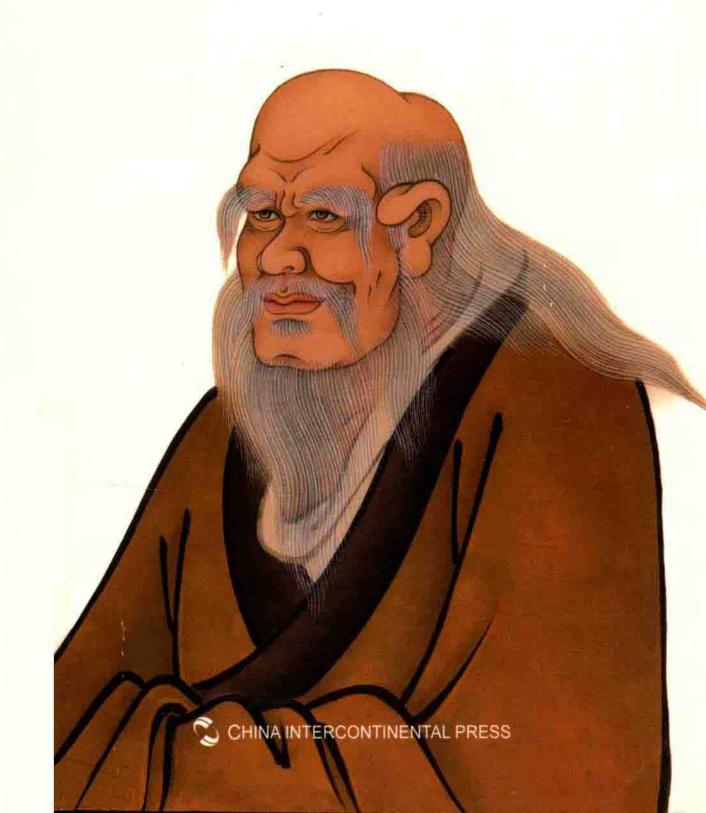
THE WISDOM OF CHINA

La ZU The Eternal Tao Te Ching



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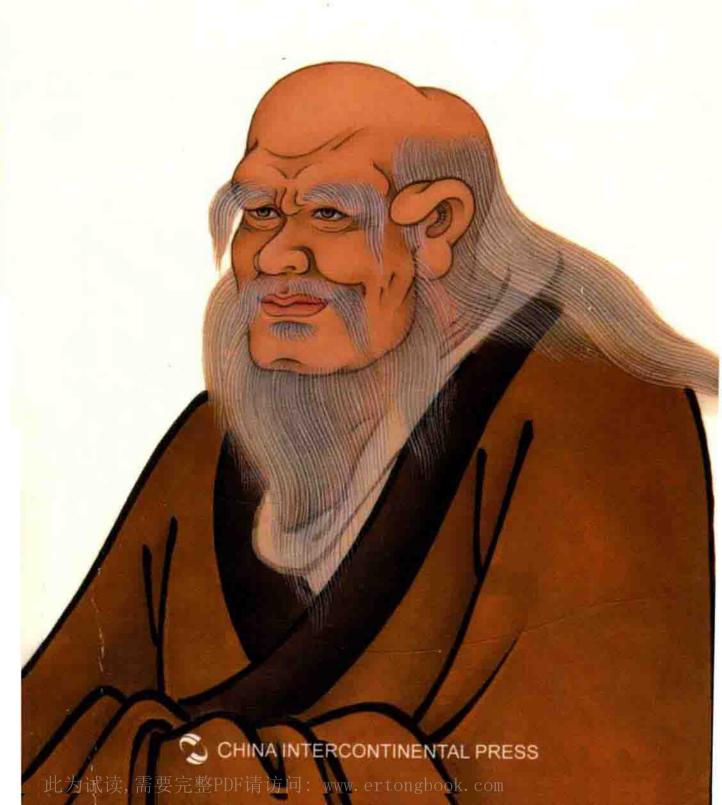
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(c.571 BC-471 BC)

