

Seek'st thou the rule of the bubbling foam?
Take the unweighed ocean for thy home.

Will'st grasp the world from atom to soul?
First span the deeps of the mighty Whole.

Would'st uncipher my riddle? Then be
The Many, the Weaver, who weaveth me.

LAO-TZE AND CONFUCIUS.

China has produced two indigenous movements of thought which have been antagonistic to each other throughout the history of Chinese civilization and have left no opportunity unimproved of mutual attack and criticism. They go under the names of Taoism and Confucianism.

Taoism is presumably the original religion of ancient China. It is a belief in the Tao or reason, the right method of thought and action, a trust in the mysterious ways of heaven, and a submission to the divine will that governs the world.

Popular Taoism is full of superstition, but its recognized leader Lao-tze is one of the profoundest sages that ever lived. He preached a purity of heart in contrast to the ritualism and ceremonialism of the *literati* who fill all important positions and practically govern China. They recognize Confucius as their leader, and Confucius tried to reform the people by minute rules of propriety.

The story goes—and it is presumably historical—that Confucius once met the venerable philosopher Lao-tze in person. The latter was by almost half a century his senior and must have been an old man when Confucius was in his best years. Lao-tze was then Keeper of the Secret Archives of the state of Cho, and his fame induced Confucius to visit him in order to learn something about the ancient sages and their views of ritual, so as to regulate thereby the rules of decorum for the present generation. But Confucius had knocked at the wrong door. Lao-tze was too much of a philosopher to be guided by the traditions of the buried past, and the ostentatious behavior of the ambitious young scholar was offensive to him. Confucius left him in disappointment.

The shortest and perhaps the most authentic report of this meeting is given by Sze-Ma-Ch'ien, and has been reprinted in the original Chinese text with two English translations, one verbatim, the other in proper English style, on pages 95 and 96 in *Lao-Tze's Tao-Teh-King* (published by the Open Court Publishing Company).

Our frontispiece represents this meeting which if it is not historical is certainly *ben trovato*, for it contrasts these two lines of thought, Taoism represented by the philosophical thinker, Lao-tze, and Confucianism represented by K'ung-tze, the man who preached Ethical Culture pure and simple. Lao-tze is easily recognized by his white beard. He steps forth from the house as the host to meet his guest. Confucius is accompanied by his disciples and approaches with great ceremony. The picture was painted by Murata Tanryō, a modern Japanese painter who preserves the traditional style without being modernized to any extent through Western influence.