PREFACE

Professor Wing-tsit Chan made this book possible. It is to him that I am most deeply grateful; accordingly the effort applied to this work is an expression of thanks to him.

Lao Tzu, for centuries, has been and still is one of the most significant sources of inspiration and peace to the Eastern as well as the Western world. In this short classic, the laws fundamental to our lives are perceived out of deep lucidity. Generations upon generations are linked together in veneration of him.

Wang Pi (226-249) in his commentary on Lao Tzu, which is the oldest extant, goes beyond the boundaries of time and space, while penetrating in no lesser measure to the very core of human reality, and this he expresses among other terms in pen-t'i (substance) and li (principle). Wang Pi thus decisively anticipated the development of Neo-Confucian thinking.

The road given by my task was long. I owed the patience required to follow this path to C. G. Jung. A scholarship from the Board of Education and the University of Zurich made the realization possible. In particular I wish to thank Professors W. Heitler, G. Huber, R. P. Kramers, Verena Meyer, and A. Niederer.

For preliminary stages of the work I had the generous support of Mr. Ping-ming Hsiung of Paris, and Mr. Anthony Hu, Ph.D., of Taipei.

Mrs. Una Thomas has been of great assistance with the English translation. Dr. Henry Rosemont has kindly gone through the manuscript and has made many valuable improvements. The Bobbs-Merrill Co. has given permission to use Professor Wing-tsit Chan's English translation of the Lao Tzu text and Princeton University Press has also given permission to use Professor Chan's translation of Wang Pi's commentary. I wish to thank both publishers. Mrs. Olga Diethelm has repeatedly helped with the typing of the manuscript. Thanks are also due Dr. Eliot Deutsch, Chairman of the Monograph Series Committee, for bringing about this publication and for Mrs. Floris Sakamoto for preparing the manuscript for production. Most of all, I am grateful to the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy for including this translation in its Monograph Series.

I should like to express my gratitude to all of these persons, and to many others who have helped.

The present translation was completed in 1973, long before we learned of the publication of Professor Paul Lin's translation of Wang Pi's Commentary. I have been benefited by it, but only a few minor changes have been made as a result. Readers may be interested in Professor Chan's review of Lin's translation in Philosophy East and West, Vol. 29, No. 3 (July 1979).

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