

39. 1. The things which from of old have got the One (the Tâo) are--

Heaven which by it is bright and pure;
Earth rendered thereby firm and sure;
Spirits with powers by it supplied;
Valleys kept full throughout their void
All creatures which through it do live
Princes and kings who from it get
The model which to all they give.
All these are the results of the One (Tâo).

2. If heaven were not thus pure, it soon would rend;
If earth were not thus sure, 'twould break and bend;
Without these powers, the spirits soon would fail;
If not so filled, the drought would parch each vale;
Without that life, creatures would pass away;
Princes and kings, without that moral sway,
However grand and high, would all decay.

3. Thus it is that dignity finds its (firm) root in its (previous) meanness, and what is lofty finds its stability in the lowness (from which it rises). Hence princes and kings call themselves 'Orphans,' 'Men of small virtue,' and as 'Carriages without a nave.' Is not this an acknowledgment that in their considering themselves mean they see the foundation of their dignity? So it is that in the enumeration of the different parts of a carriage we do not come on what makes it answer the ends of a carriage. They do not wish to show themselves elegant-looking as jade, but (prefer) to be coarse-looking as an (ordinary) stone.

法本

, 'The Origin of the Law.' In this title there is a reference to the Law given to all things by the Tâo, as described in the conclusion of chapter 25. And the Tâo affords that law by its passionless, undemonstrative nature, through which in its spontaneity, doing nothing for the sake of doing, it yet does all things.

The difficulty of translation is in the third paragraph. The way in which princes and kings speak depreciatingly of themselves is adduced as illustrating how they have indeed got the spirit of the

Tâo; and I accept the last epithet as given by Ho-shang Kung, 'naveless' (**轂**), instead of **穀** (= 'the unworthy'), which is found in Wang Pî, and has been adopted by nearly all subsequent editors. To see its appropriateness here, we have only to refer back to chapter 11, where the thirty spokes, and the nave, empty to receive the axle, are spoken of, and it is shown how the usefulness of the carriage is derived from that emptiness of the nave. This also enables us to give a fair and consistent explanation of the difficult clause which follows, in which also I have followed the text

of Ho-shang Kung. For his **車**, Wang Pî has **輿**, which also is found in a quotation of it by Hwâi-nan Dze; but this need not affect the meaning. In the translation of the clause we are assisted by a somewhat similar illustration about a horse in the twenty-fifth of Kwang-dze's Books, par. 10.

40. 1. The movement of the Tâo

By contraries proceeds;
And weakness marks the course
Of Tâo's mighty deeds.

2. All things under heaven sprang from It as existing (and named); that existence sprang from It as non-existent (and not named).

去用

'Dispensing with the Use (of Means);'--with their use, that is, as it appears to us. The subject of the brief chapter is the action of the Tâo by contraries, leading to a result the opposite of what existed previously, and by means which might seem calculated to produce a contrary result.

In translating par. 2 1 have followed Ziâo Hung, who finds the key to it in ch. 1. Having a name, the Tâo is 'the Mother of all things;' having no name, it is 'the Originator of Heaven and Earth.' But here is the teaching of Lâu-dze:--'If Tâo seems to be before God,' Tâo itself sprang from nothing.

41. 1. Scholars of the highest class, when they hear about the Tâo, earnestly carry it into practice. Scholars of the middle class, when they have heard about it, seem now to keep it and now to lose it. Scholars of the lowest class, when they have heard about it, laugh greatly at it. If it were not (thus) laughed at, it would not be fit to be the Tâo.

2. Therefore the sentence-makers have thus expressed themselves:--

'The Tâo, when brightest seen, seems light to lack;
Who progress in it makes, seems drawing back;
Its even way is like a rugged track.
Its highest virtue from the vale doth rise;
Its greatest beauty seems to offend the eyes
And he has most whose lot the least supplies.
Its firmest virtue seems but poor and low;
Its solid truth seems change to undergo;
Its largest square doth yet no corner show
A vessel great, it is the slowest made; p. 85
Loud is its sound, but never word it said;
A semblance great, the shadow of a shade.'

3. The Tâo is hidden, and has no name; but it is the Tâo which is skilful at imparting (to all things what they need) and making them complete.

同異

'Sameness and Difference.' The chapter is a sequel of the preceding, and may be taken as an illustration of the Tâo's proceeding by contraries.

Who the sentence-makers were whose sayings are quoted we cannot tell, but it would have been strange if Lâu-dze had not had a large store of such sentences at his command. The fifth and sixth of those employed by him here are found in Lieh-dze (II, 15 a), spoken by Lâu in reproving Yang Kû, and in VII, 3 a, that heretic appears quoting an utterance of the same kind, with the words,'

according to an old saying (古語有之).

