THE LAOTZIAN AND CONFUCIAN TAO:
ITS CLASSIFICATION, ORIGIN NATURE AND FUNCTION

DISON HSUEH-FENG POE

I. AIM AND SCOPE

Albeit different in contents and opposite in direction, the respective tao taught by Lao Tzu and Confucius constitutes the cornerstone of their two systems of philosophy. What after all is tao? To be specific, what exactly is its classification, origin, nature, and function? By classification is meant how many categories there are of tao together with their definitive standards of demarcation. By origin is meant what provides the ultimate source from which stems the tao that man ought to follow. By nature is meant whether tao is fact or fiction, namely, whether tao exists in itself and by itself. By function is meant how tao operates (that is, if it exists at all) and what kind of effect it may produce. Concerning this fourfold involved and complex fundamental question as to what after all tao is, traditional explanations are, as regarding classification and origin, either vague, fragmentary or altogether metaphysical, and, as regarding nature and function, evasive, negligible or else merely laudatory or critical. To arrive at an inclusive, objective and thorough answer is, indeed, difficult, if not impossible. Yet it is worth an earnest attempt, bold and unorthodox even it may be. The writer of this paper ventures to submit to the scrutiny of interested scholars the result of his arduous pro\:\ing into the posed problem. One thing may be acknowledged at the outstart. This study is confined to the respective classics traditionally taken to contain the teachings of the two sages, and questions like authenticity or spuriousness, and possible erroneous omissions or additions of words, phrases or sentences are ignored.

II. THE CLASSIFICATION OF TAO

The investigation of the real whatness of tao may well begin with an inquiry into its relevant classification. The tao that Lao Tzu and Confucius whole-heartedly talk about is found to contain a threefold classification; and the standards of demarcation are the scope, order and subject matter of tao. (1) Concerning the scope, either extensive or limited, there are the integral or all-inclusive tao and the particular or piecemeal tao. (2) Concerning the order, either high or low, there are the tao of Heaven and the tao of man. (3) Concerning the subject matter, either theoretical or practical, there are the abstract tao (or tao in abstract principles) and the concrete tao (or tao in concrete actions). A clear, detailed understanding of these three classifications may be conducive to a fruitful exploration
of the origin, nature and function of tao. It is proposed therefore to examine carefully each of these groupings one by one.

First of all, let us take stock of the first set. The scope of tao may vary. It may be wide or extensive, and it may be narrow or limited. In other words, there are the integral or all-inclusive tao and the particular or piecemeal tao. The following passages are taken from the Tao Te Ching (the Book of Lao Tzu), the Chung Yung (the Doctrine of the Mean) and the Lun Yü (the Confucian Analects):

The tao that can be described is not the eternal tao.1

Tao is always thus: while doing nothing, nothing is undone.2

What is called tao is that which may not be momentarily departed from.

That which could be momentarily departed from is not tao.3

Man can enlarge tao; tao cannot enlarge man.4

In each case the tao spoken of is evidently the integral or all-inclusive tao, namely, tao in general or tao as a whole. On the other hand, when Confucius’ discussion concerns itself with the tao of the chiün tsu, the tao of the husband and wife, the tao of ruler and ministers, the tao of producing wealth, or the tao of the rise and fall of states. and the like, the tao referred to is partial and specific, namely, particular or piecemeal. Likewise Lao Tzu presents such kind of tao. For instance:

He who assists the ruler with tao does not seek world domination through the use of military force.5

The tao that passes through the mouth is tasteless. It cannot be seen. It cannot be heard and cannot be exhausted by use.6

When the superior scholar hears the tao he arduously endeavors to achieve it. When the average scholar hears the tao it appears to him as something and as nothing. When the inferior scholar hears the tao he laughs aloud; if not laughed at, it would not be tao.7

Those of ancient times who excel in achieving tao do not seek to enlighten the people but to keep them in ignorance.8

It is rather obvious that the tao that “does not seek world domination”, the tao that “passes through the mouth”, the tao that “the superior scholar....endeavors to achieve” and “the inferior scholar....laughs aloud” at: in each and every case it cannot be the tao in its wholeness; it can only belong to the particular or piecemeal category.

