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الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية اسلام آباد  
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## **The Relationship between Confucianism and Daoism**

An Analytical and Historical Study

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**FINAL APPROVAL**

It is certificated that we have read the thesis submitted by Mr. Ma Zhili and it is our judgment that this project is of sufficient standard to warrant its acceptance by the International Islamic University, Islamabad for the M.S Degree in Comparative Religion.

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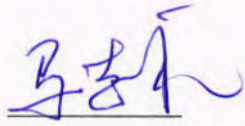
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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented is my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged and that the thesis is my own composition. No part of the thesis has been previously presented for any other degree.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be '马志立' (Ma Zhili), written over a horizontal line.

Ma Zhili/Idrees

Date 22-SEP-2017

### **Acknowledgment**

First, I thank Allah, who taught speech and swore by pen so that the significance of knowledge is highlighted. I pray for blessings and peace for the seal of the prophethood, Muhammad, his family and companies who are the beloved and exemplar for all human being.

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Ma Zhili/Idrees

(21 July 2017)

## Introduction

"The one who makes things as they are is not a thing"<sup>1</sup>---Zhuang Zi

Confucianism and Daoism are two indigenous teachings of early Chinese tradition. They strictly bind themselves with traditional civilization before them: "I transmit (the old truth) and do not originate (any new theory); I am a man who honors the ancients and devotes efforts to acquire their science."<sup>2</sup> Confucius said. Lao Zi also referred the Dao of ancients several times in *Dao De Jing*.<sup>3</sup> Zhuang Zi said: "Not getting entangled in worldly affairs; not decorates with material ornaments...in this consist the teachings of Dao of the ancients."<sup>4</sup>

The relationship between Confucianism and Daoism has been understood in different ways by different scholars. The present research goes back to original texts in order to understand the relationship between the two schools and through study of some common themes between them and their conceptions of each other.

The introduction contains survey of literature, statement of research problem and research methodology. In the first chapter, after a brief study of the background of two schools, the common themes between them are studied analytically. Confucianism and Daoism had common political background. They emerged in the time when the central government was declining and losing its control over the feudal states. The feudal states were fighting for land and power. However, their social and cultural backgrounds were different. The social background of Lao Zi was tribal agricultural society, and Confucius lived in a relatively advanced civilized society. Some themes may seem more important for Confucianism while other themes are more important for Daoism. But all six themes discussed in this research are given importance by both schools in their respective texts with their own interpretations. The 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter studies the mutual perception of these schools in the light of early exponent figures of each school.

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<sup>1</sup>Zhuang Zi, *Zhuang Zi*, trans. Wang Rongpei (Chang Sha: Hunan People's Publishing House, 1999), 168

<sup>2</sup> Gu Hongming, *The Discourses and Saying of Confucius* (Hai Kou: Hainan Publishing House, 2000), 390.

<sup>3</sup> Lao Zi, *Lao Zi*, trans. Arther Waley (Chang Sha: Hunan People's Publishing House, 1999), 30 (Chapters: 15, 28, 14, 132 and 65)

<sup>4</sup> Zhuang Zi 592.

This research is concerned with pre-Qin<sup>5</sup> Confucianism represented mainly by Confucius, Meng Zi and Xun Zi<sup>6</sup> and pre-Qin Daoism primarily of Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi and Lie Zi.

All Chinese terms, titles and names are transliterated into Pin-yin (Chinese phonetic alphabet) and the corresponding pronunciations in Wade-Giles system have been listed in a table at the beginning.

For citation, Chicago 16th A footnote style has been used in this thesis.

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<sup>5</sup> Qin Dynasty (221B.C.-207B.C.) was the first dynasty that united warring states since the time of Spring and Autumn and warring state (B.C.771-221B.C.) after Zhou Dynasty (11<sup>th</sup> century B.C. – 771B.C.).

<sup>6</sup> Xun Zi (313 B.C – 238 B.C.), Confucian thinker who was famous for his theory of the 'evil nature of man.'



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## **Romanization**

Several Romanization systems are used to represent Chinese pronunciation in English. Pin Yin, created by the mainland Chinese government<sup>7</sup>, has become the standard. This research therefore uses Pin Yin. But since the older Wade-Giles systems is still preferred by some, we give below a PY-WG Conversion table.

<b>Pinyin</b>	<b>Wade-Giles</b>
B	P
C	ts'/tz'
Ch	ch'
D	T
G	K
Ian	Ien
J	Ch
K	k'
Ong	Ung
P	p'
Q	ch'
R	J
Si	ssu/szu
T	t'
X	Hs
You	Yu
Yu	Yü
Z	ts/tz
Zh	Ch
Zhi	Chih
Zi	Tzu

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<sup>7</sup> Chinese Pinyin: The pinyin system was developed in the 1950s by many linguists under organization of China Language Reform Commission (now State language Commission). including Zhou Youguang, published by the Chinese government in 1958, adopted by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) as an international standard of Romanization of Chinese in 1982 by the United Nations in 1986.

## **Abstract**

Scholars of Chinese studies disagree regarding the relationship between Confucianism and Daoism, two major representatives of ancient Chinese tradition. Some think that Confucianism and Daoism are just two dimensions of the older Chinese tradition so that Daoism develops that tradition's inner dimension while Confucianism the external. On the other hand, many researchers emphasize their being contradictory to each other. This variety of opinions inspired me to revisit the question of the relationship between Confucianism and Daoism in this research. Through analyzing the common themes between these two schools and analyzing their mutual perceptions, I find that most of the central themes common to the two schools developed from ancient tradition. Though these two schools focus on different themes and highlight them from their own perspective, they do not completely contradict each other. I conclude that the first of the two positions is closer to truth as I find that there is a unity behind the difference found between Confucianism and Daoism.

# باسمه سبحانه و تعالي

## تلخيص خطة البحث

العلاقة بين الكونفوشيوسية و الطاوية: دراسة تحليلية و تاريخية

إعداد: ما جي لي (محمد إدريس)

إن العلماء في الدراسات الصينية لم يتفقوا حول العلاقة بين الكونفوشيوسية و الطاوية الممثلين الأساسيين للثقافة القديمة الصينية. بعضهم يعتقدون بأنهما جانبان لنفس الثقافة : الطاوية جانبها الباطن و الكونفوشيوسية جانبها الظاهر. و من جهة أخرى، كثير من الباحثين يؤكدون على التعارض الكامل بينهما. إنما هذه الاختلافات في الآراء ألهمتني بإعادة النظر في العلاقة بين الكونفوشيوسية و الطاوية في هذا البحث بدراسة تحليلية لبعض موضوعات هامة مشتركة بين المذهبين و تصورهما بعضهما بعضا وجدت أن أكثر الموضوعات الرئيسية المشتركة بينهما تطويرات لما وجد في الثقافة القديمة. أختتم البحث بأن الموقف القائل بوجود الوحدة الكامنة وراء التعارض والاختلاف الظاهر بين الكونفوشيوسية و الطاوية.

## Introduction

## 0.1 Survey of Literature

The earliest scholars to study and review the main Chinese schools of thought were Si-ma Tan (165 B.C.-110 B.C.)<sup>8</sup> and Liu Xin (50 B.C.-23 B.C.).<sup>9</sup> Si-ma Tan listed only six schools and defined them. Although he favored Daoism, he did not ignore the advantages of Confucianism. Liu Xin explored the origins of Confucianism and Daoism trying to conciliate the differences between them, he wrote:

*The Taoist school may have originated with the official historians of ancient times. They noted down in an orderly way the changes of society, including its successes and failures, fortunes and disasters. As a result, they came to understand the key to managing a country.*<sup>10</sup>

A contemporary scholar, Professor Zhou Jixu thinks that this view of Liu Xin is farfetched because many historical books including *the Spring and Autumn*, *Guo Yu*, *Zuo Zhuan* and *Shang Shu* are not Taoist. He says that “the ideas of Liu Xin and Ban Gu were intended to make Taoism seem closer to Confucianism, in order to help the rulers govern the nation. But their ideas actually do not reflect reality.”<sup>11</sup> On the contrary, these two schools of thought were not related to each other.”

Zhou Jixu explained this opposition according to the data from the fieldwork of contemporary anthropology. Two types of society coexisted in the region of the Yellow River valley: the relatively primitive tribal agricultural society where there was no caste system and the other comparatively advanced class-based society in terms of technology advocating Li (rituals) and morality. Lao Zi lived in the first society, while Confucius was born in the latter one. The different societies and contrasting ways of life gave birth to the thought of Confucianism and Lao Zi and formed the difference of

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<sup>8</sup> Si-ma Tan was official historian in beginning of Han Dynasty

<sup>9</sup> Liu Xin, (50 BC-23 BC), famous Confucian scholar of Western Han Dynasty, pioneer of studies of classics in traditional Chinese.

<sup>10</sup> Zhou Jixu.2

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.3

Confucianism and Daoism.<sup>12</sup>

For Feng Youlan, Confucianism and Daoism are just two different expressions of the farmers' thought and life. Feng Youlan<sup>13</sup> in his book *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* is of the opinion that Confucianism and Daoism differ "because they are the rationalization or theoretical expression of different aspects of the life of the farmers."<sup>14</sup>

Since the economics of ancient Chinese people primarily depended on the land, and people can hardly leave their land, therefore, farmers being bond on the land and lived together. Thus family system formed. Confucianism rationally justified and theoretically expressed this Chinese family system.<sup>15</sup>

Daoism highlighted, praised and idealized the innocent thought and simple life of farmers, Therefore it idealized the simplicity of primitive society and condemned civilization. Always contacting with nature, farmers admire and love it. Daoism developed this admiration and love to the fullest extent, it made the sharp distinction between what is of nature and that is of man.<sup>16</sup> This idea of Feng Youlan is opposite to that of Zhou Jixu. According to Zhou Jixu, the two schools had two different social backgrounds in terms of technical advancement and with or without social class, but Feng Youlan thinks they are just two different expressions of the Farmers' life and thought.

The two masters attached their thought to the ancients not to themselves, but Zhou Jixu ignored the relationship of the teachings of the two masters to the tradition before them. On the contrary, he even thinks that their ideas and teachings were original developed under the influence of their respective backgrounds.

Liu Xin and Zhou Jixu represent two different approaches regarding the relationship between Confucianism and Daoism. There are other scholars who either

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<sup>12</sup> *The Rise of Agricultural Civilization in China. The Disparity between Archeological Discovery and the Documentary Record and Its Explanation*, ed. Victor H. Mair (Berkeley: Sino-American Publications of University of California Press, 2006) 11

<sup>13</sup> Feng Youlan was a contemporary Chinese philosopher and educator, and was professor in Qing Hua University.

<sup>14</sup> Feng Youlan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc, 1948) 20.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid 20-21



with one of these two. Some think that the relationship of the two schools is not that of absolute opposition but there is a unity in the difference, while some consider the differences between Confucianism and Daoism as irreducible. In what follows, these views shall be discussed.

## **view 1 - Unity in the difference**

### **a. Jiang Tao**

A Chinese researcher, Jiang Tao<sup>17</sup> in one of his article mentioned three main views about the role of Confucianism and Daoism for Chinese philosophy: Confucianism as its trunk, Daoism as its trunk and Confucianism-Daoism together being its trunk. Confucianism-Daoism being the main body of Chinese philosophy according to Professor Liu Xiaogan is interlinked. This interlinkage is explained by Jiang Tao through the meetings and discourses of Confucius and Lao Zi, and their relation to *the book of Changes* (*Yi Jing*). Conversations between the two masters show that they concern about some common issues and finally Confucius agreed on self-transformation before transforming others which was advice of Lao Zi to him. Heaven, Earth and man, the three talents of *Yi Jing* constituted the universal order in Daoism, Lao Zi said "Man follows earth, earth follows Heaven, Heaven follows Dao." Confucius in his old age liked *Yi Jing*, and said that if he can have some years to study *Yi Jing*, he shall in future be able to avoid errors. Thus, the interlinkage of the two schools is seen.<sup>18</sup>

### **b. René Guénon**

Many noticed difference between the two schools and tried explaining the reason of the difference, but few discovered the oneness and identity of Confucianism and

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<sup>17</sup> Jiang Tao (1983-). A Chinese researcher, mainly of the Chinese Philosophy

<sup>18</sup> Jiang Tao, "The Interconnect between Confucius and Lao Zi---and the Interconnection between Confucianism and Daoism," *Journal of Hunan University of Science and Engineering* 30, no. 1 (2009): 14-16

Daoism. René Guénon<sup>19</sup> is of the opinion that both the two schools inherited from the tradition before them different 'parts'. They are just one but belong to two dimensions of one the same tradition.

