that it is used to signify 'spirits and men.' Nor does his going on to speak of it as 'chaotic (混成)' necessarily lead us to conceive it as made up of the 'material elements of things;' we have the same term applied in ch. 14 to the three immaterial constituents there said to be blended in the idea of it.

'He does not know its name,' and he designates it by the term denoting a course or way (Tâo, 道), and indicating the phenomenal attribute, the method in which all phenomena come before our observation, in their development or evolution. And to distinguish it from all other methods of evolution, he would call it 'the Great Method,' and so he employs that combination as its name in ch. 18 and elsewhere; but it cannot be said that this name has fully maintained itself in the writings of his followers. But understood thus, he here says, as in ch. 1, that it is 'the Mother of all things.' And yet, when he says that 'it was before Heaven and Earth were produced,' he comes very near his affirmations in chapters 1 and 4, that 'the nameless Tâo was the beginning (or originating cause) of Heaven and Earth,' and 'might seem to have been before

God.' Was he groping after God if haply he might find Him? I think he was, and he gets so far as to conceive of Him as 'the Uncaused Cause,' but comes short of the idea of His personality. The other subordinate causes which he mentions all get their force or power from the Tâo, but after all the Tâo is simply a spontaneity, evolving from itself, and not acting from a personal will, consciously in the direction of its own wisdom and love. 'Who can by searching find out God? Who can find out the Almighty to perfection?'

The predicate of the Tâo in the chapter, most perplexing to myself, is 'It returns,' in par. 3. 'It flows away, far away, and comes back;'—are not the three statements together equal to 'It is everywhere?'

26. 1. Gravity is the root of lightness; stillness, the ruler of movement.

2. Therefore a wise prince, marching the whole day, does not go far from his baggage waggons. Although he may have brilliant prospects to look at, he quietly remains (in his proper place), indifferent to them. How should the lord of a myriad chariots carry himself lightly before the kingdom? If he do act lightly, he has lost his root (of gravity); if he proceed to active movement, he will lose his throne.

重德, 'The Quality of Gravity.' Gravity and stillness are both attributes of the Tâo; and he who cultivates it must not give way to lightness of mind, or hasty action.

The rule for a leader not to separate from his baggage waggons is simply the necessity of adhering to gravity. I have adopted from Han Fei the reading of 'the wise prince' for 'the sage,' which is found in Ho-shang Kung; and later on the reading of 'has lost his root' for his 'loses his ministers,' though the latter is found also in Han Fei.

27. 1. The skilful traveller leaves no traces of his wheels or footsteps; the skilful speaker says nothing that can be found fault with or blamed; the skilful reckoner uses no tallies; the skilful closer needs no bolts or bars, while to open what he has shut will be impossible; the skilful binder uses no strings or knots, while to unloose what he has bound will be impossible. In the same way the sage is always skilful at saving men, and so he does not cast away any man; he is always skilful at saving things, and so he does not cast away anything. This is called 'Hiding the light of his procedure.'

2. Therefore the man of skill is a master (to be looked up to) by him who has not the skill; and he who has not the skill is the helper of (the reputation of) him who has the skill. If the one did not honour his master, and the other did not rejoice in his helper, an (observer), though intelligent, might greatly err about them. This is called 'The utmost degree of mystery.'

巧用, 'Dexterity in Using,' that is, in the application of the Tâo. This is the substance of the chapter, celebrating the effective but invisible operation of the Tâo, and the impartial exercise of it for the benefit of all men and all things.

I have given the most natural construction of the two characters at the end of par. 1, the only possible construction of them, so far as I can see, suitable to the context. The action of the Tâo (non-acting and yet all-efficient) and that of the sage in accordance with it, are veiled by their nature from the sight of ordinary men.

It is more difficult to catch the scope and point of par. 2. If there were not the conditions described in it, it would be hard for even an intelligent onlooker to distinguish between the man who had the skill and the man without it, between

him who possessed the Tâo, and him who had it not, which would be strange indeed.