Next comes the second classification in connection with the comparatively high or low order of tao: namely, the tao of nature (or Nature’s tao), the tao of Heaven (or Heaven’s tao), and the tao of man (or man’s tao). As a matter of fact, the two terms of the “tao of Heaven” and the “tao of man” are explicitly and repeatedly used by the two sages themselves. Whether or not they are dimly aware of there being yet another level of tao, the tao of nature, it is hard to ascertain. But this much assertion may be warranted. In their statements where the phrase the tao of Heaven or of Heaven and earth is employed to describe unmistakably mere
natural phenomena and natural laws then what is implied is no other than the tao of nature. Since there is a twofold variation in the scope of tao it follows logically that within each of the threefold order of tao there are both the integral and the particular types. To verify that this is the case, illustrative quotations are to be furnished.

Let us begin with the tao of nature. "Tao", according to Lao Tzu, "produces one. One produces two. Two produces three. And three produces the myriad things."8 Again, "Tao produces life.... Therefore all things without exception revere tao."10 Here what is denoted is certainly the integral or all-inclusive tao of nature. For examples of particular or piecemeal "nature's-tao", the following sayings may be cited.

Supreme goodness is like water. Water benefits well all things without striving with them, and it settles down in places men despise. Thus water is close to tao.11

Nothing in the world is softer and weaker than water, and yet nothing surpasses water in attacking the hard and strong.12 Water is singled out for its virtue of meekness; thus water serves as one particular instance of the tao of nature. In the same fashion Lao Tzu takes as models for human behavior the quiescence of the female, the emptiness of the valley and the wholeness of the uncarved rock. All such are clear instances of particular, and not integral, nature's-tao.

Turning to Confucius, we find the same sort of subtle distinction. In the following passages the all-inclusive category of nature's-tao is referred to:

The tao of Heaven-and-Earth may be completely summarized in one statement: it affects things with no double standard and so it produces things in an unfathomable manner. The tao of Heaven-and-Earth is all-inclusive and all-deep, high and shining, far-reaching and ever-enduring.13

What does Heaven speak! Yet the four seasons pursue their course, and hundreds of things continue their production. What does Heaven speak!14 Heaven-and-Earth is marked by changes and transformations. The sages imitate them.15

Tao changes and evolves.16 Contrariwise, there are references to the individual, specific features of the tao of nature. Here are some of the examples:

This is the tao of Heaven-and-Earth. Untimely heat and cold bring about sickness; unusual wind and rain bring about famine.17

Heaven displays strength in movement. Accordingly, the chün tzu sets himself to ceaseless self-strengthening.18

When at the meridian, the sun starts declining. When full, the moon starts waning. Heaven-and-Earth shows alternate, timely abundance and scantiness, growth and shrinkage. How much more so must it be with man.19
It is obvious that the above-mentioned cases of "sickness", "famine", "strength in movement", "declining" and "waning" all definitively demonstrate the particular working of the laws of nature, or of the tao of nature.

As to the tao of Heaven, its cardinal character is implied rationality and moral value. It is verily the idealized tao of nature. Indeed, the distinction between Heaven's-tao and nature's-tao may appear to be hair-splitting; but as a rule it can be discerned after some reflection. Here is how Lao Tzu views the all-inclusive tao of Heaven:

Heaven is one with tao. Tao is one with eternity.\textsuperscript{30}

The tao of Heaven wins well without contention, responds well without speaking, attracts well without summoning, and plans well without hurrying.

Heaven's net is vast and wide; and nothing slips through its coarse net.\textsuperscript{31}

When Lao Tzu asserts that "it is the tao of Heaven to diminish the excessive in order to make up the insufficient,"\textsuperscript{32} very clearly this indicates only specific tao, because Heaven's tao is certainly not limited to—nay, it must be so very much more than—the one mere principle "to diminish the excessive in order to make up the insufficient". Another instance is this: "Without peeping through the window, one may see Heaven's tao."\textsuperscript{33}

Such classification applies just the same to the Confucian tao of Heaven. "In order to know man, one may not dispense with a knowledge of Heaven.\textsuperscript{34} Now a knowledge of Heaven must mean a knowledge of Heaven's-tao; but such knowledge can only be in the nature of the case partial, limited and incomplete. However, the scope of Heaven's-tao may be extensive to the utmost when it is asserted thus:

Constancy is the tao of Heaven.

