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CRITICISMS AND DISCUSSIONS.

LAO-TZE AND PROFESSOR GILES.

[In reply to an inquiry as to the validity of my arguments against the position of Professor Giles with respect to the authenticity of Lao-Tze's Tao Teh King, Mr. Teitaro Suzuki, a Japanese scholar, has written the following comments in criticism of my own and Professor Giles's positions. Since these comments contain a good deal of material that will be of assistance to our readers in forming their opinion, we have deemed it pertinent to publish them here.—Ed.]

The Tao Teh King is a collection of aphorisms and not a systematic treatise on philosophy. Is this, however, reasonable ground for assuming that Lao-Tze wrote his work when his health was broken down, and does this fact account for his somewhat unintelligible style of writing? I think not. The probability is that Lao-Tze was not so careful in writing as modern writers are, and that he simply put down his thoughts as they flashed through his mind, however incoherent they were. Chinese philosophers, before the introduction of Buddhism, were as a rule very unsystematic. As for Lao-Tze, this irregularity was in full accord with his character and mode of thinking.

Further, allow me to say that Sze-Ma Ch'ien was not an admirer of Lao-Tze. Everything in the Shi ki tends to prove the contrary or at least goes to show that he was favorably disposed towards Confucianism and not Taoism. His father, however, seems to have had a liking for Lao-Tze.

It is difficult to understand how Mr. Giles can imagine he finds a support in Sze-Ma Ch'ien's Historical Records (the Shi ki) for his theory of the unauthenticity of Lao-Tze's Tao Teh King, for there are in addition to the one quoted by Dr. Carus in the present number of The Monist, pp. 574, a number of quite explicit passages in the Records which prove the contrary; and the assertion that Sze-Ma Ch'ien "had never set eyes upon the work" of Lao-Tze, must be rejected as unwarranted. Here are some quotations which cannot be reconciled with Professor Giles's criticism:

1. In summing up Lao-Tze's doctrine in a brief epilogue to the collective lives of Lao Tan, Chuang Chou, Han Fei, and Shen Pu-hai, Sze-Ma Ch'ien says:
"The Tao that is most honored by Lao-Tze is void and non-existent, and [spontaneously] responds to impulses; its modifications are endless. Therefore his writings and phraseology are full of mystery and beyond comprehension. . . ."

Could Sze-Ma Ch’ien make this statement without ever having set eyes on Lao-Tze’s work?

2. Sze-Ma Ch’ien occasionally quotes Lao-Tze. Here are a few of the quotations I have found while turning over the leaves of the Shi k’i at random.

a. In the introductory remark to the Lives of the Merciless Judges (Biographical Section 65), Sze-Ma Ch’ien, speaking of both Lao-Tze and Confucius quotes the following passages from Lao-Tze: ‘‘Superior virtue makes no show of virtue, therefore it has virtue. Inferior virtue never loses sight of virtue, therefore it has no virtue.’’1 (The more discriminating become laws and ordinances, the more there appear thieves and robbers.)”

He adds: ‘‘How well remarked!’’

But these first two passages are exactly what we now find in Chapter 38 of the Tao Teh King. Mr. Giles, who thinks that the characters not quoted by Han Fei Tze are not genuine, omits the second passage 下德不失德是以無德 and declares that it ‘‘makes nonsense’’ (p. 256) and weakens the whole drift of the chapter. Further, his interpretation of the first passage is strange. In archaic Chinese 得 teh, to obtain, frequently stands for 徳 teh, virtue, not, as Professor Giles claims, 德 teh, virtue, for 得 teh, to obtain. The passage should read accordingly, ‘‘The highest virtue makes no show of virtue, therefore it is virtue.’’2

The characters of the passage quoted above in parentheses do not appear in the present Tao Teh King. But the sense is quite Laotzean: ‘‘The more discriminating become laws and ordinances, the more there appear thieves and robbers.’’3

A little farther down in the same introductory remark mentioned above, Sze-Ma Ch’ien again alludes to Lao-Tze together with Confucius, though this time he does not mention Lao-Tze’s name, but quotes the well-known passage, ‘‘When inferior men hear of the Tao, they greatly ridicule it.’’

