

THE WISDOM OF CHINA

LAOTZU

The Eternal Tao Te Ching

By Xu Yuanxiang & Yin Yongjian



CHINA INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

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老子

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(c.571 BC-471 BC)

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弱勝剛強魚不可脫於淵國之利器
以示人道常無為而無不為侯王若能
將自化而欲作吾將鎮之以無名之樸
之樸亦將不欲不欲以靜天下將自正
德不德是以有德下德不失德是以無
德無為而無以爲下德爲之而無以爲上

Introduction

In a rural area in the northern part of China, a wedding is taking place. The ritual is a strange but revealing mixture of Eastern and Western traditions and cultures; of the modern and the ancient. The groom and the bride wear Western-style dress, not the traditional long gown or cheongsam. However, many of the rituals still observed in Chinese weddings date back thousands of years and are a living echo of ancient Chinese teachings. The bride and groom still make traditional obeisances to their parents and each other as well as to the Heavens and the Earth. Thus, some 20 percent of the world's population still honor traditions and customs that date back over two millennia. When Christians

Bowing to the Heavens and the Earth is a traditional Chinese custom.



marry, they commit themselves to each other before God. Chinese typically render these commitments to the Heavens and to the Earth. Such relations between the Heavens and the Earth that exist in Chinese culture provide a fascinating insight into the development of Chinese civilization.

Since ancient times, Chinese have all along held the Heavens and the Earth that they live on in great reverence. Thousands of years ago, when many peoples embraced a strong belief in Spirits who were thought of as the creators of all beings, the Chinese had begun to probe into astronomy as well as geography. There an old man for the first time unveiled the laws of nature and formed a cosmic view of worshiping nature, by symbolically comparing the relations between the Heavens and the Earth and men to a chain.

The old man, regarded by the world as



Portrait of Lao Tzu Explaining Tao Te Ching to Yin Xi (partial) by Sheng Maozuo, Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368).

the initiator of the Chinese Taoist school -
the native religion of China - was called Lao
Tzu.