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道德經白話解說序
老子者，道德開始，存神過化，無始無終，一大至人也。
孔子者，生民未有，教集大成，無古無今，一大聖人也。
江神童希張者，則叉世紀穎悟絕倫，天人交徹，無無外，一大解人也。
唯大解人知大聖人，唯大聖人知大至人。
老子之學，歷數千百年無有知者。
關、尹、莊、列，淵源相承，具體而微。
厥後一變為陰陽家而老學失，再變為符籙家而老學失，再變為執著丹術家而老學又失。
此後老子之真面目，逐蔽於迷雲層霧，龍之一鱗一爪不得復觀矣。
知希之歎，當時已然，又何況數千百年後耶？
孔子者，深知老子者也。
觀其《猶龍序》，一讚已將道妙精神曲為傳出，不可謂非老子天涯海角、神明相交之一知己也。
孔子之學，歷數千百年亦無知者。
自顏、曾、端木、冉、閔、宰我、有若，以及思、孟接授薪傳，各得具體之外，餘各就其性之所近，得其一體。
厥後一沿為訓詁學而孔學晦，再沿為詞賦學而孔學晦，再沿為空談性理學而孔學又晦。
此後孔子之學，途至一落千丈，同入於迷雲暗霧，麟之一角一趾亦不得復覩矣。
夫孔學、老學既已同蔽於迷雲暗霧，一鱗一爪、一角一趾不得復覩。
而後之學孔者，唯宗訓詁、詞賦、空談性理學；學老者，唯宗陰陽、符籙、執著丹術。

悲其誤認漢唐以來之孔與老，以為孔老，而不知孔老之真也。

若知孔老之真矣，彼將頂禮拜禱之不暇，與晉督閻公取一致之進行，又安出此惡言哉?

江童《道德白話註解書》既成，江蘇大道德家葉君西亭慨然出巨資刊印於前，直隸丁君立善等復繼刊印於後。

從此《道德經》與《四書》《禮運》並流通於天下。

後世江童著書之功，與葉君等刊印之力，將與孔老之書並垂不朽云。

是為序。

民國九年夏歷七月日望

直隸大名臨安　　　　張知容識

Preface to the Vernacular Explanation of the Dao De Jing

Laozi is the origin of Dao and virtue, preserving the spirit through transformation, without beginning or end — a great perfected one.

Confucius, for the people, brought together the great teaching into a complete whole, transcending ancient and modern times — a great sage.

Jiang Shentong Xizhang, in his century, was supremely gifted and insightful, penetrating the realms of Heaven and humanity without boundary — a great elucidator.

Only a great elucidator can truly know a great sage; only a great sage can truly know a great perfected one.

For thousands of years, none understood Laozi’s teaching.

Guan, Yin, Zhuang, and Lie inherited his lineage, preserving its essence in miniature.

Later, it transformed into the School of Yin-Yang and was lost; transformed again into the talismanic school and was lost; transformed again into those fixated on alchemy and was lost once more.

Since then, Laozi's true countenance has been shrouded in clouds and mists — only a glimpse of a dragon's scale or claw could be seen. Jiang lamented this even in his time — how much more so after thousands of years!

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.

Written in the summer of the 9th year of the Republic (1920), on the 15th day of the 7th lunar month.

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