

A READING FROM THE 4TH CENTURY BCE TAOIST WRITINGS OF THE SAGE CHAUNG-TZU:

How complete was (the operation of the Tao)in the people of old!

It made them the equals of spiritual beings, and subtle and all-embracing as heaven and earth.

They nourished all things, and produced harmony under the heavens.

Their beneficial influence reached to all classes of people...Great and small, fine and coarse— all felt their presence and operation.

Their intelligence, as seen in all their regulations, was handed down from age to age in their old laws, and much of it was still to be found in the writings of the Historians.

But there ensued great disorder in the world, and sages and worthies no long shed their light on it.

The Tao and its characteristic ceased to be regarded as uniform. Many in different places got one glimpse of it, and congratulate themselves on possessing it as whole.

They might be compared to the ear, the eye, the nose, or the mouth. Each sense has it own faculty, but their different faculties cannot be interchanged.

So it was with the many branches of the various schools. Each had it's peculiar excellence, and there was a time for it, but notwithstanding no one covered or extended over the whole range of truth.



Thus it was that the Tao, which inwardly forms the sage and outwardly the king, became obscured and lost its clearness, became repressed and lost its development.

Every one in the world did whatever he wished and was the rule to himself. Alas! The various schools held onto their several ways and could not come back to the same point, nor agree together.

The students of that later age unfortunately did not see the undivided purity of heaven and earth, and the great scheme of truth held by the ancients.

The system of the Tao was about to be torn into fragments under all of heaven.

The Writings of Chaung-Tzu (Zhuangzi)
Book XXXIII, Part III, Section XI
Thien Hsiâ 1.