According to René Guénon, Chinese tradition started with the first Chinese emperor Fu Xi.<sup>20</sup> Fu Xi was inspired by the Heaven the Earth and the man through his observation, or inspired by a dragon on its back inscribed the Eight Kua 'trigrams'. The synthetic linear symbols were made by Fu Xi for representing Yin and Yang i.e. passive and active which are resulted from polarization of the supreme metaphysical unity. It is Yin and Yang which gives birth to the universal manifestation.<sup>21</sup>

The whole tradition represented by Fu Xi was first contained in the symbolical trigrams. The pure metaphysical knowledge, cosmic and human orders are development from the trigrams. The trigrams were written by Fu Xi in *Yi Jing, the Classic of Changes*. The Classic of Changes is so synthetic that it could be understood in many but concordant senses, depending on whether strictly keeping on the principles as Daoism did or applying to determinate orders as in Confucianism.<sup>22</sup>

*Confucianism is practical, Daoism is cognitive; Confucianism is social application. Daoism is pure metaphysics. Confucius recognized that his knowledge is not par excellence because he is not "born with knowledge." "23 but Lao Zi was described as dragon by Confucius. You can hunt and fish, but you cannot trace dragon."24*

In Confucianism, scholar takes virtuous as discipline, virtuous considers Sheng Ren as discipline, and Sheng Ren holds Heaven as his discipline. Sheng Ren is situated

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<sup>19</sup> René Guénon (1886-1951) was a French metaphysician

<sup>20</sup> Fu Xi was the first legendary Chinese emperor who lived around in 3700 B.C.

<sup>21</sup> René Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of the Oriental Doctrines* (Lahore: Suhail Academy 2011) 418

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Confucius, *The Analects* (Liaoning: Liaoning National Press, 1996) 74

<sup>24</sup> Si-ma Qian, *Historical Records* (Bei Jing: Zhong Hua Publishing House, 1999) p1702; Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of the Oriental Doctrines* 420

in the boundary point between the pure metaphysics domain and practical realm, everything above him is indistinguishable from Heaven itself. Sheng Ren (wise man) the highest of the grades in Confucianism is the lowest of the grades in Daoism. But he is very important because he provides the continuity between Confucianism and Daoism.<sup>25</sup>

The way by which Daoism strictly keeps to the disciplines is Wu Wei which is like axis of the wheel, that does not act but is positioned in the central and core place for the movement of the wheel. Sheng Ren is like spoke through which the central axis which is transcendent man or universal man in Daoism gets effective to the wheel.<sup>26</sup>

Confucianism and Daoism remain in different domain; one should not exclude the other as Confucius did. But his latter followers insisted on exclusivism that caused the strict criticizing of the followers of Daoism.<sup>27</sup>

René Guénon explained the relationship between Confucianism and Daoism relying on the analytic study of respective central teachings in light of his metaphysical theory. René Guénon has recognized the event recorded by Si-ma Qian. Theory of common origin and complement relationship of Confucianism and Daoism has been supported by many Chinese scholars, like Liu Xin and Professor Liu xiaogan. Nevertheless, theory of René Guénon studied the theme from a new angle.

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<sup>25</sup> *Great Triad*, 125.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* 125.

<sup>27</sup> *Introduction to the Study of the Oriental Doctrines*, 409.

## View 2 – Opposition of the Two Schools

### a. Toshihiko Izutsu

Toshihiko Izutsu<sup>28</sup> in his book *Sufism and Daoism* is of the view that Confucianism and Daoism are in sharp contrast for their different modes of thinking. Toshihiko Izutsu said:

*“We observe also that this mode of thinking (shamanic mode of thinking) stands in sharp contrast to the realistic and rationalistic thinking as represented by the austere ethical world-view of Confucius and his followers.”*<sup>29</sup>

The mode of thinking of Daoism is defined by Toshihiko Izutsu as philosophical expression of Shamanic mysticism, i.e. personal seeing on supra-sensible plane of consciousness through encounter with the Absolute. Mode of thinking of Confucianism is realistic and rationalistic which provided Confucius and his followers with an austere ethical world-view.

But, Confucianism if defined as such as did Izutsu, then the understanding of Heaven, the command of Heaven, Sheng Ren (sage), spirit and many other concepts of Confucianism which related to metaphysical domain becomes difficult. Therefore, Confucianism even if not mystical, it should have some way in dealing with the metaphysics<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> Toshihiko Izutsu (1914-1993) was a professor at Keio University in Japan and author of many books on Islam and other religions.

<sup>29</sup> Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2005). 300.

<sup>30</sup> Feng Youlan, *The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy (Zhong Guo Zhe Xue Zhi Jing Shen)* (Bei Jing: China Youth Press, 2005). 27

## b. Feng Youlan

Feng Youlan borrowed one sentence from *the Doctrine of Mean (Zhong Yong)* “Exalted extremely in daily life”<sup>31</sup> taking as a standard to measure all traditional schools of thought of China in his book of *the Spirit of Chinese Philosophy*. This idea of seeking highest spirituality within society in daily life is not only found in Confucian classic but also found in *Zhuang Zi* as “inner sainthood and external kingship.”<sup>32</sup> “Inner sainthood” means (spiritually) “exaltedness” and “external kingship” indicates “daily life.”

Having put Confucianism and Daoism under this standard and analyzed them, it is concluded by Feng Youlan that Daoism is exalted enough but not good in closeness to daily life because in Daoism, man and Heaven are of two different ways as Zhuang Zi said: “the one considered as Jun Zi by Heaven (Tian) is base man in the opinion of man and likewise, the base man to Heaven is considered as Jun Zi by man.” In contrast with Daoism, Confucianism is quite within life but not exalted fully, because Heaven of Confucius is not extremely exalted but is as simple as religious.<sup>33</sup>

Confucianism and Daoism have different ways in spiritual realization. The way of Confucianism is accumulation of righteousness with a warm but hot heart. In contrast with Confucianism, the way of Daoism ‘Qu-zhi’ (get rid of knowledge) with an cool mind. The way of Confucianism is to make difference but the way of Daoism is to eliminate the difference.<sup>34</sup> Thus we find that according to Feng Youlan, there is connection between Confucianism and Daoism, because Confucianism though focusing on morality but also seek for higher spiritual realization, while Daoism highlighting the metaphysical concepts, also give advice for “daily life.” However, Feng Youlan emphasized the difference and separation between the two schools.

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<sup>31</sup> Zeng Zi and Zi Si, *Da Xue and Zhong Yong* (Bei Jing: Chung Hwa Book Co., 2006). 119.

<sup>32</sup> Zhuang Zi, 586

<sup>33</sup> Ibid 106

<sup>34</sup> Youlan, *The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy (Zhong Guo Zhe Xue Zhi Jing Shen)*, 26-27, 66-68

### c. Qian Mu

Qian Mu<sup>35</sup> in his book *New Commentary of the Analects* Qian Mu said “Daoism arisen after Confucianism opposing Li of Confucianism.”<sup>36</sup> Li is one of the important themes in Confucianism, and Daoism is against it. Thus, according to Qian Mu, the relationship of the two schools is opposition.

In addition of the observances of the difference of scholars which has been interpreted differently as discussed above, the view of conflict was also held by some leading followers of the two schools. However, the two founding masters, Confucius and Lao Zi did not see each other in conflict with one another. This will be studied in the second chapter of this research.

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<sup>35</sup> Qian Mu (1895-1990), a Chinese historian, thinker and educator.

<sup>36</sup> Qian Mu, *New Commentary on the Analects (Lun Yu Xin Jie)* (Bei Jing: SXD Joint Publishing Company, 2002).42.

## **0.2 Statement of the Problem**

What is the precise picture of the relationship between Daoism and Confucianism emerges in the light of an accurate understanding of their history, common concepts and mutual understanding? Which, if any, of the above described competing views is close to the reality of Daoism-Confucianism relationship in the light of primary sources, shared themes and mutual perceptions?

## **0.3 Research Methodology**

The research methodology used in this research is historical because the topic often leads to the origins of the two traditions while common key concepts of both schools in their early texts have to be analyzed and compared.

## **Chapter One: Some Common Themes between Confucianism and Daoism**



Before discussion of some common themes common between Confucianism and Daoism, let us have a very brief introduction to their respective geographical, political and socio-economic background.

Confucianism and Daoism emerged in a continent far away from water rather than island surrounded by water. This geographical characteristic determined that their lives mainly depended on the land and agriculture. The culture and philosophy originating there closely related to farmers or landowners.<sup>37</sup> Politically, the prominent figures of early Confucianism Confucius, Meng Zi and Xun Zi, and those of Daoism Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi and Lie Zi lived in a time when Zhou Dynasty was declining and losing its authority. Civil wars increased in that time and fighting for land became the norm. As Meng Zi remarked: "No war was righteous in the time of Spring and Autumn (770 BCE -476/403BCE)."<sup>38</sup>

In socio-economic terms, Lao Zi lived in tribal agricultural society where people lived on techniques of pottery making, spinning, weaving, and simple building. In contrast with this pre-civilized society, Confucius lived in a more civilized agricultural society powered by new techniques such as making of bronze, wheels, ploughing and writing.<sup>39</sup> Confucius lived in the state of Lu which was known as 'state of rituals' Influenced by social culture he advocated the concept of Li aiming at restoring social order. Lao Zi was once head of national library of Zhou dynasty. He studied widely and plentifully and witnessed the decline of the dynasty, his advice to the people was quite different from that of Confucius. Instead of applying the wisdoms recorded in the traditional classics on the current situation, Lao Zi suggested not to narrate words of the dead sages whose bones are already rotten, but the wise way was according to him to understand eternal Dao wherefrom the ancient people got the efficient wisdom for their time and their society and to adopt the way of Wu Wei (non-action). It is Wu Wei was according to him which interpreted by Zhuang Zi as 'let everything be as it is determined by Heaven, rather than man-made'.

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<sup>37</sup> Feng Youlan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 2011) 16.

<sup>38</sup> Meng Zi, *Meng Zi* (Chang Chun City Jiling Province: Shidai Wenyi Publisher, 2011) 509

<sup>39</sup> Jixu, "Confucius and Lao Zi: Their Differing Foundations and Cultures" 11

Formed in different backgrounds, Confucianism and Daoism understood the tradition before them differently and therefore responded to it differently. Here in this chapter some themes common between the two schools have been selected for comparative and analytic study analytically in order to understand how both schools are inter-related.

### 1.1. Dao (the Way)

Dao, the way, has been given the first place because it is the central concept upon which the whole Daoist philosophy, rather, entire Chinese philosophy is based. Though it is not central theme in Confucianism it has been considered very important there as well.

#### 1.1.1. *Literal Meaning*

‘Dao’ is written in traditional Chinese as 道, which is combination of two parts: ‘Chuo’ 辵 means ‘movement’ while ‘Shou’ (首) indicates ‘head’. So, the etymology of Dao gives two meanings: one is movement; another is head which is symbol of direction or consciousness.<sup>40</sup>The philologist Xu Shen of Han Dynasty (58-149 CE) in his book *Shuo Wen Jie Zi* interpreted 道(dao) as “the road on which people walk, but Dao refers only to the road which extends towards only one direction.” The philologist Dai Zhen (1724-1777)<sup>41</sup> interpreted Dao as movement. He said “Dao is like movement, therefore it is named so.” For him, Dao’s literal meaning and philosophical conception

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<sup>40</sup> downloaded from Baidu: <http://baike.baidu.com/item/首/4678029?fr=aladdin>.

<sup>41</sup> A Chinese philosopher and philologist of Qing Dynasty.

are interconnected, i.e. Dao literally means movement and Dao in philosophy also means movement.<sup>42</sup>

The literal meaning of Dao was extended to include method and management. “Dao (govern) people with decrees, control them with punishment, people will be exempted from committing crime.”<sup>43</sup> here, Dao is used as a verb meaning administration. *Dao De Jing* says: “once accomplishments have been made, withdrawing is the Dao of Heaven,”<sup>44</sup> here Dao is noun, indicating discipline and principle.

In ordinary usage, Dao simply meant ‘road’ or ‘way’ of someone or something like Dao of Heaven which means way of Heaven. Dao is mentioned in *the classic of Poetry* which was compiled before Spring and Autumn period. “wandering on the dao (road), for the heart is hesitating.”<sup>45</sup> and *Zuo-zhuan* (biography) of Zuo Qiuming<sup>46</sup> “Zi-Chan<sup>47</sup> said: “dao of Heaven is far, dao of man is near.”<sup>48</sup> In these two places Dao means affairs and way or discipline. Zuo Qiuming’s *Guo-yu* also mentioned Dao in the same sense “Duke Shan-xiang (单襄公) said ‘I am not recorder of phenomena of Heaven, how can I know the dao of Heaven?’<sup>49</sup>

In this period Dao had not yet become central theme in Chinese philosophy, instead “Heaven” was playing key role, as shown in the phrase of Tian Dao, way of Heaven, the object of description is Heaven not Dao, while Dao just plays its descriptive role.

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<sup>42</sup> Dai Zhen, *Lexicon Commentary on Meng Zi* (Bei Jing: Chung Hwa Book Co., 1961). 21

<sup>43</sup> Confucius 10-11

<sup>44</sup> Lao Zi, *Lao Zi* (Chang Sha: Hunan People's Publishing House, 1999). 18.

<sup>45</sup> Wang Xiumei, *Shi Jing the Classic of Poetry* (Bei Jing: Chung Hwa Book Co., 2006). 44.

