

**WU WEI: A PHANTASY
BASED ON THE
PHILOSOPHY OF LAO-TSE**

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Wu Wei: A Phantasy Based on the Philosophy of Lao-Tse by Henri Borel & Meredith Ianson

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HENRI BOREL & MEREDITH IANSON

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A PHANTASY

BASED ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF LAO-TSE.

FROM THE DUTCH

OF

HENRI BOREL.

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AUTHORISED VERSION BY MEREDITH IANSON.

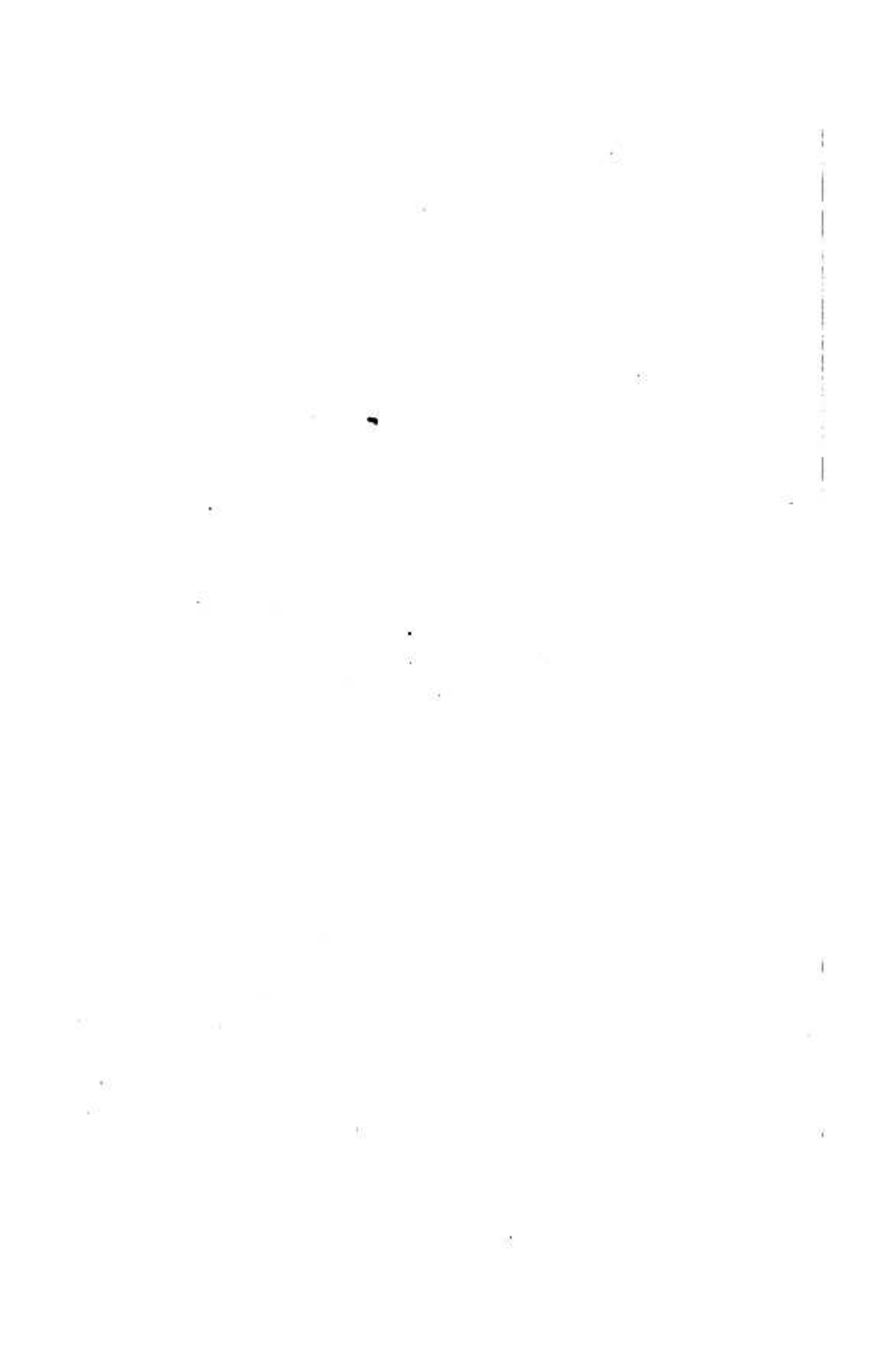


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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

1873



AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

The following study on Lao-Tse's "Wu-Wei" should by no means be regarded as a translation or even as a free rendering of the actual work of that philosopher. I have simply endeavoured to retain in my work the essence of his wisdom in all its purity, and I have given a direct translation of his essential truths in isolated instances only, the rest being for the most part a self-thought-out elaboration of the few principles enunciated by him.

My conception of the terms "Tao" and "Wu-Wei" is entirely different from that of most sinologists (such as Stanislas Julien, Giles, and Legge), who have translated the work "Tao-Teh-King". But this is not the place to justify myself. It may best be judged from the following work whether my conception be wisdom or foolishness.

But little is contained in Lao-Tse's short, extremely simple book, the words of which may be said to be condensed into their purely primary significance — a significance at times quite at variance

with that given in other works to the same words *) — but this little is gospel. Lao-Tse's work is no treatise on philosophy, but contains, rather, merely those truths to which this (unwritten) philosophy had led him. In it we find no form nor embodiment, nothing but the quintessence of this philosophy.

My work is permeated with this essence, but it is no translation of Lao-Tse. None of my metaphorical comparisons, such as that with the landscape, with the sea, with the clouds, are anywhere to be found in Lao-Tse's work. Neither has he anywhere spoken of Art, nor specially of Love. In writing of all this I have spoken aloud the thoughts and feelings instinctively induced by the perusal of Lao-Tse's deep-felt philosophy. Thus it may be that my work contains far more of myself than I am conscious of; but even so, it is but an outpouring of the thought and feeling called up in me by the words of Lao-Tse.

I have made use of none but *Chinese* works on Lao-Tse, and of those only a few. On reading later some of the English and French translations, I was amazed to find how confused and unintelligible these books were.

I adhered to my simple idea of Lao-Tse's work, and of my work I could alter nothing, for I felt the truth of it within me as a simple and natural faith.

*) By Confucius, for instance.

HENRI BOREL.

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TAO.