All things concurrently flourish without damaging one another. All principles of tao parallelly operate without colliding with one another.\textsuperscript{35}

It is doubtless that the tao of Heaven as indicated in the above two quotations belongs to the all-inclusive class.

Lowest in order but greatest in importance is the tao of man. This is the very tao the propagation of which the two sages devote themselves. Man's-tao is considered either good or bad, either right or wrong, either ought or ought-not. Therefore it has a twofold subdivision: the proper tao (called the "great tao", or "positive tao") and the improper or mistaken tao (termed as the "not-tao", "anti-tao", or "negative tao"). There is always a marked contrast or distinction between the tao of man and the tao of Heaven. As already quoted from the Tao Te Ching, "It is the tao of Heaven to diminish the excessive in order to make up the insufficient." This sentence is immediately followed by another: "The tao of man is contrary to this: it is to diminish the already insufficient in order to augment further the already excessive,"\textsuperscript{36} Another passage runs like this: "The tao of Heaven benefits and harms not. The tao of the sages works and contends not."\textsuperscript{37}

On the Confucian side we find such statements: "The tao of man nourishes
governance.”

“The achievement of constancy is the tao of Heaven. The achievement of constancy is the tao of man….by choosing what is good and holding it with steadfastness.”

These quotations are given to show that the tao of man is distinct or different from—whether it is in accord with or contrary to—the tao of Heaven. It may be pertinent here to point out that ordinarily the single word “tao” does refer to the proper tao that man should understand and practice. Most likely, the implication is that whatever is bad, wrong or ought-not does not deserve such a dignified title as “tao”. Practically, however, the proper tao and the improper tao coexist side by side, and too oftentimes the latter is found predominant. Parenthetically it may be added that what is called proper or good and what is called improper or bad vary with time and place.

Of course, the tao of man also has its twofold scope, the integral and the particular. To illustrate, the following passage from the Tao Te Ching may be taken as to come closest to a description of the ideal all-inclusive man’s tao.

No exaltation of the worthy leads the people to no contention. No admiration of hard-to-get goods leads the people to no robbery. No sight of desirable wants leads the people to no confusion in mind. Therefore, in governing the people, the sages have the latter’s minds emptied, their bellies filled, their wills weakened, and their bones strengthened. The sages always keep the people devoid of knowledge and devoid of desires. Thereupon the clever ones dare not act. Through doing nothing, governance is attained.

On the other hand, the following advice contains some specific tao of man:

To know contentment is to avoid disgrace. To know where to stop is to avoid danger.

In the teachings of Confucius the implicit distinction between the two groups of man’s tao, the integral and the particular, also stands out in bold relief. Illustrations are abundant. For instance:

Wealth and honor are what men desire. If they cannot be obtained in accordance with tao they should not be acquired. Poverty and lowliness are what men dislike. If they cannot be disposed of in accordance with tao they should not be avoided.

Having heard the tao in the morning, one may die in the evening.

What is called a great minister is one who serves his ruler according to tao, and when finding it impossible to do so, he retires.

The tao of the chün tsu is threefold…. Human-hearted, he is free from anxieties; wise, he is free from perplexities; and courageous, he is free from fear.

All the tao mentioned above is unmistakably narrow, limited and specific in its scope. Indeed, almost all Confucius’ sayings concerning man’s tao are of this category: to wit, father’s compassion, son’s filiality, elder brother’s love, young brother’s reverence, ruler’s benevolence, minister’s loyalty, and the like. As for a
general description of the totality of man's-tao, it is rather difficult to find a satisfactory one in the Confucian classics. Perhaps two passages may be considered as approaching such a presentation. One is from the Chung Yung, ascribed to Tzu-ssu: "How great is the tao of the sage! Like overflowing water, it sends forth and nourishes all things and rises up to the height of Heaven." The other passage is from the Ta Hsüeh, ascribed to Tseng Shén: "The tao of Great Learning is to illustrate illustrious virtue, to renovate the people, and to rest in the highest excellence."