<sup>46</sup> Zuo Qiu-Ming (556 BCE-451 BCE), thinker and historian of state of Lu in the time of Spring and Autumn.

<sup>47</sup> Zi Chan, thinker, politician and reformer of state Zheng in the time of Spring and Autumn.

<sup>48</sup> Zuo Qiuming, *Zuo Zhuan* (Bei Jing: Chung Hwa Book Co., 2007). 265.

<sup>49</sup> Explanatory Commentary of Guo Yu, ed. Wu Guoyi Hu Guowen and Li Xiaolu (Shang Hai: Shang Hai Ancient Books Publishing House, 1994) 71

### 1.1.2. *The Theme of Dao in Confucianism*

Although Confucianism defines the ultimate meaning of life by realization of Dao, but unlike Daoism, it did not elaborate the reality of Dao. Dao in Confucianism is considered so exalted that even a sage may not know some of its aspects. However, Dao the exalted one has another aspect which is obvious and easy to understand even for ordinary people in order to put into practice.

Confucius said: "If enlightened by Dao in the early morning, it is not regrettable to die in the evening."<sup>50</sup> So, Dao in this sense can only be defined as something in which the ultimate meaning of life lies because it is the ultimate and final basis of the world. Confucius did not elaborate how the existence of the world related to Dao, but he highlighted that the meaning and goal of life is bound to realization of Dao. Confucius said: "It is man who can make Dao great, not Dao can make man great."<sup>51</sup>

In the Confucian classic *Zhong Yong* (Doctrine of Mean), it is said: "The Dao of Jun-zi (superior man) is immense and hidden."<sup>52</sup> Zi Si<sup>53</sup> explained: "the immense Dao can be understood and practiced by ordinary people but the ultimate reality of the hidden Dao is not comprehended fully even by Sheng Ren the sages." So, Confucian Dao as defined by Zi Si has an essence which is unknowable. We may safely compare this aspect of Dao of Confucianism with that of Daoist Dao which is exalted from any description that it does not even have a name.

Dao according to Confucius is found in man's self. Zi Si in his *Zhong Yong* narrated the saying of Confucius: "Dao is not away from man; if Dao has been performed separately from man, do not consider it as Dao."<sup>54</sup> Confucianism recognizes transcendence of Dao, the transcendence does not conflict with human being. In contrast, Confucius said: "once the root has been established, Dao will take place (or

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<sup>50</sup> Confucius.36.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.77.

<sup>52</sup> Zi Si.70.

<sup>53</sup> Zi Si, grandson of Confucius. He is considered to be author of *Zhong Yong*

<sup>54</sup> Zi Si 73

emerge).”<sup>55</sup> This “root” has been interpreted as faithfulness and forgiveness.<sup>56</sup> So, Confucianism believes that morality leads to transcendence. It seems Confucianism seek for transcendence through man not by natural world.

Confucian Dao is extremely exalted in the sense that it could not be completely comprehended even by a sage. Confucius believes that if man cultivates himself properly, Dao will be realized in turn, as Feng Youlan said: “Confucianism in moral practice seeks for the highest spiritual realization.”<sup>57</sup>

Confucius did not emphasize the perspective of Dao in relation to generation of the universe. To him, the universe had always existed. Unlike Lao Zi, Confucius accepted the fact of the existence of the universe without asking about its origin. Confucius did not elaborate Dao from cosmological and ontological perspectives, but he emphasized the role of human being in relation with it. Philosophers interpreted this differently.

### ***1.1.3. The Conception of Dao in Daoism***

Although Dao cannot be talked about according to *Dao De Jing*, Lao Zi still talked about it more than Confucius did. However, Lao Zi hesitantly named Dao just for purpose of introduction not because it actually could be named. Lao Zi gave ‘Dao’ as its name and used ‘Da’ (the great) for its literary name that shows respect.<sup>58</sup>

Dao is the ultimate base and the source from which all things came into being. Dao itself is the totally independent and it existed before even Heaven and Earth. The world depends depending on it. As Lao Zi said: “Men models himself after the Earth; The Earth models itself after Heaven (Tian); The Heaven models itself after Tao (Dao); Tao models itself after Nature (self-so not material world).”<sup>59</sup> “Dependent on nothing, unchanging.”<sup>60</sup>, “Dao follows self-so.”<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Confucius.2.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.38

<sup>57</sup> Youlan, *The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy (Zhong Guo Zhe Xue Zhi Jing Shen)* 20

<sup>58</sup> Lao Zi.Ch. 25.

<sup>59</sup> Lin Yutang, *The Wisdom of Laoise*, (New York: The Modern Library, 1948) , 146

<sup>60</sup> Lao Zi.Ch. 25.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

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In further explaining the nature of Dao, Zhuang Zi interpreted as “The one existed before Heaven and Earth, the one who made things as they are is not same as the things made.”<sup>62</sup> This is to say there is no positive description of Dao, but through negation, we can say about Dao that it is different from things made out of it.

“Dao, rooted in itself, dependent on itself.”<sup>63</sup> If origin and ultimate base of Dao is questioned, Zhuang Zi’s response is that Dao is its base not anything else.

All things of the world come into being from Dao just as continuously being taken out from a never ending store. Lao Zi said “Dao is the ‘Ao’ (奧) of all things.”<sup>64</sup> ‘Ao’ is interpreted by He Shang Gong<sup>65</sup> as ‘storehouse.’ “Dao is store of all things, there is nothing outside of Dao.”<sup>66</sup>

All things came from Dao, so Dao is the source of the world. However, Dao is not only the source of the world in the sense of origin or past of the world, but all things and events at all times may be correctly attributed to Dao, because “Dao does not take possession when its work is accomplished,”<sup>67</sup> and “Dao does not ever do anything.”<sup>68</sup>, but “yet through it everything is done.”<sup>69</sup> Dao models itself after Nature, that’s why its work or participation is not felt.

“There are things created by others; there is one that is not created. Those created have to be under creation and changing, like Yin, Yang and four seasons. However the one that is not created is independent and everlasting Dao.”<sup>70</sup> Lie Zi described Dao in contrast with things created by it. All things that are created are always under creation and changing; that which is not created does not change, but is independent and eternal.

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<sup>62</sup> Zhuang Zi, 168

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.94.

<sup>64</sup> Lao Zi.Ch.62.

<sup>65</sup> He-shang gong (Duke of Upper River), his biography is unknown, lived in the time of King Wen (203B.C-157B.C) of Han dynasty. He was Daoist recluse famous for his *Commentary on Dao De Jing*.

<sup>66</sup> He-shang Gong, *Syntactic and Semantic Analysis of Lao Zi Dao De Jing* (Bei Jing: Chung Hwa Book Co., 1993), 241

<sup>67</sup> Lin Yutang, *The Wisdom of Lao-tse*. (New York: The Modern Library, 1948) .186

<sup>68</sup> Lin Yutang, 194

<sup>69</sup> Ibid

<sup>70</sup> Lie Zi, *Lie Zi*, ed. Jing Zhong (Bei Jing: Chung Hwa Book Co., 2007) 3.

Zhuang Zi defines Dao negatively by saying the creator of things is not a thing<sup>71</sup>. This is to say that the maker of things is different from things made. Lao Zi also employed adjectives such as “empty.”<sup>72</sup>“invisible, unhearable and impalpable”<sup>73</sup> to describe Dao.

Dao is extremely exalted but it is the ontological background of all things, therefore, Dao is also not only the principle or law of the universe but also an entity. Zhuang Zi said: “Dao is everywhere, even in lowly things such the ant.”<sup>74</sup>For Zhuang Zi, it is not possible for anything to be separated from Dao. In describing the body or reality of Dao, Lao Zi said: “within Dao are the forms and entities.”<sup>75</sup> Some take this description of Lao Zi for their materialist view. But since Dao in Daoism is explicitly introduced as different from all things of forms, forms and entity of Dao are different from things which are produced from Dao. The reality of Dao is summed up in word “hun”<sup>76</sup> which means “vague” and “whole”. Wang Bi<sup>77</sup> and Zhang Dainian<sup>78</sup> understood “hun” to mean “unknown”.<sup>79</sup>

For Confucianism and Daoism in some of its aspects, Dao is unknown and indescribable. Confucianism considers Dao from the perspective of its significance to human being while Daoism puts Dao in the universe as a whole for consideration, whereof man is just one part. For Confucianism, it is man who makes Dao great, but for Daoism, Dao is already the greatest one to be followed. As Wing-Tsit Chan asserted, the saying of Confucius “it is the man that can make his religion or the principles he

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<sup>71</sup> Zhuang Zi, *Zhuang Zi*, Translated by Wang Rongpei, (Chang Sha City: Hu Nan Ren Ming Press,1999), 381

<sup>72</sup> Lao Zi.Ch.4

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. Ch.14.

<sup>74</sup> Zhuang Zi, *Zhuang Zi*, (Chang Sha City: Hu Nan Ren Ming Press,1999), 360.

<sup>75</sup> Lao Zi.Ch.21.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.Ch.25.

<sup>77</sup> Wang Bi, *Lao Zi Dao De Jing* (Shang Hai: World Book Bureau, 1935). 14.

<sup>78</sup> Zhang Dainian (1909-2004), a modern Chinese philosopher and professor.

<sup>79</sup> Zhang Dainian, *A Deep Study of Chinese Philosophy (Zhong Guo Zhe Xue Fa Wei)* (Tai Yuan: Shanxi People's Publishing House. 1981) 23

professes great; and not his religion or principles which he professes, which can make the man great<sup>80</sup> is the chief spiritual and moral inspiration of the Chinese.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Gu Hongming, 467-468

<sup>81</sup> Hu Shih Wing-tsit Chan, and Tang Chün-i etc. *The Chinese Mind* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, University of Hawaii Press, 1967) 32



## 1.2. Tian (Heaven)

Lao Zi introduced the concept of Dao and then it became the utmost central theme in Daoism while Confucius also takes reference of meaning of life from Dao. The concept of Heaven was given a place secondary to Dao in Daoism, while Confucius considered it the ultimate dominator of the universe and man as well.

### 1.2.1. *Literal Meaning of Tian (Heaven)*

Tian (Heaven) is explained in bone inscription as: “that indicates a man with big head.” Head was highlighted indicating its highest position i.e. that there is nothing above Tian. However, this was not agreed by Lao Zi. The philologist Xu Shen explained: “Tian is constituted of ‘一’ (one) and ‘大’ (great) meaning the highest which there is nothing above.”<sup>82</sup> So, according to the etymology of the word, Tian is the *highest heavenly greatness*.

### 1.2.2. *Meaning of Tian before Confucius and Lao Zi*

Tian is mentioned in *Shi Jing* many times, in combination with different adjectives. “oh remote dark blue Heaven, what kind of person is this!”<sup>83</sup> Here in *Shi Jing*, Tian has been described as sky above our heads. We can hardly equate Tian in meaning with God. “Oh! Tremendous Tian, you did not sustain your kindness for longer, but you dropped and released famine!” Tian here means God because it is not only great or tremendous, but it also determines the destiny.

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<sup>82</sup> Xu Shen, *Shao Wen Jie Zi* (Bei Jing: Jiu Zhou Publishing Houses, 2001), 1.

<sup>83</sup> Zhou Zhenfu, *Commentary on Shi Jing* (Bei Jing: Chung Hwa Book Co., 2002), 95.

Tian was also called “Shang Tian” which means Heaven highly above men. “Bright Shang Tian is shining on earth.”<sup>84</sup> Another of its names “Shang Di” meaning King above. “Oh mighty Shang Di (Topmost Emperor), having insight into all under him”<sup>85</sup> Tian and Di are one the same. “when worshiped at sacrificial altar at open place, it is called Tian, when worshiped under roof through deity, it is called Di.” Zhu-Xi<sup>86</sup>(1130CE-1200CE) explained.

So, Tian appears with different colors in different seasons, but it is that to whom mankind appeal because man’s destiny is in his hand. Therefore Tian in this sense has a religious meaning. This traditional religious meaning of Tian is also accepted by Confucius.

### ***1.2.3. Conception of Tian (Heaven) in Confucianism***

When Yan Hui, one of his disciples died, Confucius cried in an outburst of grief: “Oh! Oh! Tian has forsaken me! Tian has forsaken me!”<sup>87</sup> Confucius when facing accident of life and death, behaved differently from Zhuang Zi who upon his wife’s death cried but then stopped crying at once and started celebrating. When asked by his friend, he replied that: “there was once no her, then by chance she came into being, now how can I cry while she takes rest in between Heaven and Earth? One will cry only when he does not understand this.”<sup>88</sup> Confucius expressed his feelings of normal men. Confucius also did not feel any hesitation to attribute fortune of life to Tian as others normally do.

Zi Xia a disciple of Confucius in consoling his colleague said: “Life and death are governed by Ming (fate); wealth and honor are determined by Tian.”<sup>89</sup> ‘Ming’ literally means ‘command’, so ‘Tian Ming’ means ‘command of Tian’. Therefore, fate and

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.338.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.412.

<sup>86</sup> Zhu Xi was a Confucian philosopher, educator and poet of Song Dynasty (960-1279).