β. The second sentence of the first chapter is quoted by Sung Chung and Chia Y after their interview with the astrologer Sze-ma Chi-chu, above referred to (the Biographical Section 67). The quotation is not quite literal; it reads:

無名萬物之母

‘‘The unnameable is the beginning of the ten thousand things,’’ and not (as reads the text of the Tao Teh King) ‘‘of heaven and earth.’’

1 Dr. Carus’s translation with a little modification.
2 This first passage is also quoted by an astrologer called Sze-ma Chi-chu whose life forms the Biographical Section 67 of the Shi k’i.
3 The same idea is expressed in Chapter 19.
γ. As an introductory remark to his Lives of Industrial Men (Biographical Section 69), Sze-Ma Ch'ien quotes a part of Chapter 80 in the Tao Teh King, the same which Professor Giles condemns as "pitchforked into the Tao Teh King." The quotation in full runs as follows: "When administration reaches its perfection, neighboring states are within sight of one another, the voices of cocks and dogs are heard everywhere, the people are delighted with their food, pleased with their clothes, contented with their customs, and rejoice in their business. Up to old age and death, they do not have any intercourse with one another [as all their wants are satisfied at home]."

δ. At the end of the Biographical Section 45 (lives of some famous physicians) Sze-Ma Ch'ien quotes a modified version of the first passage of Chapter 37 in the Tao Teh King. The quotation reads: "Excellence and beauty are things un-blessed." The truth of this saying is proved by the story of a physician who was persecuted by his rivals on account of his superiority.

These allusions apparently prove that Sze-Ma Ch'ien's knowledge of Lao-Tze was not a mere matter of oral tradition, but that he was intimately acquainted with Lao-Tze's work; and when we consider the significance of this fact in conjunction with the statement given by Sze-Ma Ch'ien to the effect that Lao-Tze wrote a book on the Tao and the Teh, consisting of two parts, the conclusion is obvious.

ε. Sze-Ma Ch'ien's father, like his famous son, was an official historian of the Han Dynasty; but he was besides a scholar of wide learning and a student of the Taoist doctrines under Huang-Tze. He seems to have taken a very favorable view of Taoism, as is shown in his brief exposition of the different philosophical systems that were then prevalent. This exposition is incorporated in Sze-Ma Ch'ien's epilogue to the Historical Records, which alone makes it highly probable that Sze-Ma Ch'ien had carefully studied the work of Lao-Tze as we have it now. This can be further corroborated by quotations and by other references, but I abstain from doing so because it would protract the discussion and become monotonous.

Mr. Giles is right when he says that Lao-Tze's writing was not known in Sze-Ma Ch'ien's time under the present title of Tao Teh King. Like many other philosophers' works in those days, it is highly probable that the work which we at present know as Tao Teh King was then known simply as Lao-Tze. The work of Chuang Chou is called Chuang-Tze; that of Mencius, Mencius; that of Lieh-Tze, Lieh-Tze, and so forth. Only the work of Confucius was not named after its author, for it was not written by him, but compiled by his disciples. However, when writers quote from the Lun yü, they do not generally say, "It is written in the Lun yü," but merely, "Confucius says."

As to the inaccuracy of the quotations from Lao-Tze as they appear in various philosophical writings, I would say that it by no means disproves the authenticity of the Tao Teh King; for Chinese scholars, especially those ancient writers in whose times the art of printing was yet unknown, were notoriously careless with their quotations; they rarely took pains to cite the original as literally and as faith-
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fully as modern writers do; they even went so far as to twist the real meaning of a quotation so as to make it suit their own purposes. Add to this the vagueness of Chinese syntactical construction, and there is left the widest scope for misquotations. I make bold to say, however, that there are fewer misquotations from Lao-Tze than from any other author.

