

19th August 2021

Great

“Let people hold on to these:

**Manifest plainness,
Embrace simplicity,
Reduce selfishness,
Have few desires.”**

Lao Tzu, Tao-te Ching

Lao Tzu was a Chinese philosopher who lived around 600 years BC. He was the founder of “Taoism” and author of the keystone of the Taoist tradition, *Tao-te Ching*. Taoism is a philosophical and spiritual tradition which emphasises living in harmony with The Tao, or The Way. Our search for “perfection” in this life is to become “at one” with the rhythms of the universe, founded on “Three Treasures”, compassion, frugality and humility. I’ll leave you to look further at Taoism as you choose, but I find it remarkable that so much of what’s written chimes with Christianity – which it predates by 600 years – and current environmental thinking.

Lao Tzu wrote this about his emerging philosophical thought:

The thing that is called Tao is eluding and vague.

Vague and eluding, there is in it the form.

Eluding and vague, in it are things.

Deep and obscure, in it is the essence.

The essence is very real; in it are evidences.

I call it Tao. If forced to give it a name, I shall call it Great.

Now being great means functioning everywhere.

Functioning everywhere means far-reaching.

Being far-reaching means returning to the original point.

Therefore Tao is great.

I’m not sure I understand all of that, but I like the “feel” of it and the mystery within it. Perhaps it’ll just have to be enough to start with. But the part I really get is the quote with which I’ve begun today. It’s a pretty good mantra to live with, no matter what faith or belief system you subscribe to. “Manifest plainness, embrace simplicity, reduce selfishness, have few desires.” Thank you, Lao Tzu. That’s just great!

A prayer for today

Lord, I feel great today, not because of anything I’ve done but because of what you are for me, right here, and right now. Thank you. Amen