<sup>87</sup> Confucius.115.

<sup>88</sup> Zhuang Zi. *Zhuang Zi*, Trans by Wang Rongpei (Chang Sha: Hunan People’s publishing House, 1999),288.

<sup>89</sup> Confucius 12

fortune are commands of Tian. This sort of religious thinking or belief of Confucius and his disciples was succeeded the religious connotations of Tian from the previous prevailing ideology.

Confucius accepted traditional Tian. He also taught his disciples to respect Tian. Confucius taught: "Jun Zi is in awe of three things, of Command of Tian, of Great Man (Senior) and of words of Sheng Ren (Wiseman)"<sup>90</sup> Jun Zi is in awe of command of Tian, because it is out of man's control, but even beyond his understanding as Qian Mu has explained<sup>91</sup>.

Tian wills and its willing is absolutely free. It is the highest authority whose resolution cannot be influenced or controlled by anyone. Even the so-called deities cannot ask Tian for favor (intercede) once Tian is defied. "Once you sinned toward Tian, no prayer can help"<sup>92</sup> Confucian Tian is also the highest authority to be obeyed and even those who were generally worshiped deities cannot help if one goes to them for prayer.

Tian is also the source of virtue. "It is Heaven who bestowed upon me with virtue (De)"<sup>93</sup> Virtue here is translation of De, the same Chinese word appearing in the title of *Dao De Jing*, the classic of Lao Zi. It is rendered differently because De can hardly be understood in Confucianism in the same way as Daoism defined it. In Daoism De may be properly understood in the sense of ontology. So, De is the ontological ground of all individuals of the world. Zhuang Zi defined De as that which gives birth to everything.<sup>94</sup> Dao however, in Confucianism (early Confucianism), ontological question was neither their starting point nor their main concern. Confucius accepted the universe as a fact already existing without questioning how it came into being, i.e. without cosmological or ontological query. Confucian De is bestowed by Tian, so, it has an ontological base, but its fundamental meaning is Ren (benevolence) in Confucianism not the reality of individuals of the world that makes things as they are. So, based on different philosophical concerns, Daoism advises man to follow Dao and De through Wu Wei (non action). Confucianism teaches man to enlarge Dao through moral cultivation.

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid.186.

<sup>91</sup> Qian Mu 313.

<sup>92</sup> Confucius.26.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.75

<sup>94</sup> Zhuang Zi.183

Zhang Dainian thinks that Tian of Confucius in his term Tian Ming (command of Tian) has religious connotations. So Tian wills, knows and is dominant over the universe.<sup>95</sup> This religious conception is considered by Feng Youlan as simple as graphical. That means that the conception of Tian in Confucius is relatively simple, not philosophically profound enough because it is religious.<sup>96</sup>

#### **1.2.4. Tian (Heaven) in Daoism**

Tian repeatedly appears in the Daoist texts in combination with 'Earth'. In the combination, 'Tian-di' means the whole universe. So, Tian in this context only indicates the material heavens and their belongings. This is not the concern for the present study. However, Tian also appears in combination 'Tian-dao'. In this phrase, Tian is the subject being described by Dao which literally means 'way'. In other words, in this phrase, Tian gives philosophical meaning, while Dao only indicates its literal meaning. Although for Daoism, Dao is the ultimate reality and principle to be followed, but Tian has also been referred to for the same purpose. While bringing forward his own philosophical concept, Lao Zi also elaborates the way of Tian (Tian-dao), most probably for taking the most popular and authentic conception of Tian for the reference.

One of the ways of Tian is to inhibit stronger and nourish weaker. Lao Zi said: "Heaven's way is like the bending a row. When a bow is bent the top comes down and bottom-end comes up. So, too does Heaven take away from those who have too much, and give to those who have not enough"<sup>97</sup> This principle of Tian is in sharp contrast with the way of man. The way of man is "taking away from those that have not enough in order to make offering to those that already have enough,"<sup>98</sup> as Lao Zi further said. This way of Heaven is like Dao's quality of reversal that when things reach the poles of their

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<sup>95</sup> Zhang Dainian, *General Outlines of Chinese Philosophy (Zhong Guo Zhe Xue Da Gang)*. (Bei Jing: China Social Sciences Publisher, 1994) 2

<sup>96</sup> Youlan, *The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy (Zhong Guo Zhe Xue Zhi Jing Shen)* 27

<sup>97</sup> Lao Zi, Ch 77

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. Ch 77.

development or decadence, revert to the opposite direction. So, it is always advised by Lao Zi to be cautious when you are in status of confidence or satisfaction.

Another way of Tian is to withdraw when work is done. Lao Zi said “When your work is done, then, withdraw. Such is Heaven’s way.”<sup>99</sup> This way of Heaven is also described by Lao Zi as ‘Xuan De’, rendered differently as ‘mysterious power’ and ‘deep power’ etc. Lao Zi said: “Dao gave them birth, the ‘power’ of Dao (De) reared them...rear them, but not lay claim to them; control them, but never lean upon them; be the chief among them, but do not manage them. This is called the mysterious De.” The way of Tian is very similar to Dao that they accomplish things, and then withdraw.

From above discussions, it becomes clear that in Daoism, Tian looks like Dao but is in reality different from Confucian Tian. Zhang Dainian thinks that in virtue of transcending all things, the Daoist Dao does not have will, emotion and consciousness, unlike Confucian Tian.<sup>100</sup>

All things come from Tian. But there are also things coming from man. It is ultimate human knowledge to know how to differentiate between them in order to avoid harm of man-made things, and to have a complete life determined by Tian. This is termed by Zhuang Zi ‘years of Tian’. Zhuang Zi said: “To know that Heaven can do and to know what man can do---that is the ultimate human knowledge. To know what Heaven can do is to know that everything comes from Heaven. To know what man can do is to use one’s knowledge of known to nourish his knowledge of the unknown against premature death until his natural death.”<sup>101</sup> Things done by Tian are like having four feet of cattle and horse; that done by man are like headstall for horse, nose ring for cattle, as Zhuang Zi illustrated.<sup>102</sup>

Anyway, Dao in Lao Zi is the more fundamental even than Tian, because, Dao is prior to it, though Tian is also fundamental because referring to it helps in expounding Dao.

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.Ch 9

<sup>100</sup> Dainian. *A Deep Study of Chinese Philosophy (Zhong Guo Zhe Xue Fa Wei)*. 17

<sup>101</sup> Zhuang Zi.88.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

### 1.3. De

The word, 'De' is normally understood to mean 'virtue' and 'moral'. However, as suggested by René Guénon, De in Daoist context should properly be rendered as 'rectitude'. Actually in the Chinese language, there is another 'De' (得) which means 'to obtain' and 'that which is obtained'. The second 'De' has been explained by a modern Confucian thinker Qian Mu<sup>103</sup> in his *new commentary on the Analects* as the acquisition of Dao. Though it is acquisition of Dao, it is still Confucian, because according to him Dao indicates Dao of Ren, which is different from connotation of Dao in Daoism.<sup>104</sup>

#### 1.3.1. Literal Meaning of De

De written in simplified Chinese as 德, is as difficult to be translated into English word as any other Chinese philosophical concepts. It has variety of meanings in Chinese language such as 'virtue' which is result of cultivation, idea, grace and power endowed by Dao to all individuals of the universe as their reality etc.

In Jin Wen<sup>105</sup> De is written as 𠂔 combination of Chi( 𠂔 ) and De( 惠 ). 𠂔 means 'ascending' as in 'ascend on a horse or vehicle'; 惠 means De in question. The component 惠 itself gives meaning of obtaining. It means to obtain from both inside and outside, inside from one's own heart, outside from others.<sup>106</sup> "De" literally means 'ascending' as interpreted by Shuo Wen Jie Zi.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Qian Mu (1895-1990), Chinese modern historian, thinker, educator

<sup>104</sup> Qian Mu 8.

<sup>105</sup> Jin Wen is one of the historical system of Chinese language inscribed into the metal items such as bells and cauldrons before Qin dynasty consolidated other vassal states (888B.C.-207B.C.).

<sup>106</sup> Xushen, "Shuowenjiezi" 603

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. 105.

According to *Shi Jing, the Classic of Poetry*, De also means nice, melodious and grace. "For a long time, my husband did not speak with me in melodious tone."<sup>108</sup> A wife complained that her husband after marriage does not placate her with nice tone and kind words. In this context, De is used to describe the manner the husband used to speak to his wife before they got married and when they were just falling love. In another place of *Shi Jing*, De means 'grace' "Oh, immense Tian (Heaven), your grace has not lasted longer."<sup>109</sup> People begged for grace of Tian to last forever whenever disaster happened.

### 1.3.2. *De in Confucianism*

One of the most fundamental concepts in Confucianism is 'Ren'. According to Confucius himself, his whole teaching is connected by one (thing or principle). This one is explained by his disciple as connotation of Ren, which is moral. However, Confucius attributed the roots of human morality to Heaven.

The basic connotation of De in Confucian context is Ren, but since it originated from Tian it has got ontological ground. In terms of professor Song Zhiming<sup>110</sup>, Daoism emphasizes ontological objectivity of Dao, while Confucianism highlighted ontological subjectivity of Dao. Confucius Said: "God (Tian) has given me moral and intellectual power (De)."<sup>111</sup> De in Confucian context basically means Ren. Since it originated from Heaven, it got an ontological basis. However, in this ontological basis, Confucius emphasized man's subjectivity.<sup>112</sup>

Heavenly originated De is also described by Confucius as the doctrine of mean, which means middle and the best way, not undue and not insufficient. Confucius say: "The doctrine of mean is the utmost De"<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Zhou Zhenfu.41.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.303.

<sup>110</sup> Song Zhiming (Born 1947), Professor in department of philosophy of Renming University of China.

<sup>111</sup> Hongming.394-395

<sup>112</sup> Song Zhiming, "An Ontological Thinking of Chinese Philosophy (Zhong Guo Zhe Xue De Ben Ti Lun Si Lu)," *Chuan Shan Xue Kan Journal*, no. 1 (2004) 6

<sup>113</sup> Confucius 66

However, Confucius himself lamented that De is not easy to understand and practice persistently. Confucius said: “You<sup>114</sup>, those who know De are few!”<sup>115</sup> “Rarely, people persist in it (the doctrine of mean)!”<sup>116</sup>

### 1.3.3. *De in Taoism*

De is sometimes translated as ‘virtue’ which has moral meaning. Guénon prefers ‘Rectitude’ rather than ‘virtue’ keeping in with the outlook of Daoism. For him, De is the ‘specification’ of Dao with respect to individuals. In other words, any single thing of all things including humankind is a specific manifestation of Dao. According to Guénon, De is the direction which a being “must follow in order that its existence in its present state shall be according to the Way (Dao), or, in other words, in conformity with the Principle.”<sup>117</sup>

In his translation of Dao De Jing, Lin Yutang rendered De as ‘character’ mostly and at one place as ‘virtue’. Unlike Guénon, he considers De a moral principle.<sup>118</sup>

There might be many other translations of De as per different understandings, like ‘Power of Dao’ translated by Waley, but they all may fall into only two categories of meaning as just discussed: moral and non-moral of Daoist De.

When discussing De, Lao Zi always prefers “superior De”, “mystic De”, “ultimate De”, sometimes in contrasting with “inferior De.” According to Lao Zi, superior, mystic and ultimate De is true and real De because the man with this kind of De is not aware of it and never acts. In sharp contrast, the man of inferior De is intent on not losing De therefore he does not have De, i.e. real De. So, Lao Zi tries to lead from normal perceiving of De to some other meaning of it which is superior to Ren and leads to Dao.

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<sup>114</sup> You here refers to Zhong You(542-480 B.C), one of top ten disciples of Confucius.

<sup>115</sup> Confucius 171

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of the Oriental Doctrines* 422

<sup>118</sup> Ibid



“After Tao was lost, then came the ‘power’ (De); after the ‘power’ was lost, then came human kindness.”<sup>119</sup>

As Dao is the origin and the end of all things and provider of ontological ground to them, De is also defined in the same way in Daoism. Lao Zi said: “Dao gave them birth; De reared them”<sup>120</sup> This ‘rearing’ of De is explained by Zhuang Zi as: “From Oneness (Dao) came everything, each receiving what is called its own ‘virtue’(De).”<sup>121</sup> De, the virtue as translated by Wang Rongpei has ontological meaning not moral, because everything came from Dao, and what they have received from Dao is called De of each thing. That is why Guénon defined De as ‘specification’ of Dao within every individual of all things including humankind.

De in both schools has ontological meaning. Confucianism highlights subjectivity of the ontology, while Daoism emphasizes its objectivity. In other words, according Confucianism, man plays leading and active role in making Dao great, but Dao cannot make man great; As per Daoist outlook, Dao is ‘unconditioned’, what-is-so-itself, while man is conditioned by Dao, man has its direction of De to follow in order to conform with the supreme Principle, Dao. In words of Feng Youlan, it is not correct to say that Daoism does not advocate morality of Ren and Yi, rather, they are not sufficient, there should be something more to be given priority.