Finally, Mr. Giles's statement that "many of Han Fei Tze's quotations make sense where the corresponding sentences in the Tao Teh King make nonsense," proves nothing. Han Fei Tze had his own way of interpreting Lao-Tze's sayings, which, however, we are by no means bound to accept as true. Han Fei Tze's "Explanations" and "Illustrations" are not a text-commentary to Lao-Tze, but a collection of comments. He picked up from Lao-Tze those passages which suited his purpose. Not being a speculative mind like Lao-Tze and exhibiting a practical tendency, he explained all the aphorisms from Lao-Tze from ethical and civic standpoints, and those passages which peculiarly reflect the speculative power of Lao-Tze's metaphysics, receive only a commonplace interpretation in the hands of Han Fei Tze. See, for instance, how superficial his comment on 無狀之狀 無物之象 "Wu chuang chi chuang, wu wuh chi siang" (Cap. 14), is, while Dr. Carus discovers the Kantian philosophy of pure form foreshadowed there, and native scholars, when they become familiar with Western thought, will agree that in this as in many other obscure points of Laotzean philosophy Dr. Carus has rightly hit the mark. Han Fei Tze sees in Lao-Tze only a teacher of morals, of Lebensweisheit, and statecraft, but not a metaphysical thinker. Therefore we cannot doubt that Han Fei Tze's Lao-Tze is an obscured and in many points distorted reflexion of the original.

As to the main question I agree essentially with Dr. Carus; I believe that Lao-Tze wrote a book which is still extant under the title of Tao Teh King. The book was not divided into so many chapters, but simply into an "upper" and a "lower" scroll; the "upper scroll" beginning with the passage on the nature of the Tao and the "lower scroll" with that of the Teh, just as we have them in our present Tao Teh King. It would be an unparalleled hypercriticism not to regard Sze-Ma Ch'ien's statement as quite reliable.

The Tao Teh King, as I said before, is a collection of aphorisms, not an exposition of systematic thoughts. Lao-Tze was a child of the sixth century B. C. and had therefore no ambition to present his philosophical views of life and the universe after the manner of Kant or Hegel in accordance with the strict logical process of thinking of European thinkers. As a mystic he merely wrote down the thoughts with which he was inspired by his wonderful intuitive knowledge. If we accept the present division into chapters as a guide to their meaning, we may not infrequently find ourselves at sea, but the lack of coherency and the obscurity of the Tao Teh King have nothing to do with its authenticity.

In concluding my letter, I am reminded of the humorous poem of Pei Lê Tien, a noted poet of the Tang Dynasty, with regard to the Tao Teh King:
"The sage declares, 'One who knows does not speak, and one who speaks does not know;' why then is it that the sage himself uttered those five thousand and odd words?"

TRITARO SUZUKI.

A HISTORY OF CHINESE LITERATURE.¹

In the production of his History of Chinese Literature Mr. Giles has added one more to the long list of obligations under which he has laid the public, and has materially increased the admiration with which all sinologues regard his already Herculean labors. The volume before us may be considered the completion of a boon of which Mr. Giles gave us a foretaste some few years back in Gems of Chinese Literature. This new work, however, more than fulfils the promise of the former one. A large octavo volume of 450 pages, it furnishes the Western reader with a most interesting review, which will at the same time satisfy the severely exacting demands of specialists in the Chinese language, of the whole field of Chinese literature from the earliest times down to its latest productions under the rule of the Manchu.

Those whose experience includes weary memories of long hours of drudgery endured in mastering the perplexing but fascinating ideographs—neither hieroglyphs nor letters—which guard the gateways of celestial learning, and who have spent toilsome years in digging out their hardly acquired knowledge from books about as badly printed as any in existence, will envy the favored mortals who under Mr. Giles's safe guidance have a way through the wilderness cut and smoothed for them, and thus (so to speak) can know Chinese without the trouble of learning it.

Professor Giles's new book forms one of a fairly comprehensive series conceived on a uniform plan, under the able editorship of Dr. E. Gosse. Each volume is a history of some national literature. The volumes are published at an unvarying price, six shillings; the work under review is the tenth and last volume issued; but six others are in preparation to complete the series. It appears at a favorable time; not only because the Chinese Empire has during the past year been so prominently though most unenviably before the world, but what is of more consequence, because its pages will serve as a corrective and counter-balance to certain erroneous and unfavorable impressions which recent events in China appear to force upon us. If we had but the occurrences of the past twelve months to judge by, we should pronounce the Chinese a savage, treacherous, and barbarous race. How singular then must be the reflexions produced by a perusal of this volume, which