

LIBER

XXI

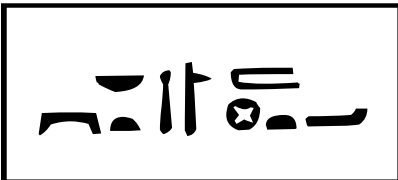
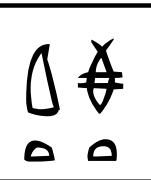
清淨經

THE CLASSIC
OF PURITY

FIRST WRITTEN DOWN BY ME

萬元

IN THE EPISODE OF THE
DYNASTY OF WU
AND NOW MADE INTO A RIME
BY ME
ALEISTER CROWLEY





A.:A.:.
Publication in Class B

KHING KÄNG KING

I

Lao Kun the Master said:
Tao is devoid of form—
Yet Heaven and Earth are brought to birth,
And nurtured by its norm.

Tao hath no will to work;
Yet by its way of heaven
The Moon and Sun rejoice to run
Among the starry seven.

Tao hath no name; its word
Is growth, and sustenance
To all; I aim to give it name:
Tao (heaven prosper chance!)

Tao hath twin phase with Teh:
The silent and the stressed.
Of motion, those; of these, repose
Sublimely manifest

Heaven moves, pure silence he;
Earth rests beneath the strain;
Shuttle and loom, as word and womb,
Their mystery sustain

Pure motion maketh rest
As silence maketh stress.
If man were still, then heaven should thrill
With earth to nothingness.

Self loveth silence, yea,
But mind distracteth it.
Mind loveth rest; but passion's pest
Allures the trembling wit.

If man restrain desire,
His mind will cease to roll,
And mind's release allow pure peace
Of silence to the soul.

The senses will not soil;
The thought will not upstress;
Nor poisons (greed, wrath, dullness) breed
Their triform deadliness.

Men earn not ease of Tao
For their desire's disease;
Because their mind is not refined
Of thought by killing these.

If one should slay desires,
His mind and body seem
No longer his, but phantasies
Danced in a wanton's dream.

Slay mind, slay body, slay
The external: matter goes.
Then space remains; renew thy pains!
Up! front the final foes!

Slay space; then naught abides.
Hold not thy holy hand!
When naught gives back before the attack,
Serene thy silence stand!

All's rest, devoid of mark;
How should desires fix tooth?
When they are past, thou surely hast
The silence of the truth.

Flawless that truth and fixed,
Yet apt to each appeal
Nature and sense to influence—
The magnet to the steel!

Oh! This true touch with all
Elastic and exact
That yet abides above their tides—
The silence free from act!

He that hath this shall come
Little by little, a breath,
So floweth he now, to truth of Tao,
Wherein he vanisheth.

Men style him Lord of Tao,
Yet he hath none to lord.
Hid motive he of all that be:
Enough for his reward!

He that can comprehend
This doctrine may transmit
This sacred Tao to men that vow
Themselves to fathom it.

II

Lao Kun the Master said:
The Adept in skill of soul
Hath never an aim: the bunglers shame
Is that he gropes a goal.

Who most possess the Teh
Conceal their Magick power;
Who least possess exert their strength
Seven times in every hour.

These, who cling fast to powers,
Who guard them, and display
Their magick art—they are not part
Of Tao nor yet of Teh.

Men win not truth of Tao
Because their minds are wried.
The mind uncurbed, the self's perturbed,
And loses tune of tide.

Lost, the external lures;
They turn to seek it: then
All things perplex, confuse, and vex
Those miserable men.

Disordered thoughts arise;
Body and mind grow sick.
Disgrace and fear grow year by year
To their climacteric.

Wild, they are tossed about
Through life and death; they quiver,
Sunk in sea-stress of bitterness,
And lose the Tao for ever.

The true, the abiding Tao!
Who understandeth hath;
Who hath the Tao is here and now
In Silence of the Path

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Final remarks

Liber CLVII

Despite the claim on the title page this is not a new translation of the Taoist classic; as explained in Crowley's introduction (previously published in *Magick Without Tears*) it is an adaptation of James Legge's translation (in vol. XXXIX of *Sacred Books of the East*, Oxford, 1891; facsimile reprint as *The Texts of Taoism* (vol. I) New York: Dover Publications, 1962).

This work was initially designated *Liber LXXXI* (from the number of chapters). In the list of forthcoming *Libri* in the Blue Equinox it had been re-numbered CLVII, the former number having been assigned to Crowley's novel *The Butterfly Net* (eventually published as *Moonchild*). See "Sepher Sephiroth" (*Liber D*), s.v. 157 for possible meanings of the later number.

The text and commentary are distinguished by type size and indenting. Some of Crowley's commentary appears to comprise general remarks either on a chapter as a whole or on an individual numbered section: this has been placed at the bottom of the chapter or section it refers to. Material indicated by numbered citations is rather a note on a particular point; text which appears in such a note in round brackets is best read as an gloss to be interpolated into the text (in the Skinner edition it was printed thus).

Footnotes indicated by *, †, etc., are due to one of the successive transcribers or editors or another, mostly providing translations, identifying quotations, etc.

The Skinner edition is said to have been prepared from various typescripts of *Liber CLVII* which Crowley had made and circulated among his disciples and friends, possibly in the hopes that someone would put up money for publication. Skinner mentions that a planned print edition was provisionally designated *Equinox III* (5).

The Tree of Life diagram apparently appeared following chapter I in the *Equinox* edition. I have redrawn it based on the version printed in *The Book of Thoth* (where it is titled "The Chinese Cosmos"). Here as elsewhere, Crowley uses the transliterations of Chinese names employed by Legge in *Sacred Books of the East*; these differ somewhat from the Wade-Giles and Pinyin schemes used now. In particular it should be observed that consonants have a different phonetic value when italicised. "Tao Teh King" for instance is nowadays rendered Tao Te Ching or Dao De Jing.

Liber XXI

This free verse-rendering of the “Classic of Purity” was probably made by Crowley about the same time as his work on the *Tao Teh King*. It was listed in the “Præ monstrance of A.:A.:" in the Blue Equinox (it was described simply as “LIBER XXI: THE CLASSIC OF PURITY by Ko Hsuen. A new translation (*sic*) from the Chinese by the Master Therion”) and was apparently included in the abortive *Equinox* III (2). A small edition was privately issued by the O.T.O. in London in 1939. While not bound up with the original *Equinox* publication of the *Tao Teh King* (H.P. Smith’s Thelema Publications had reprinted it on its own in 1973) it was included as an appendix to the 1995 reissue (Weiser). This copy is based on a key-entry by persons unknown found on the Internet. For some unclear reason all the etexts of this work I have been able to find are in ALL CAPS. I have not seen a print copy; as such, capitalisation in this edition must be regarded as conjectural restoration.

The *Khing Kǎng King* appeared in English translation (by James Legge) in an appendix to vol. XL of the Oxford University Press “Sacred Books of the East” series. Legge says of it: “It is attributed to Ko Yüan (or Hsüan), a Tǎoist of the Wû dynasty (A.D. 222-277), who is fabled to have attained to the state of an Immortal, and is generally so denominated. He is represented as a worker of miracles; as addicted to intemperance, and very eccentric in his ways.” As indicated by the long title of *Liber XXI* and elsewhere in Liber CLVII, Crowley claimed Ko Yuan as one of his previous incarnations.

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The title pages with the A.:A.: “portal” design for both works are reconstructed, though that for *Liber XXI* is based closely on that from the 1939 edition. Chinese titles &c. are taken directly from facsimiles of S.B.E. 39 & 40.

T.S.