Looking from moral perspective, the basic meaning of Confucian De is moral, i.e. Ren (benevolence) of man, while fundamental meaning of Daoist De is ontological, i.e. the reality of all things including man. Whereas, Daoism pays attention to man from the standpoint of high position of Dao and Tian, while Confucianism starts from men and looks forward to Dao and Tian.

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<sup>119</sup> Lao Zi Ch.38.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.* Ch.51.

<sup>121</sup> Zhuang Zi.182

#### 1.4. Ren (Benevolence), Yi (Righteousness) and Li (Ritual)

Ren, Yi and Li are the core concepts of Confucianism, just like Dao and De are in Daoism. Confucius did not put 'Ren', 'Yi' and 'Li' together when teaching them, but mentioned and discussed them in different occasions and contexts separately. It is his later follower Meng Zi who put them together with 'Zhi' (wisdom) and named them 'Si Duan' (four clues).<sup>122</sup> Since 'Zhi' (wisdom) is not discussed in the most primary text of Daoism, *Dao De Jing*, so, in this section study, only Ren, Yi and Li will be considered.

##### 1.4.1. Literal Meaning of Ren, Yi and Li

Ren is written in simplified Chinese as '仁' (Ren) constituted by '人' (Ren) which means human being and '二' (er) which means two. It means when there are two persons, Ren arises, that is to prefer for another what one wants for himself. However, it is interpreted by *Shuo Wen Jie Zi* as: "blood relation."<sup>123</sup> In this sense, the primary meaning of Ren is blood relation which was extended later to wider society and the universe. Before it was taken by Confucius as the kernel of his teaching, conception of Ren was generally taken to mean 'kindness.' *Shi Jing* the Chinese classic of poetry said describing a man: "The man is good looking and kind."<sup>124</sup>

Yi is written in simplified Chinese as '义', and in Jin Wen as '義' (yi) constituted of '羊' (yang) which means 'blessed' and '我' (wo) which indicates 'war'. So, Yi primarily means 'blessed war', but later it was extended to include justice. Tian does not bless unjust war. Then, Yi became symbol of justice in everything. However, it is

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<sup>122</sup> Yang BoJun. *Commentary of Meng Zi* (Bei Jing: Chung Hwa Book Co., 1988) 88

<sup>123</sup> Xu Shen. 448.

<sup>124</sup> Zhou Zhenfu. 142

interpreted in *Shuo Wen Jie Zi* as “dignity of self.”<sup>125</sup> This shows that justice embodies ‘dignity of self’. Before Confucian appropriation, Yi generally meant good and things that should be done, but sometimes it also meant ‘powerful’ in negative sense. King Zhou Wen after overthrowing the previous Shang dynasty once blamed the kings of Shang Dynasty “You appointed Yi (powerful) people”<sup>126</sup> King Zhou Wen said: “Indulgence is not Yi (right, appropriate).”<sup>127</sup> So, if things are not in accordance with Yi, one should not do them.

Li is written in simplified Chinese as ‘礼’, and 禮(li) in Jin Wen, constituted of ‘示’ (shi) which means sacrifice and ‘豐’ (li) which means a utensil used in sacrificing. It is interpreted in *Shuo Wen Jie Zi* as “sacrifice to deity for blessings”. The deity mentioned here in Chinese language is ‘Shen’, which according to *Shuo Wen Jie Zi* is not Tian or Dao, but merely what brought things out into being.<sup>128</sup> The deity mentioned here is interpreted by the author of *Shuo Wen Jie Zi* as heavenly deities that brought things into being. Defined thus, they seem like mediators between the Ultimate Reality and all created things. To celebrate good harvest, people used to say: “In accordance with hundreds of Li (ceremonies), please prepare wine (normal) and sweet wine”<sup>129</sup>

Ren, Yi and Li were not Confucian creations, on the contrary, they were very common and well-known concepts in the time of Confucius and even before him. This might have been because these traditional teachings were the central themes in the tradition before Confucius. Therefore, Confucius focused his teachings on them, because he did not claim originality but to have elaborated ancient teachings.

As literary study of the characters of these themes has shown, they all somehow were related to worship and sacrifice. However the way Confucius followed ancient teachings is interpreted differently. Feng Youlan is of the view that Confucius produces creatively though narration. This production seems like highlighting the reason, rather

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<sup>125</sup> Xu Shen 744

<sup>126</sup> Zhou Zhenfu.451

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.452.

<sup>128</sup> Xu Shen.3

<sup>129</sup> Zhou Zhenfu.508

than faith. Liang Shuming<sup>130</sup> believes that Confucius promoted spirit of rationality instead of preferring religious thought in Xia (2070B.C.-1600B.C.), Shang (1571B.C.-1046B.C.) and early Zhou (1046B.C.-256B.C.) dynasties.<sup>131</sup>

#### 1.4.2. *Ren, Yi and Li in Confucianism*

As discussed above, Ren, Yi and Li are not original Confucian themes. Rather, these were traditional concepts of Chinese philosophy. Confucian teachers were most familiar with them. This was later confirmed also by Zhuang Zi in the chapter of 'All under Tian' of his book where he discussed all prominent contemporary schools.

In the society, there are ranks of nobility. People strive for the highest one, but the truly highest nobility is ignored. Meng Zi said "Ren is an honorable nobility from Tian, and a peaceful home for man."<sup>132</sup> According to Meng Zi, man's home is not where he bodily lives, not in the universe but in Ren which belongs to realm of Tian.

This Heavenly bestowed nobility of Ren results from practicing Dao. "Seek Dao; hold fast to De; live in Ren; and enjoy the pleasures derived from the pursuit of Li (the fine arts)" Ren is rendered by Professor Gu Hongming as 'morality'. According to professor Qian Mu, Ren is all that is obtained by practicing Dao.<sup>133</sup> As Professor Song Zhiming pointed out, Confucianism highlighted the subjectivity of man in the ontological what of Dao. Daoism emphasized the objectivity of Dao.<sup>134</sup>

'Ren' can be understood either for a person's relation to himself or his relation with other persons. 'Ren' to one's self means that it is like men's home where his heart can 'live' easily and peacefully. Confucius said: "it is satisfactory to live in Ren."<sup>135</sup> Man will find peace in his own heart which itself is Ren. It seems that for Confucius

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<sup>130</sup> Liang ShuMing (1893-1988), Chinese thinker, educator and social reformer. 1917-1924. He was professor in Beijing University.

<sup>131</sup> Liang Shuming, *The Essentials of Chinese Culture* (Shang Hai: Shang Hai People's Publishing House, 2011). 102-110.

<sup>132</sup> Yang BoJun 81.

<sup>133</sup> Qian Mu, 123-124.

<sup>134</sup> Zhang Zhiming, "Ontological Way of Thinking of Chinese Philosophy (Zhong Guo Zhe Xue De Ben Ti Lun Si Lu)," *Chuan Shan School Journal*, no. 1 (2004). 7.

<sup>135</sup> Confucius. 34.

'Ren' is almost like Dao because both, being the meaning of life can satisfy heart. Ren is not only home of man's heart, but it is man's very heart. It is likely that according to Confucianism the meaning of man's life is Ren. Therefore, man's heart is defined by it. Meng Zi said: "Ren is the heart of man."<sup>136</sup>

The meaning of Ren can be understood also in social life, because Ren does not remain within one's self, rather it naturally inclines to be expressed in feelings and actions. Confucius said: "Ren is to love others".<sup>137</sup> Loving others starts with loving the closest one which is one's own self. You love yourself, so, you only want good for yourself. Thus, Ren means just to apply this principle to others. Confucius said: "A moral man in forming his character forms the character of others; in lightening himself he lightens others."<sup>138</sup> Ren is not only to love, but also to serve. Confucius said: "the root of Ren is to show filial piety to parents and respect to elders (elder brothers)." Meng Zi said: "The content of Ren is to serve parents."<sup>139</sup>

The love and service that are emitted from Ren are not exhausted in close relatives rather it is taught by Meng Zi that: "Treat you aged kin as the elderly should be treated, and then extend it to the young children of others."<sup>140</sup> On this extension of Ren is based political thought of Confucianism that if all members of the society extend Ren (love and serve) to others, then the society will be in order. Meng Zi took reference from *the Classic of Poetry* (Shi Jing) "An exemplar in treating his wife, and extending to his brothers, thus he rules the family and the state."<sup>141</sup>

Yi is usually mentioned along with Ren in Confucianism, so, Yi is also one of the key themes in it. Yi is that according to which man should perform his all actions. Anything without Yi is considered as getting far away from Dao. Yi is the way of Jun Zi (noble man) for keeping Dao. The meaning of life consists in keeping Dao even on the price of living a tough life. Just as Ren is innate quality of man which naturally and

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<sup>136</sup> Yang BoJun.267.

<sup>137</sup> Hongming.439.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.389.

<sup>139</sup> Yang BoJun 183

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.16

<sup>141</sup> Ibid

spontaneously motivates him to doing good, Yi is also the inherent quality of man that makes him avoiding evil. Yi as inner inherent quality manifests in form of 'shame', just as Ren does in form of compassion. Meng Zi said: "shame on evil is clue of Yi"<sup>142</sup>

Li is related to external behavior whether personal etiquettes or collective ceremonies. Confucianism advocated Li for its containing inner meanings of Ren and Yi. Otherwise, Li is criticized by Confucianism also. Confucius said: "if a man is without Ren (empty of "moral character", rendered by professor Gu Hongmin), what good can the use of Li (the fine arts translated by Professor Gu Hongmin) do him?"<sup>143</sup> In defining the fundamental principle of Li, Confucius gave example of funeral ceremonies by saying that "in rituals (Li) for the dead, it is better that there should be heartfelt grief rather than minute attention to external observances"<sup>144</sup> Daoism criticized Confucian teachings of Ren, Yi and Li generally, and Li is much more severely criticized by Daoism. Lao Zi said: "Now Li (ritual) is the mere husk of loyalty and promise-keeping and indeed the first step towards brawling"<sup>145</sup> It seems that Lao Zi is not criticizing Li itself, but Li when it becomes empty of inner meanings. Confucius and Lao Zi both have noticed negative side of Li. Confucianism therefore stresses unity of external Li and interior Ren.

#### ***1.4.3. Ren, Yi and Li in Daoism***

In criticizing the notion of Ren, Lao Zi refers to Tian, Earth and Sage. He says that "Tian and Earth (nature) are unkind...the Sage is unkind"<sup>146</sup> Unkindness of Tian, Earth and Sage is learnt from Dao. Lao Zi said: "Man models himself after the Earth; the Earth models itself after Tian (Heaven); Tian models itself after Tao; Tao models itself

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid.80.

<sup>143</sup> Gu Hongming.360.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.361

<sup>145</sup> Lao Zi.Ch.38.

<sup>146</sup> Lin Yutang, *The Wisdom of Lao-tze* (New York: Ransom House, 1948).63.

after the Nature that is so by itself (Zi Ran)."<sup>147</sup> To model after 'Self-so' is to let all things be as they are rather than interfere with them. "Giving them birth does not own them...being superior does not control them". The real Ren is named by Lao Zi 'superior Ren'.<sup>148</sup> It is real and superior because the 'superior Ren' acts but without an ulterior motive.<sup>149</sup> The real Ren is titled by Zhuang Zi 'perfect Ren' (Zhi Ren) and 'great Ren' (Da Ren).<sup>150</sup> It is real and perfect because it is not close to anyone, but treats all equally.<sup>151</sup> Zhuang Zi gave an example of King Yao and King Shun to explain the perfect Ren which is not Ren (benevolent). He says that King Yao and King Shun left virtue behind them, and let people act according to their own natural bent, thus bestowed benefit and grace to them without their consciousness.<sup>152</sup>

Daoism redefined traditional concept of Ren in its philosophical framework, but it did not completely reject Ren and Yi, because ancient kings also used to advocate them, but they took them just like inns in which they did not stay for more than one night. Perfect man of ancient times took Ren and Yi just for the time being in order to travel in the world of the absolute freedom. Daoism criticized Ren and Yi on their leading to disorder, advising to let people keep their purity and simplicity.<sup>153</sup>

According to Daoism, Ren and Yi are secondary to Dao and De. Lao Zi said in 38<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Dao De Jing*: "After Tao is lost, then Ren; After Ren is lost, then Yi."<sup>154</sup> Professor Feng Youlan says that Daoist critique of Confucian notions of Ren and Yi does not mean that Daoism advocates Ren-less and Yi-less living. Rather, they think that the spiritual realm of Ren and Yi is lower than that of Tian and Earth.

Ren, Yi are criticized not only because they belong to a lower spiritual realm, but also because of their harm to man's nature. Zhuang Zi said: "King Shun started advocating Ren and Yi, since then, people ran after Ren and Yi. This is to let Ren and

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid. 145-146.

<sup>148</sup> Yutang. 198.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Zhuang Zi. 224-225.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Zhuang Zi. 225.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. 235-237

<sup>154</sup> Lao Zi Ch. 38.