28. 1. Who knows his manhood's strength,
Yet still his female feebleness maintains;
As to one channel flow the many drains,
All come to him, yea, all beneath the sky.
Thus he the constant excellence retains;—
The simple child again, free from all stains.
Who knows how white attracts,
Yet always keeps himself within black's shade,
The pattern of humility displayed,
Displayed in view of all beneath the sky;
He in the unchanging excellence arrayed,
Endless return to man's first state has made.
Who knows how glory shines,
Yet loves disgrace, nor e'er for it is pale;
Behold his presence in a spacious vale,
To which men come from all beneath the sky.
The unchanging excellence completes its tale;
The simple infant man in him we hail.

2. The unwrought material, when divided and distributed, forms vessels. The sage, when employed, becomes the Head of all the Officers (of government); and in his greatest regulations he employs no violent measures.

反樸, 'Returning to Simplicity.' The chapter sets forth humility and simplicity, an artless freedom from all purpose, as characteristic of the man of Tâo, such as he was in the primeval time. 'The sage' in par. 2 may be 'the Son of Heaven,'—the Head of all rule in the kingdom, or the feudal lord in a state.

29. 1. If any one should wish to get the kingdom for himself, and to effect this by what he does, I see

that he will not succeed. The kingdom is a spirit-like thing, and cannot be got by active doing. He who would so win it destroys it; he who would hold it in his grasp loses it.

2. The course and nature of things is such that

What was in front is now behind;

What warmed anon we freezing find.

Strength is of weakness oft the spoil;

The store in ruins mocks our toil.

Hence the sage puts away excessive effort, extravagance, and easy indulgence.

無爲, 'Taking no Action.' All efforts made with a purpose are sure to fail. The nature of the Tâo necessitates their doing so, and the uncertainty of things and events teaches the same lesson.

That the kingdom or throne is a 'spirit-like vessel' has become a common enough saying among the Chinese. Julien has, 'L'Empire est comme un vase divin;' but I always shrink from translating 神 by 'divine.' Its English analogue is 'spirit,' and the idea in the text is based on the immunity of spirit from all material law, and the uncertain issue of attempts to deal with it according to ordinary methods. Wû K'hang takes the phrase as equivalent to 'superintended by spirits,' which is as inadmissible as Julien's 'divin.' The Tâo forbids action with a personal purpose, and all such action is sure to fail in the greatest things as well as in the least.

30. 1. He who would assist a lord of men in harmony with the Tâo will not assert his mastery in the kingdom by force of arms. Such a course is sure to meet with its proper return.

2. Wherever a host is stationed, briars and thorns spring up. In the sequence of great armies there are sure to be bad years.

3. A skilful (commander) strikes a decisive blow, and stops. He does not dare (by continuing his operations) to assert and complete his mastery. He will strike the blow, but will be on his guard against being vain or boastful or arrogant in consequence of it. He strikes it as a matter of necessity; he strikes it, but not from a wish for mastery.

4. When things have attained their strong maturity they become old. This may be said to be not in accordance with the Tâo: and what is not in accordance with it soon comes to an end.

儉武, 'A Caveat against War.' War is contrary to the spirit of the Tâo, and, as being so, is productive of misery, and leads to early ruin. It is only permissible in a case of necessity, and even then its spirit and tendencies must be guarded against.

In translating 果 by 'striking a decisive blow,' I have, no doubt, followed Julien's 'frapper un coup décisif.' The same 果 occurs six times in par. 3, followed by 而, and 3iâo Hung says that in all but the first instance the 而 should be taken as equivalent to 於, so that we should have to translate, 'He is determined against being vain,' &c. But there is no necessity for such a construction of 而.

'Weakness' and not 'strength' is the character of the Tâo; hence the lesson in par. 4.

31. 1. Now arms, however beautiful, are instruments of evil omen, hateful, it may be said, to all creatures. Therefore they who have the Tâo do not like to employ them.

2. The superior man ordinarily considers the left hand the most honourable place, but in time of war the right hand. Those sharp weapons are instruments of evil omen, and not the instruments of the