









Confucius deeply understood Laozi, as seen in the *Eulogy on the Dragon*, where he extolled the profound spirit of the Dao.

Confucius' teaching too has, for centuries, been little understood.

From Yan, Zeng, Duanmu, Ran, Min, Zai Wo, and You Ruo to Si and Meng, the transmission was maintained, each preserving a part.

Later, it devolved into exegetical scholarship, obscuring Confucian learning; then into the study of poetry and prose, again obscuring it; then into empty discourse on metaphysics, obscuring it yet again.

Thus Confucius' path fell into deep decline, equally shrouded in clouds and darkness — only a corner of the qilin's horn or a hoof could be glimpsed.

Both Confucian and Daoist learning became similarly obscured.

Later students of Confucius clung only to exegesis, literature, and abstract speculation; students of Laozi clung only to Yin-Yang, talismans, and alchemy.

Though their words may be fine, they are empty talk.

One who seeks to see Confucius' qilin or Laozi's dragon will forever lose the chance.

Unfortunately, later generations, unable to see even a fragment, took the Han and Tang interpretations as the true teachings of Confucius and Laozi.

Some even slandered them, bringing offense to the sages.

Yet those who honor or slander them alike cannot harm or add to them — both remain unseen in the mist.

Jiang was a great elucidator appearing after thousands of years, sweeping away the clouds to reveal the saints' true forms.

With a great voice he awakened the deluded, ringing the wooden bell.

Suddenly one could behold the lofty walls of their school, the beauty of the ancestral halls, the elegance of Tang and Yu's legacies, the perfection of the Three Dynasties' institutions.

Not merely a horn or hoof, but the full form of the qilin was revealed.

His vernacular commentary on the Four Books is something unseen since the Han and Tang, awakening insight not known for over two millennia.

He not only clarified Confucius' profound vision but also peered into the Laozi beyond form and

name, beyond the reach of thought and sense.

With a mind pure as Heaven, free from human distortion, he matched heart to heart — Confucius' heart to Laozi's heart — measuring the nameless simplicity.

Thus he opened the celestial pattern, gathering light and essence into form, uniting Heaven and Earth, traversing space and dust alike.

The image of Laozi now appears vividly before the world, destined to guide the Great Harmony of all nations.

Laozi recorded his learning thousands of years ago; Jiang expounded it thousands of years later.

Heaven's timing will unfold the Great Harmony, and Jiang's appearance is to lay its foundation.

The beginnings of Laozi and Confucius were different in form but the same in breath, deeply connected.

When they met, they conversed long and warmly, like old friends; each held the other in their heart alone.

Yet over the centuries, Confucians have belittled Laozi, and Daoists have belittled Confucius — due to knowing only the broad but not the concise, the apparent but not the hidden, the empty but not the substantial.

Laozi's learning is Heaven's learning with humanity included; Confucius' learning is humanity's learning with Heaven included.

Laozi's words proceed from Heaven to humanity, hence their simplicity; Confucius' words proceed from humanity to Heaven, hence their subtlety.

Outwardly they seem opposed; inwardly they are one.

Thus, one deeply versed in Confucius and the relation of Heaven and humanity is also deeply versed in Laozi.

This is why Mencius refuted Yang and Mo but never Laozi.

This truth lay buried for centuries until I saw it in Jiang's commentary.

I see this clearly in Jiang's annotation of the *Dao De Jing*.

With his vernacular explanations of both Confucius and Laozi, these works will become household knowledge, shining brightly in the world as ironclad proof of future Great Harmony.

In recent years, Governor Yan Xishan of Shanxi has promoted the true learning of Confucius and

Laozi, bringing peace and prosperity to his province.

Yet some foolishly claim that Confucius valued benevolence and righteousness over profit, that Laozi despised war, and thus these teachings would doom the nation.

They would abolish the classics entirely — words reckless and self-destructive, born of mistaking Han and Tang distortions for the truth.

If they knew the real teachings, they would venerate them instead.

Jiang's *Vernacular Commentary on the Dao De Jing* was funded and printed through the generosity of Ye Xiting of Jiangsu, and later by Ding Lishan of Zhili.

Thus the *Dao De Jing* will circulate alongside the Four Books and *Li Yun*.

Jiang's authorship and his patrons' efforts will be remembered alongside the works of Confucius and Laozi, enduring for all time.

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