Yi change man's nature."<sup>155</sup> Because ordinary men started sacrificing their life for profit, scholars for fame, and even Sheng Ren for the sake of mankind. None of them is following his own nature.<sup>156</sup>

Daoism criticizes Ren, Yi and Li not really because they are fundamentally false but because they are misunderstood and misused by people: they are misunderstood because they are limited to close relatives; they are misused because if you "create benevolence and righteousness to assure honesty and even in this instance benevolence and righteousness teach them to steal."<sup>157</sup>

The negative side of Li in Confucianism as discussed previously is also criticized by Daoism. Lao Zi said: "Li is the thinning out of loyalty and honesty of heart and the beginning of chaos."<sup>158</sup> Confucius pointed out that Li does not help if it is empty of Ren, Lao Zi attributed chaos to Li when it lacks inner meanings like loyalty and honesty.

To Confucianism, Ren, Yi and Li are central teachings which are of highest moral value, but they are at most secondary in Daoism and some of them are harmful therefore they are criticized. Confucianism focused on these moral teachings that emphasized the proactive role of man in practicing them, however it does not stop here. Rather, it aims at higher spiritual realization of state of Tian and Earth. In the other words, Confucianism believes that Dao to which Confucianism attaches the ultimate meaning of life can be realized through man's practicing of these Confucian moral teachings. These teachings are considered the very fundamentals of man. Once the fundamentals are realized, Dao occurs. Daoism though does not overlook man's social life and social relationship, but it makes its way of life in the light of its philosophy of Tian, Earth and the way of ancient sages.

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<sup>155</sup> Zhuang Zi 128

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid. 144.

<sup>158</sup> Lao Zi Ch 38



### 1.5. Wu Wei (Action-less Act)

Wu Wei the Chinese phrase has been translated in various ways, such as 'effortless action,' 'inactivity', 'no-government' and 'non-action' etc. Despite its rich connotations, when translating, we might be sometimes in confusion whether follow its literal meaning or try to explore its basic technical meaning as it is shown in the just mentioned translation. Effortless action is to explore its basic meaning, but it may loss its other connotations. Non-action and inactivity are to follow its literal meaning without touching its real meaning. We may suggest "Actionless Act" to indicate its basic meaning without going far away from its literal meaning.

Wu Wei is a way of life and wisdom of politics learnt from Dao. It is usually considered the key theme unique to Daoism. However, Wu Wei is also discussed by Confucius in *the Analects*. Some scholar even hold that Wu Wei was originally a Confucian theme, taken over and developed by Daoism.<sup>159</sup>

The phrase 'Wu Wei' was not created by Confucius and Lao Zi. It was mentioned in *the Classic of Poetry (Shi Jing)*, the most ancient Chinese work. In "Wu Wei Kua Pi" (do not be soft)<sup>160</sup> Wu Wei here means 'do not be'. In "Wu Mei Wu Wei" (it is useless to sleep or to be awake, the thinking of someone at all time goes on)<sup>161</sup>, Wu Wei means 'no help', 'useless'. In "Wo Sheng Zhi Chu, Shang Wu Wei" (In my early life, I had no work)<sup>162</sup> Wu Wei means 'no work', 'no career'. It is child's life. It is thus clear that Wu Wei literally means to negate action while it is philosophically interpreted differently.

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<sup>159</sup> Qian Mu 287.

<sup>160</sup> Zhou Zhenfu.447

<sup>161</sup> Ibid 200

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.101

### 1.5.1. Wu Wei in Confucianism

Wu Wei technically means 'inactivity' neither in Confucianism nor in Daoism. Rather, it is considered as very important wisdom through which both schools explain how things work and get done. However, the operation side of Wu Wei is explained differently by the two schools.

Confucius said: "The ancient Emperor Shun was perhaps the one man who successfully carried out the principle of no-government (Wu Wei)"<sup>163</sup> Professor Gu Hongming translated 'ordering through Wu Wei' as 'the principle of no government'. It means that the Emperor Shun formulated for the first time a way of politics through Wu Wei. Edward Slingerland in his work *Effortless Action* is of the view that the ideal of Wu Wei was discussed widely in early China by different schools, especially by Confucianism and Daoism. According to his point of view, Wu Wei is perceived by Lao Zi as 'So-of-Itself' while Confucius understand it as 'at ease in virtue'<sup>164</sup>. In the other words, Wu Wei of Lao Zi is Wu Wei of 'Zi Ran' (self-so) and Wu Wei of Confucius is transformation through moral influence.<sup>165</sup> Therefore, the Emperor who carried out the principle of no-government in his governing was doing nothing but "to be earnest in his personal conduct and to behave in a manner worthy of his position"<sup>166</sup>

Regarding the meaning of Wu Wei in Confucianism, Professor Qian Mu<sup>167</sup> summed up three opinions. The first is that King Yao and King Shun appointed appropriate officials to do work and the king himself was not personally involved in any work. The second is that the King Yao and King Shun got their kingship through abdicating and not through competition. The third is that as Kings, they handled the state affairs with such ease that their hearts were just like not involving in anything.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Gu Hongming 463.

<sup>164</sup> Edward Slingerland *Effortless Action* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003) 43.77

<sup>165</sup> Chen Lei, "Discourse on 'Ordering of Wu Wei' in Confucianism and Daoism," *New West of China* 24 (2009): 142

<sup>166</sup> Hongming, 463.

<sup>167</sup> Qian Mu, was a famous Confucian Scholar.

<sup>168</sup> Qian Mu 158.

The basic meaning of Wu Wei is summed up by Slingerland is in two kinds: lack of exertion and unself-consciousness. Confucius realized this spiritual state at age of seventy. He said: “at seventy, I could follow whatever my heart desired without transgressing the law.”<sup>169</sup> For this spiritual stage, Confucius started his long journey of study and self-cultivation. According to Confucianism, man has to take this long journey of self-cultivation with traditional teachings of Zhou Dynasty.

Meng Zi thinks that moral cultivation of man is spontaneous because man by his nature inclines towards Ren just like water inclines flowing down.<sup>170</sup> Meng zi’s “Flood-like Qi” is cultivated from this natural tendency of inclining towards Ren. So, it is also Wu Wei in the sense of lack of exertion.

In opposition to Meng Zi, Xun Zi was of the view that man’s nature is not good but evil<sup>171</sup>, so highlights the significance of self-cultivation. That is why Wu Wei in the sense of lack of exertion will be realized after arduous and long bitter training, as Confucius did realize it in his age of seventy.<sup>172</sup>

### 1.5.2. *Wu Wei in Daoism*

Wu Wei (Action-less Act) in Daoism is also not inertia, but implies fullness of activity. Lao Zi in chapter 37<sup>th</sup> of *Dao De Jing* said: “Dao never docs (never take action), yet through it all things are done.”<sup>173</sup> Wu Wei is discipline of Dao through which we understand the action of Dao.

The action of Dao is summed up in the chapter 40<sup>th</sup> of *Dao De Jing* by the word “Fan”<sup>174</sup> (Returning). “Fan” (Returning) being the action of Dao is one of the

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<sup>169</sup> Hongming, 355.

<sup>170</sup> Meng Zi, *Meng Zi* (Beijing: Zhong Hua Publishing House, 1960), 206.

<sup>171</sup> Xun Zi, *Xun Zi*, (Bei Jing: Zhong Hua Publishing house, 2007), 266 There is one whole chapter discussing evil nature of human.

<sup>172</sup> Edward Slingerland 217-218

<sup>173</sup> Lao Zi 75.

<sup>174</sup> *ibid.* 83.

characteristics of Dao. “(Dao) Changes not, eternally revolves without fail.” So, Dao’s action of ‘returning’ and ‘revolving’ just illustrates that all things are done by Dao. Dao does everything without taking any action, because “Dao never does” and Dao is unnamed and unchanging one. Thus described action of Dao can be understood as Aristotelian “unmoved mover” that itself is ‘unmoved’ but it ‘moves’ others. For instance, ‘pivot of the wheel’ does not move, but it works for revolving of the wheel by just seating in the very center in union with the Principle (Dao).<sup>175</sup> Therefore, Daoist Wu Wei seems like no action at all. Thus, we find Edward Slingerland and the translators of work of René Guénon rendered Wu Wei as ‘non-doing’<sup>176</sup> and ‘non-action’ totally<sup>177</sup> negating action, rather than doing things without effort and self-consciousness.

Wu Wei, the way of Dao thus defined operates in the universe as strengthening the weak and weakening the strong through its action-less act of “returning” and “revolving”. Learning the way of Dao from Wu Wei, man “return” back to “Su”素<sup>178</sup> (your simple self) and “Pu”朴 (original self) which are “what they can depend on”<sup>179</sup> through negation of excessive “desire”<sup>180</sup> that is motive of action, “intelligence and knowledge” which cause great artifice<sup>181</sup>, and “culture” of Zhou Dynasty which is external and inadequate.<sup>182</sup> In other words, man should “empty the container of the Self of all human elements, filling it with the Heavenly ones in order to follow along the natural tendencies of things”<sup>183</sup> rather than acquisition of knowledge and cultivation of Confucianism. “To follow along the natural tendencies of things” is the way of Dao, i.e. Dao follows “Self-so” that which is so by itself, therefore, Dao taking Wu Wei as its discipline leaves all things to their natural tendencies. In the words of Lao Zi “treat

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<sup>175</sup> René Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of the Oriental Doctrines* 423-428

<sup>176</sup> Edward Slingerland, 77.

<sup>177</sup> René Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of the Oriental Doctrines* 422

<sup>178</sup> Su 素: the unadorned, the uncultured, the innate quality; originally “plain silk background” as opposed to superimposed colored drawings.

<sup>179</sup> Yutang, 120.

<sup>180</sup> Lao Zi, 7.

<sup>181</sup> Lin Yutang, 119-120.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Edward Slingerland 210

things as straw dogs” without applying your subjective attitude of “Ren” (benevolence)<sup>184</sup>.

Man's subjective attitude is narrow in contrast to look at things from the stand point of Dao or Tian. The narrow views cause the conflict of good and bad, ugliness and beautifulness.<sup>185</sup> Therefore, man should see things from higher position of Dao in order to transcend the difference and the conflict. That is, to pass beyond all the distinctions and make all contrary opinions equally relative. It is Daoist ‘Equilibrium’. Confucian “invariable middle” (doctrine of mean) is said by René Guénon to be just a theoretical expression of Daoist equilibrium.<sup>186</sup>

In his famous article “Yue Yang Lou Ji” (Yue Yang Building Note) man of letters and thinker Fan Zhongyan<sup>187</sup> had an famous motto “I am not pleased by external gains, never saddened by personal losses” (Bu Yi Wu Xi, Bu Yi Ji Bei)<sup>188</sup>. This is an expression of equilibrium to some extent, because the writer was not concerning with his personal gain but much concerned about mankind. However in Daoist philosophy, nothing is at all important to be concerned about, but one should just follow Dao. Fortune and misfortune are also way of Dao, which has its own routine. Good fortune follows upon bad fortune; bad fortune rest on good fortune.<sup>189</sup> Masses only consider fortune as fortune, they don't understand fortune is also misfortune. It is only sage who knows it.

This Daoist view of interdependence of fortune and misfortune is expressed through a famous story. The story is read as following:

*There was an old man living in the border areas of China. Once, he lost a horse, but he did not seem worried. He was asked why he was calm, he*

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<sup>184</sup> Lin Yutang 63-64

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.47.

<sup>186</sup> René Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of the Oriental Doctrines*.423.

<sup>187</sup> Fan Zhongyan (989-1052) was minister of Song Dynasty, thinker, litterateur and social reformer. His theory of poetry was influenced by Meng Zi's concept of “Flood-like” Qi.

<sup>188</sup> <http://baike.baidu.com/item/岳阳楼记#1>

<sup>189</sup> Lao Zi 119

*replied that how can you know if this is not a fortune? After some days, the lost horse came back with some horses. The old man was not delighted. In replying the same question, he said that how do you know that this is not a misfortune? One day, when training those horse, his son fell down from the horse and got injured. When asked, he said that how do we know that this is not a fortune. After time late, the invaders from neighbor state came to the village for military conscription, but his son was exempted, thanks to his broken leg.*<sup>190</sup>

In this story, the old man understood Wu Wei, the way of Dao. For him, things in the world have their rout to follow, and men are also part of the world. To be happy when obtaining something or to be sad when lossing something is not wisdom. Man definitely seeks happiness, but the correct way is not to let your happiness repose on interchange of fortune and misfortune. However, it is “equilibrium” with which man transcends relative differentiation of good and bad, right and wrong and sees unity in diverse things. He then, by his detachment becomes *mas* 莫天上帝 莫天上帝ter of all things and is not affected by things even like life and death.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Liu An, *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (Collected Works of Liu an and Others) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997). 118

<sup>191</sup> René Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of the Oriental Doctrines*. 423.

## **Chapter Two: Mutual Perceptions of Early Confucianism and Early Daoism**

The mutual perceptions of early Confucianism and Daoism are studied to be discussed in this chapter in the light of the works by leading exponents of each school.