42. 1. The Tâo produced One; One produced Two; Two produced Three; Three produced All things. All things leave behind them the Obscurity (out of which they have come), and go forward to embrace the Brightness (into which they have emerged), while they are harmonised by the Breath of Vacancy.

2. What men dislike is to be orphans, to have little virtue, to be as carriages without naves; and yet these are the designations which kings and princes use for themselves. So it is that some things are increased by being diminished, and others are diminished by being increased.

3. What other men (thus) teach, I also teach. The violent and strong do not die their natural death. I will make this the basis of my teaching.

道化

'The Transformations of the Tâo.' In par. 2 we have the case of the depreciating epithets given to themselves by kings and princes, which we found before in ch. 39, and a similar lesson is drawn from it. Such depreciation leads to exaltation, and the contrary course of self-exaltation leads to abasement. This latter case is stated emphatically in par. 3, and Lâu-dze says that it was the basis of his teaching. So far therefore we have in this chapter a repetition of the lesson that the movement of the Tâo is by contraries,' and that its weakness is the sure precursor of strength. But the connexion between this lesson and what he says in par. 1 it is difficult to trace. Up to this time at least it has baffled myself. The passage seems to give us a cosmogony. 'The Tâo produced One.' We have already seen that the Tâo is 'The One.' Are we to understand here that the Tâo, and the One

were one and the same? In this case what would be the significance of the 生 ('produced')?--that the Tâo which had been previously 'non-existent' now became 'existent,' or capable of being named? This seems to be the view of Sze-mâ Kwang (A.D. 1009-1086).

The most singular form which this view assumes is in one of the treatises on our King, attributed to the Tâoist patriarch Lü (呂祖道德經解), that 'the One is Heaven, which was formed by the congealing of the Tâo.' According to another treatise, also assigned to the same Lü (

道德真經合解) the One was 'the primordial ether;' the Two, 'the separation of that into its Yin and Yang constituents;' and the Three, 'the production of heaven, earth, and man by these.' In

quoting the paragraph Hwâi-nan dze omits 道生一, and commences with 一生二, and his glossarist, Kâo Yû, makes out the One to be the Tâo, the Two to be Spiritual Intelligences (

神明), and the Three to be the Harmonising Breath. From the mention of the Yin and Yang that follows, I believe that Lâu-dze intended by the Two these two qualities or elements in the primordial ether, which would be 'the One.' I dare not hazard a guess as to what 'the Three' were.

43. 1. The softest thing in the world dashes against and overcomes the hardest; that which has no (substantial) existence enters where there is no crevice. I know hereby what advantage belongs to doing nothing (with a purpose).

2. There are few in the world who attain to the teaching without words, and the advantage arising from non-action.

徧用

'The Universal Use (of the action in weakness of the Tâo).' The chapter takes us back to the lines of ch. 40, that

'Weakness marks the course
Of Tâo's mighty deeds.'

By 'the softest thing in the world' it is agreed that we are to understand 'water,' which will wear away the hardest rocks. 'Dashing against and overcoming' is a metaphor taken from hunting. Ho-shang Kung says that 'what has no existence' is the Tâo; it is better to understand by it the

unsubstantial air (氣) which penetrates everywhere, we cannot see how.

Compare par. 2 with ch. 2, par. 3.

44. 1. Or fame or life,

Which do you hold more dear?

Or life or wealth,

To which would you adhere?
Keep life and lose those other things;
Keep them and lose your life:--which brings
Sorrow and pain more near?

2. Thus we may see,
Who cleaves to fame
Rejects what is more great;
Who loves large stores
Gives up the richer state.

3. Who is content
Needs fear no shame.
Who knows to stop
Incurs no blame.
From danger free
Long live shall he.

立戒, 'Cautions.' The chapter warns men to let nothing come into competition with the value which they set on the Tâo. The Tâo is not named, indeed, but the idea of it was evidently in the writer's mind.

The whole chapter rhymes after a somewhat peculiar fashion; familiar enough, however, to one who is acquainted with the old rhymes of the Book of Poetry.

45. 1. Who thinks his great achievements poor
Shall find his vigour long endure.
Of greatest fulness, deemed a void,
Exhaustion ne'er shall stem the tide.
Do thou what's straight still crooked deem;
Thy greatest art still stupid seem,
And eloquence a stammering scream.

2. Constant action overcomes cold; being still overcomes heat. Purity and stillness give the correct law to all under heaven.

洪德, 'Great or Overflowing Virtue.' The chapter is another illustration of the working of the Tâo by contraries. According to Wû Khäng, the action which overcomes cold is that of the Yang element in the developing primordial ether; and the stillness which overcomes heat is that of the contrary Yin element. These may have been in Lâo-dze's mind, but the statements are so simple as hardly to need any comment. Wû further says that the purity and stillness are descriptive of the condition of non-action.