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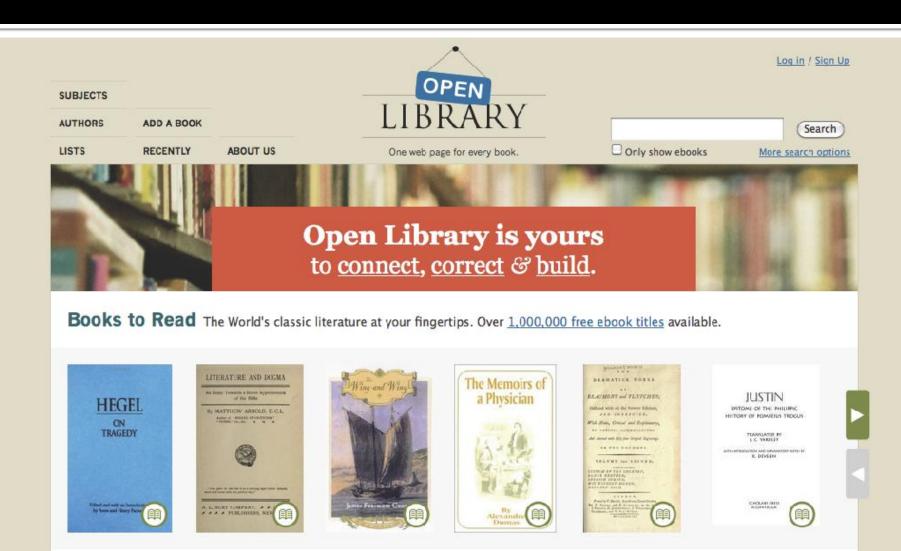
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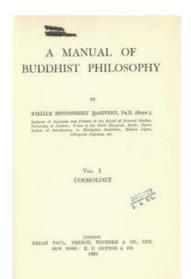
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Chung-shu's position was that the nourishing of the hao jan chih ch'i was a nourishing of the harmonized ch'i of Heaven and Earth. He did indeed inherit Mencius' ideas; but it may well be said that in regard to Mencius' sphere of living he had no understanding.

THE SPIRIT OF UNINESS PHILOSOPHI

The Han scholars were rich in religious faith. They used a religious disposition to pay honour to the Confucianist school and to Confucius. Confucius in the pre-Ch'in era was the first to create a particular school of thought, so that inevitably he occupies a very important position in history. But his position was only that of a teacher. On the other hand, the Han scholars held that he was not merely a teacher. Tung Chung-shu, along with the author of the King Yang Chuan. 1 held that Confucius received a charge from Heaven to become king. Although actually it was Ch'in Shih Huang Ti (the First Emperor) who took the place of the Chou overlord, yet Confucius was the one who received the charge from Heaven; and this was why he wrote the Spring and Autumn Annals entrusting the kingship to Lu State and establishing institutions for a new dynasty. This was an exceptionally strange thesis to advance, but at a later date in the Wei (Weft) Books it was maintained that Confucius was not only the true king of a particular age, but that he was in addition a god. In the Wei Book on the Spring and Autumn Annals, it was maintained that Confucius was "the son of the Black God (Ti)". Thus Confucius advanced from being a king to being a god. Some people in later generations gave to the Confucianist system the name of the Confucian religion. This name may rightly be given to the Confucian system as interpreted by some of the Han scholars for whom Confucius was the founder of a religion.

Afterwards, when the movement known as the Ancient Text School started, the adherents of that school cleared away the Yin-Yang school's elements which were mixed in with the Confucianist tenets. These elements in their turn were mixed in with Taoist teaching and so became a Taoist religion. In this way Confucius's position went back to being that of a teacher, and Lao Tzű became the founder of a religion.

Later this indigenous religion came to blows with the foreign religion of Buddhism. It must, however, be understood that although these Taoist devotees sailed under the Lao-Chuang flag, yet they had not accepted the Lao-Chuang philosophy.

¹ One of the three amplifications of Confucins's Spring and Autum Assals. Its date of production was some time early in the Han era. (E. R. H.)

Hence the philosophical side of the Tacist religion in those later days was inferior to the Buddhist philosophy, so that Tacist religion only spread among the lower ranks of society. The majority of those in China who accept cultural nurture do not believe in any particular religion. This is because in philosophy they can get what we describe as 'attainment of the sublime and performance of the common task'. Philosophy which transcends shapes and features enables them in the midst of daily life "to reach the sphere of the abstract and ferry over into the beyond". For this reason they have no need for "God" or a "heavenly mansion". "Without abandoning the common affairs of daily life, they go directly to what was before the heavens." This is the accomplishment which did not begin to come until a large number of wise men had given their strength to developing this philosophy.









For more information

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