The leading exponents of early Confucianism/pre-Qin Confucianism in this chapter shall be Confucius, Meng Zi and Xun Zi, while the distinguished figures of early Daoism/pre-Qin Daoism Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi, Lie Zi and Gao Zi will be discussed<sup>192</sup>.

The mutual perceptions of each other of the two schools includes perceptions of personality and teachings as well, especially in the case of having being contemporary of two persons like Confucius and Lao Zi as recorded by Si-ma Qian's *Historical Records*<sup>193</sup>, Confucian classic of *Li Ji* (the Classic of Rituals) and Daoist Classic of *Zhuang Zi*<sup>194</sup>.

## **2.1. Confucian Perception of Daoism**

Confucius declared that he was a “transmitter but not an originator.” Confucius, Meng Zi and Xun Zi reviewed Daoism in the light of traditional moral values of Ren, Yi and Li. However, these traditional values were not unfamiliar to Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi and Lie Zi. Actually they all explained these according to their understanding of the same tradition though sometimes Daoism seems to be criticizing the tradition itself.

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<sup>192</sup> Gao Zi (420BCE-350BCE), his name was Gao Buhai. He is said to be a Daoist prominent figure. He left no work and his thought is recorded in *Meng Zi*.

<sup>193</sup> Si-ma Qian. 1703.

<sup>194</sup> Zi.346.



### 2.1.1. Daoism in the Perception of Confucius

According to professor Feng Youlan, Daoism passed through many phases. The first phase was represented by recluses who “desired to maintain their personal purity.”<sup>195</sup> Lao Zi said: “if the time is to strike, gentleman can practice his knowledge, otherwise, he can be recluse”<sup>196</sup> Confucius also discussed the conception of reclusion.

This idea of reclusion was praised by Confucius. According to *the Analects*, there were many recluses in the time of Confucius. Confucius mentioned seven in different places, he said “those who stood up and left (the world) are seven,”<sup>197</sup> “Men of real moral worth now retire from the world altogether.”<sup>198</sup> Thus, Confucianism not only highlights practicing and execution of his teachings, but he was also aware of significance of reclusion. Those recluses did not participate in the social activities, but still they had real morality. In other words, it is not true that Confucius only knew progress of practicing one’s teachings, but he was also aware of reservation of one’s morality which in Daoist term is purity.

As regards the meetings of Confucius and Lao Zi, related articles written in 1919-1936 were compiled in 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> volumes of *Debates on Ancient History*, of near 350,000-360,000 words. But even then, the controversy seems still intense in Chinese scholarship as well as in western scholarship.<sup>199</sup>

Homer H. Dubs has listed some occidental scholars who agree with the traditional view that Lao Zi lived before 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. These include J. Chalmers, Von Strauss, H. A. Giles, J. Legge, C. S. Medhurst, L. Gilcs. Hu Shih. I. Means, R. Wilhelm, E. V. Zenker, A. Forke, H. Hackmann, H. Maspero, D. Goddard, D. Goddard and H. Stadelmann. According this view, stories of the meetings of Confucius with Lao Zi recorded by Si-ma Qian, Zhuang Zi and other classics are acceptable because Confucius died 551B.C. Dubs has also mentioned some scholars who traced the dating to 200 -400

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<sup>195</sup> Feng Youlan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* 60

<sup>196</sup> Si-ma Qian 1702

<sup>197</sup> Qian Mu.278.

<sup>198</sup> Gu Hongming 459.

<sup>199</sup> Xiong Tieji, “Discussion on Thought Divergence Behind Debates of Lao Zi’s Dating (1920-1930),” *Journal of Three Gorges University* 23, no. 5 (2001)

B.C like Arthur Wale and Fung Youlan. According to the second view, meeting of Confucius and Lao Zi is not possible because Confucius lived 479-551 B.C.E.

Dubs agreed with the second view by his argument that Si-ma Qian in his book *Historical Records* mentioned son of Lao Zi whose name was Duan-gan Zong lived in 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.E. Therefor the meeting of Confucius and Lao Zi is an 'invention' of Si-ma Qian by combining two popular stories in his time about visits of Confucius to Zhou Dynasty and his meeting with someone later considered to be Lao Zi.<sup>200</sup> Derk Bodde doubted and criticized this view. Bodde said that Si-ma Qian has given genealogies to many of Lao Zi's descents and Si-ma Qian did not identify son of Lao Zi Duan-gan Zong with another person whose name was Duan-gan Chong lived in 273 B.C.<sup>201</sup> The research agrees with the above mentioned traditional view because Si-ma Qian's *Historical Records* is not the only historical records of the meetings of Lao Zi and Confucius. There are other Confucian and Daoist works, like *Zhuang Zi*, *Li Ji* (the book of rites) recorded the meetings.

Confucius praised Lao Zi by saying that "He is like a dragon. As for the dragon, I know not how it can be borne by winds and clouds and raise itself to Heaven."<sup>202</sup> In his elaborating the relationship of the internal dimension of Daoism and the external one of Confucianism of one and the same tradition, René Guénon refers to in his work *Introduction to the Oriental Doctrines* the meeting of Confucius and Lao Zi for reference.<sup>203</sup>

Confucius declared that "there are people who are born with knowledge"<sup>204</sup> but he admitted "I am not one born with understanding."<sup>205</sup> The knowledge that Confucius was born with according to René Guénon is "knowledge *par excellence* which is that of metaphysical and supra-national order,"<sup>206</sup> rather, "he was acquainted with traditional symbols but he had not penetrated their deepest meaning."<sup>207</sup> This view of Guénon is

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<sup>200</sup> Homer H. Dubs, "The Date and Circumstances of the Philosopher Lao-Dz," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (1941 Dec) 218.

<sup>201</sup> Derk Bodde, "Further Remarks on the Identification of Lao Tzū: A Last Reply to Professor Dubs," *ibid.* Vol. 64, No. 1, no. American Oriental Society (1944). 24 "The New Identification of Lao Tzū," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* Vol. 62, No. 1, no. American Oriental Society (1942). 9-10.

<sup>202</sup> Si-ma Qian, p1701.

<sup>203</sup> René Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of the Oriental Doctrines*. 420.

<sup>204</sup> Hongming. 476.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.* 394

<sup>206</sup> Guénon *Introduction to the Study of the Oriental Doctrines* 420

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid*

close to that of Guo Xiang and Professor Feng Youlan who hold that Confucianism is not very exalted, i.e. their spiritual state is not par exalted.<sup>208</sup>

Professor Liang Shuming in his work *the Essentials of Chinese Culture* expresses the view that Chinese traditional religious thought was rationalized by the Duke Zhou (Zhou Gong)<sup>209</sup>, Confucius and their contemporaries.<sup>210</sup> This view seems to support the opinion of Guénon that Confucius was acquainted with traditional symbols without having penetrated their deeper meaning. According to René Guénon, it is Daoism that inherited the metaphysical and supra-rational dimension of the tradition. Professor Feng Youlan is also of the view that “the spiritual realization of Confucius belongs to realm of morality” but is not limited thereto, rather “he seeks for higher realization which is ‘realm of Tian and Earth.’<sup>211</sup> However, the difference between the two realms is recognized by him. Therefore his philosophy is in compliance with “invariable middle” that it is to be realized within daily life, but not “extremely brilliant” that the reality to be realized is exalted enough, like religious concept of “otherness.”

### 2.1.2. Meng Zi's Perception of Daoism

Meng Zi expressly stated that he inherited his thought from Confucius. However, between two personalities there was a gap of more than one hundred years. They lived in different circumstances. Therefore, Meng Zi's thought was different from that of Confucius. Meng Zi has developed the thought of Confucius.<sup>212</sup> The difference between their thought is said to be due to Daoism.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Youlan, *The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy (Zhong Guo Zhe Xue Zhu Jing Shen)* 27

<sup>209</sup> Zhou Gong (?-1105 B.C.), His surname was Ji, and given name was Dan. Zhou Gong is his title, meaning Duke of Zhou. He was fourth son of King Zhou Wen and assisted his brother King Zhou Wu in destroying Shang Dynasty.

<sup>210</sup> Shuming 98,99,102.

<sup>211</sup> The realm of Tian and Earth is to accomplish spiritual realization in the whole existence. The whole existence is termed by Feng Youlan as “Da Quan” which lit. means great whole.

<sup>212</sup> Yang BoJun.10.

<sup>213</sup> Sun Yikai, “Meng Zi and Daoism,” *An Hui University Journal*, no. 03 (1998). 1. Guo Moruo considered Meng Zi's concept of “Flood-like Qi” as ‘stolen’ from Daoism.

Professor Sun Yikai<sup>214</sup> said: “Meng Zi’s concept of ‘flood-like Qi’<sup>215</sup> is developed from his contemporary Daoist theory of Qi.”<sup>216</sup> Meng Zi said: “Qi is to integrate Yi (righteousness) with Dao”<sup>217</sup> Guo Moruo<sup>218</sup> pointed out that Dao here is ‘stolen’ from Daoism<sup>219</sup>, i.e. Meng Zi adopted Daoist Dao to provide an ontological basis to Confucian Ren and Yi.

Meng Zi and Gao Zi had a debate regarding nature of man. Gao Zi defined the nature in question as inborn quality, not result of social moral education and training. It is like water which could move to any direction without a specification. Meng Zi said that water although does not incline to east or west, north or south, it naturally flows down towards. This is one of the examples how Meng Zi and Gao Zi argued about man’s nature. Gao Zi emphasizes naturalness and transcendence of human nature from any trace of man-taught characteristics, because man is also from Dao, so man by his nature is free from human ethical judgement, like it is seen in the infancy.<sup>220</sup> Meng Zi reminds us that we naturally feel pity when we see an infant, not to mention when it is in danger. He says: “Ren, Yi, Li and Zhi are my innate qualities, not received from outside.”<sup>221</sup>

Here we find Meng Zi and Gao Zi traced the nature of man to Dao and Heaven, albeit in a different manner. Meng Zi declared that he is the successor of Confucius and this has been accepted in Confucianism. However, Meng Zi developed the teachings of Confucius beyond the point the Master had left them. One of the developments in his thought is embodied in his ontological grounding of Confucian teachings, i.e. in

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<sup>214</sup> Sun Yikai (1938- 2007), professor of philosophy in Anhui University. He is a Daoist scholar having published many works including *Zhuang Zi Tong Lun*, *Daoism and Chinese Philosophy*

<sup>215</sup> “Flood-like Qi” is *Han Ran Zhi Qi* in Chinese language, which is described by Meng Zi.

<sup>216</sup> Sun Yikai. 5 Qi is a Chinese philosophical concept as complex as Dao or Tian explains how the cosmos came into the being.

<sup>217</sup> Yang BoJun. 66.

<sup>218</sup> Guo Morou (1892-1978), Chinese poet and historian. He published numerous books including an anthology of *Goddess* published by People’s Literature Publishing House in 1982, and *Studies of Ancient Chinese Society* published by the Commercial Press, 2011, etc.

<sup>219</sup> Sun Yikai 5

<sup>220</sup> Ibid. 3

<sup>221</sup> Yang BoJun. 259.

addition to live a good and right life, Meng Zi also tried to answer why to have the right way to live. This has been due to influence of Daoism.

### 2.1.3. Xun Zi's Perception of Daoism

Like Zhuang Zi, Xun Zi also reviewed all Chinese schools of thought. He claimed that all schools other than Confucianism were blocked off from Dao, "the great principle". They were so blocked because they possessed only partial knowledge. The method suggested by Xun Zi is that man should comprehend Dao by his heart as a whole and not partially through "emptying the storage of heart"(xu 虛), "concentration on one" (zhuan yi 专一) and by "making heart quiet and avoiding disturbance" (静 jing) in order to know Dao properly. From emptying and concentration, quietude results. Only when the heart is quiet, one can know Dao completely.<sup>222</sup>

Xun Zi's comment on Zhang Zi is that "knowledge of Tian blocked off Zhuang Zi from knowing man."<sup>223</sup> This is to say that Zhuang Zi knows well about Tian, but due to his focusing on Tian, the significance of man is overlooked by him. In the words of Xun Zi, Zhuang Zi should have let his heart "unite" the difference between Tian and man in order to obtain the whole Dao. Zhuang Zi's "knowing Tian and overlooking man", consequently led him to maintain that man should "completely follow Tian". Thus the proactiveness of human being is ignored in the Confucian realization of Dao, and that is the spirit of Confucius' saying that "it is man who can make Dao great, Dao does not make man great".

Xun Zi further criticized this kind of partial knowledge of Dao. He said "those who knew Dao partially harassed themselves and confused others." They considered their partial knowledge about Dao as whole, and they displayed it. So, this stopped them

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<sup>222</sup> Xun Zi 224

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.218

from seeking Dao as whole or real Dao. This is harmful for themselves. They present their partial knowledge to be the complete Dao, so people are misguided by them.

When discussing partial knowledge of Dao in different thinkers, Xun Zi did mention Lao Zi. Lao Zi's thought is discussed in an other chapter with a light criticism: "Lao Zi has insight about retraction, but not about stretching". Retraction indicates Non-action, stretching points to the activeness highlighted by Confucianism. Xun Zi recognized that Non-action of Lao Zi is a sort of wisdom, but he asked, that if people are not urged to "make Dao great" (proving their significance), how can we differentiate noble from wretched?