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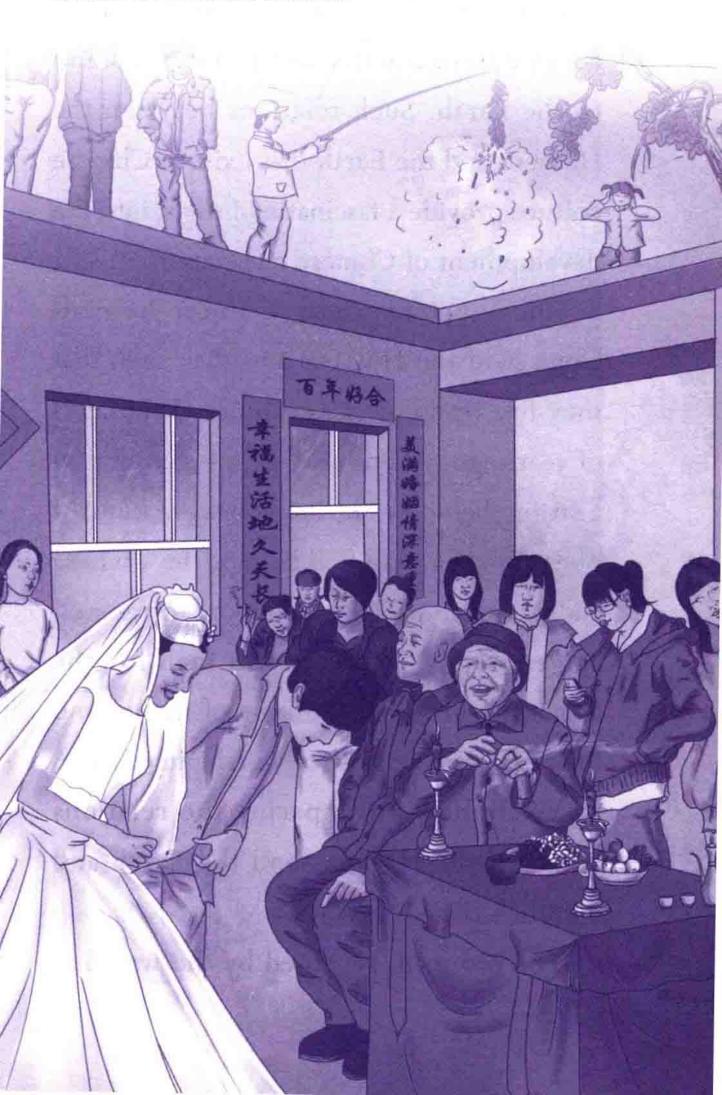
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Introduction

Lao Tzu

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

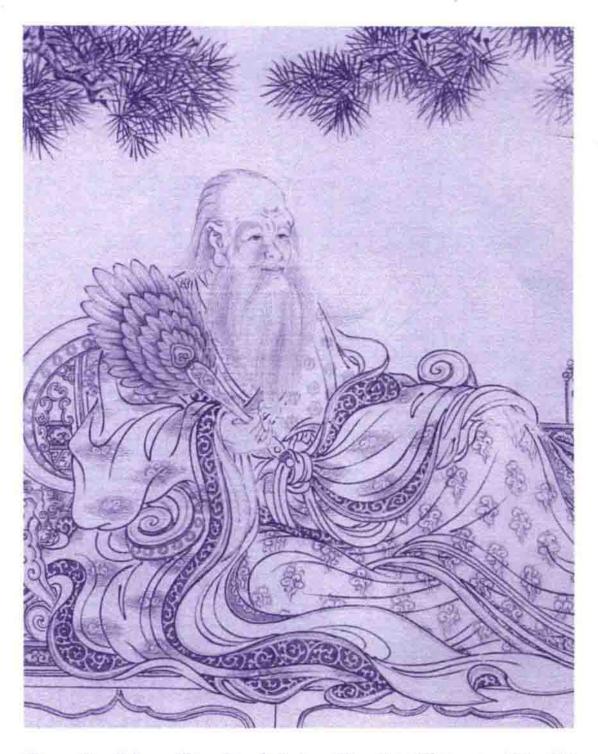
Bowing to the Heavens and the Earth is a traditional Chinese custom.



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.