However, Lao Zi's Non-action is exemplified by the saying about Tao that it "does nothing, yet achieves everything"<sup>224</sup> Daoist Dao is non-action yet it also means not leaving anything undone. Actually, the activeness or action is defined differently by both schools. The main difference between is that Daoist Wu Wei is self-transformation, because things possess within themselves the correct direction which is De, while Confucian Wu Wei is political which means that the kingship is obtained not through competition, rather through abdication as it happened in the time of the legendary Emperors Yao, Shun and Yu, or it meant that the King should not get personally involved in dealing with court affairs but that he should do so through appropriate appointment of officials, or just through his moral influence.

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<sup>224</sup> Lao Zi Ch.37.

## 2.2. Daoist Perception of Confucianism

This part purports to study prominent early Daoists' perception of the teachings and notable characters of the early representatives of Confucianism.

### 2.2.1. Lao Zi's Perception of Confucianism

In *Dao De Jing*, we cannot find any comment on the person of Confucius however there are a few things about his teachings. It is recorded in Si-ma Qian's *Historical Records* that the two masters met, and Lao Zi gave Confucius some advice.

According to the record of Si-ma Qian, Lao Zi disagreed with Confucius on solving contemporary issues though having recourse to the ancient teachings. Lao Zi said that the teachings held by Confucius are of ancients who passed long ago. Lao Zi might indicate that people should

Some negative qualities of Confucius were noted and criticized by Lao Zi, for example "arrogance, desire, self-assurance and aspiration." Lao Zi said that these qualities do not help. In advising Confucius to not display his morality, Lao Zi gave an example of expert businessman who does not show his precious items to the world. Therefore, the noble man hides <sup>225</sup> his "moral perfection" under the veil of "foolishness." Lao Zi criticized Confucius's display of his moral qualities. Here we find

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<sup>225</sup> By hiding, it should not be understood that Lao Zi advises to have morality and hide it, actually he has his own definition of morality which is real but appears like empty of morality and even makes you laugh, like celebration of Zhuang Zi for his wife's demise. This idea pure morality free from whitewash is very similar to a Sufi school called (ملاحية), they were considered one of the highest ranks of Sufism, but they look just as normal people. This may be described by De, the real morality in terms of Daoism.

that Lao Zi criticizes display, insists on hiding one's moral quality. To explain further, looking from perspective of Daoism, noble man (Jun Zi) the real moral perfections always appear in foolish appearances so that it makes people laughing just like Dao, when normal people see it, they will laugh.<sup>226</sup> However, the philosophy of Lao Zi is not passive, rather, it is the opposite, Lao Zi provided his therapy for the social problems, in the form of "self-transformation and self-regulation through Non-action, clarity and quietude."<sup>227</sup> According to Lao Zi's philosophy, if people can self-transform, what is then left for Confucius to do? Therefore, Lao Zi advised Confucius to hide moral perfection and hide himself inside the masses when the time is not suitable to practice his teachings. After trying for restoration of the social order through his teachings for Ren, Confucius withdrew from political life and concentrated on education.

Lao Zi did not reject Confucian teachings of Ren and Yi altogether, but he said that there are things that should be highlighted and given priority over them. He said: "when Ren and Yi are abandoned, people will be filial and love."<sup>228</sup> He does not teach to abandon morality totally and thoroughly but points out that Ren and Yi are not absolute values, but there are other values which are higher than Ren and Yi, namely, De and Dao.

In advocating Dao, Lao Zi particularly criticized the last grade of Confucian moral value which is Li. Lao Zi said: "Li is the head of disorder, lack of faithfulness and sincerity" because in comparison with Ren and Yi of inner cultivation, Li is the forms of external expression. If inner cultivation is far away from Dao, external forms shall have nothing to do with them, but will be misleading of Dao, therefore, Lao Zi calls Li 'the head of disorder'.

From the viewpoint of Dao, the highest moral value of Confucianism Ren cannot find its reliance upon Heaven, earth and Sheng-ren (sacred man), because none of these three are Ren (benevolent), they treat people as useless.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Si-ma Qian, 1702. Lao Zi, Chapter 41.

<sup>227</sup> Si-ma Qian 1704

<sup>228</sup> Lao Zi 38

<sup>229</sup> Ibid. Ch 5



### 2.2.2. Zhuang Zi's Perception of Confucianism

In his biography of Zhuang Zi, Si Ma Qian said that Zhuang Zi's insights were too wide but his central ideas were attributed to Lao Zi. Zhuang Zi devoted three chapters, 'Fisherman', 'Break Open the Boxes' and 'Zhi the Robber' to criticize Confucianism.<sup>230</sup> As pointed out by René Guénon, after Lao Zi, the later great Daoist commentators such as Zhuang Zi and Lie Zi reacted against the narrow exclusivism of the late disciples of Confucius with strict criticism. From the comments of Confucius on Lao Zi, it becomes clear that Confucius was careful not to deny what lay beyond his understanding. Thus, Zhuang Zi's criticism was against disciples of Confucius and not against Confucius himself.

In the chapter, titled 'All under Heaven' *Zhuang Zi*<sup>231</sup> applying the standard of "inner sage-hood, outward kingship" examined Confucian teachings and concluded that the spiritual state of Confucius was that of a man of noble character.<sup>232</sup> The author of *Zhuang Zi* said that although Confucius was familiar with ancient the classics, the Daoist commentators Xiang Xiu<sup>233</sup> and Guo Xiang<sup>234</sup> were of the view that Confucius was familiar with ancients' teachings<sup>235</sup> but not with the essence of them. In the words of Feng Youlan it is the people of morality, not the people of Heaven and Earth. Feng Youlan divides people in terms of their spiritual state into three groups. First, the fools, second the nobility or the people of morality; and third, the people of Heaven and Earth, who are sages. The thought of a sage is more exalted than that of noble man.

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<sup>230</sup> Si-ma Qian. 1704

<sup>231</sup> The author of *Zhuang Zi* might have been a disciple of Zhuang Zi but could not have been Zhuang Zi himself as this was the case with almost all ancient classics, such as *the Analects*, *Meng Zi* and *Dao De Jing* that these teachings and sayings were titled with their names, but edited and composed later by the disciples

<sup>232</sup> *Zhuang Zi*. 583.

<sup>233</sup> Xiang Xiu (around 227-272), one of the seven sages in the time of Wei Jin Dynasty (220-420), one of the commentators of *Zhuang Zi*

<sup>234</sup> Guo Xiang (252-312), metaphysician of Jin Dynasty (266-420), one of the commentators on *Zhuang Zi*.

<sup>235</sup> *Zhuang Zi* 584

Confucianism claimed to be a continuation of the tradition. However, Zhuang Zi did not refute the tradition, rather, he highly praised it. He said: "How perfect the ancient men of virtue were!"<sup>236</sup> Zhuang Zi criticized Confucianism because he was of the view that it was also among those who could only see one side of reality. In the words of his followers, "Confucius was familiar with the marks of ancients but not with their essence."<sup>237</sup>

### 2.2.3. Lie Zi's Perception of Confucianism

There is a chapter titled 'Zhong Ni' (another name of Confucius) in the book *Lie Zi*. In this chapter, Lie Zi tells us about conversation between Confucius and his disciples about knowing destiny and happiness with the mandate of Heaven (Tian). During the conversation, Confucius redefined knowing and happiness as "no knowledge and no happiness" as real knowing and real happiness. Once this state is realized, there will be no necessity to leave or change the ancient classics of poetry, Rituals, Music.

Instead of explicitly criticizing, Lie Zi overlooked Confucian teachings and focused on Daoist philosophy.

The same chapter contains a dialogue between the Duke Shusun<sup>238</sup> of the state of Lu<sup>239</sup> and a Duke from the vassal state of Chen. The Duke Shusun said that the state of Lu had a sage whose name was Kong Qiu (name of Confucius) who dealt with affairs through signs. The Duke of Chen said that the state of Chen also had a sage who was student of Lao Dan (Lao Zi), he saw and heard without using eyes and ears, but through

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<sup>236</sup> Ibid.585.

<sup>237</sup> Feng Youlan, *The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy (Zhong Guo Zhe Xue Zhi Jing Shen)* 8

<sup>238</sup> The Duke Shusun (?-604 B.C.), one of the three Dukes of the state of Lu who were overriding the imperial court

<sup>239</sup> The State of Lu (around 1042 B.C. - 256 B.C.) was one of the vassal states of Zhou dynasty

quietude and emptying, he saw and heard naturally and spontaneously.<sup>240</sup> Later, this was related by King of Lu to Confucius, Confucius just smiled and did not reply.

This story indicates that according to Lie Zi, Lao Zi's teaching is more excellent than that of Confucius. Nevertheless, Confucius though not as excellent as Lao Zi, was considered in his time as perfect man.

Confucius was once asked whether he was a sage or not and he replied that he was not, even ancient kings like King Zhou Wen were not sages. In defining sage-hood, Confucius said that sage influences by doing nothing.

Here again, after negating Confucius, Lie Zi gives priority to Daoist teaching of Wu Wei. Lie Zi also emphasized the Daoist teaching of maintaining nature which is called De, the reality of individuals from Dao, or that is done by Tian (Heaven). He warned Confucianism not to damage the nature, because once the nature is damaged, Confucian teachings of Ren and Yi can not restore it.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Lie Zi. 109.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

## Conclusion

Different views on the relationship between Confucianism and Daoism aroused my interest in this topic and I decided to write my thesis about it.

In review of literature I discussed two points of view regarding this question:

- 1) There is a unity in the difference between Confucianism and Daoism
- 2) The two schools are completely opposed to and different from each other.

My research problem was to explore which one of these two points of view is more accurate. For that purpose, I studied selected common themes between the two schools in order to find out how they look at them. I have also tried to look at the way the two schools view each other.

I have found the first position more accurate in the light of the following:

1. Being the successors to the same tradition, the two schools have different perspectives. Therefore, they are essentially not in conflict. Most of the themes in both the schools such as Dao, De, Ren, Yi were borrowed from ancient traditions. Both schools emphasize the continuity of the tradition, and their different ways of continuing the tradition have been noted. Confucius promoted the spirit of rationality instead of preferring religious thought of Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties, whereas Daoism developed the mystical and metaphysical aspect of the tradition. Their different approaches to the key themes of the tradition show their different perspectives on the same thing.
  - a. The two schools approach Dao in different ways. Instead of relating Dao to its ontological and cosmological aspects, Confucius accepted the fact of the existence of the universe without asking about its origin. Rather he emphasized the proactive role of men in making Dao great. According to Daoism, Dao is not only the principle or the law of the universe but it is an entity which is different from all things.
  - b. Their different understandings of Wu Wei show their different approaches to morality. This also proves that their philosophies belong to different levels of understanding. Wu Wei, non-action in Daoism means absolutely not taking any action, yet leaving nothing undone. Since it leaves nothing

undone, therefore, it is still action. But this action is different from that of Confucianism. It is self-transformation in Daoism, because things possess within themselves the correct direction which is De, while action of Wu Wei in Confucianism means a way of politics which means that the kingship is obtained not through competition, rather through abdication or that the King should not get personally involved in dealing with court affairs.

- c. Confucianism considers itself a successor and reformer of traditional civilization. Despite its rationalization, it also accepted religious connotations of Tian from the previous ideology. Here we find out the difference of Tian in Confucianism from Dao in Daoism. Dao in Daoism transcends all things and all things depend on it and it does not have will, emotion and consciousness, unlike Confucian Tian. Lao Zi has described the reality of Dao as it is experienced, while Confucius accepted the traditional concept of Heaven (Tian) without paying as much attention to its reality.
2. The differences between Confucianism and Daoism maybe more than their similarities as noticed in many studies on the topic, but they may not be considered as contradicting each other. Rather the continuity among the teachings of both the schools must be noticed. Lao Zi criticized Confucian teachings by ranking them in the hierarchy of the traditional values as he understood them. Obviously, the fact that Daoism views Confucian teachings as inferior to its own should not be considered their denial. On the contrary, they have been accepted and given a place just after Dao and De.
3. The different ways of thinking do not necessarily imply conflict between the two schools as it is shown by the relationship between the masters of the two schools. Only their late followers criticized each other when they claimed exclusive possession of the tradition. However in excluding the other from comprehensiveness of the whole tradition, they admitted the value of the other.

4. Though ethics is the prime concern of Confucianism, Daoism did not just ignore it. It rather pointed to the higher values or the primordial teachings. Focusing on the moral teachings Confucius emphasized the proactive role of man in practicing them, but he aimed at higher spiritual realization or the state of Heaven and Earth rather than the state of morality. Here we find Daoism not concentrating on Dao or Tian (Heaven), but also concerned about men; Confucianism focusing on men, targets higher spiritual realization as well.

Thus we may safely conclude that Confucianism and Daoism although clearly different from each other in the way of thinking and focusing, are not essentially in conflict, but internally united.

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