Let it be observed here that the all-inclusive tao of any kind—nature's-, Heaven's-, or man's-tao—is readily imagined but well-nigh impossible to understand and practice in toto. The very fact that man's-tao is narrow or wide in its scope may be said to have been tacitly acknowledged even in an indirect way:

The tao of the chün tzu reaches far and wide and remains secret. Common men and women may share in knowing some parts of it, and yet in its utmost reaches there is what even the sage does not know. Common men and women of whatever low calibre may practice some parts of it, and yet in its utmost reaches there is what even the sage is unable to carry into practice.

It can hardly be gainsaid that whatever tao can be known and practiced by the common folk must be of the easy and simple sort, and whatever tao cannot be understood and carried out must be of the subtle and complicated nature. Admittedly, even the sage does not know too much of the contents of man's-tao although he is sure of its existence.

One significant as well as interesting point deserves special emphasis. As has been indicated, the terms like the "tao of Heaven" (or "Heaven's-tao") and the "tao of man" (or "man's-tao") are sometimes used in the Laotzian and Confucian classics for the sake of clarity and stress; but even when the single word "tao" is used without any qualifying word or phrase it readily reveals within the context its own order, its own category. Let this point be verified by sample quotations. Here are three from the Tao Te Ching. "As a thing, the tao is elusive and intangible." This "tao" is the integral tao of nature. "Meekness is the function of tao." It is the particular tao of Heaven this "tao" denotes. And when speaking of "when there is tao in the world....(and) when there is no tao in the world", Lao Tzu must have meant the "tao" of man, especially what is being practiced by the ruling class. In the Confucian classics we find the same thing: the one word "tao" denoting some different-order and different-scope tao. "What is called tao is that which may not be momentarily departed from. That which could by momentarily departed from is not tao." This "tao" should mean the integral tao of nature. "Tao is not remote from man. That which is taken to be tao and found remote from man may not be tao." Here the first "tao" ("not remote from man") refers to some piecemeal Heaven's-tao, and the second "tao" ("found remote from man") some piecemeal man's-tao. Again, take at random the two following passages.
"The chün tzu is concerned with the seeking of tao and not concerned with the seeking of food."\(^44\) "Those whose tao is different cannot lay plans for one another."\(^45\) Assuredly, the "tao" therein is meant to be particular tao of man.

Now we turn to the third classification of tao, its demarcation line being the subject matter. Depending on whether the tao in discussion is theoretical or practical, there is either abstract tao (namely, tao in abstract principle) or concrete tao (namely, tao in concrete action). It seems rather fascinating to find out that such a classification does not hold good with man's-tao only; nay, it is also true with nature's-tao and Heaven's-tao. Take nature's-tao for instance. "Heaven dispalys strength in movement."\(^46\) This is tao in abstract principle. On the other hand, "the four seasons in their alternating progress and the sun and moon in their successive shining"\(^47\) demonstrate nature's-tao in concreto action. As for Heaven's-tao, jen and yi may be taken as samples of abstract tao whereas the springtime birth and growth of myriad things like insects, birds, grasses and flowers, etc., and the autumn-season harvesting and withering and decaying are taken to be concrete tao, the respective tangible embodiment of the two principles, jen and yi. Naturally enough, with man's-tao, the distinction between principle(s) and action(s) is all the more conspicuous.

Between the two sages there is a marked difference in their emphasis on and elaboration of these two types of tao, abstract and concrete. With Confucius, practically equal weight is put on both. With Lao Tzu, it is almost exhaustively the abstract tao that engages his attention. The foremost principles of tao that Confucius stresses are the doctrine of the mean, jen and yi, loyalty and forgiveness, and propriety. As to concrete man's-tao, samples abound in the Li Chi and Lun Yü, ranging from individual conduct to state affairs.

In making the annual state budget, planned expenditure should be based on estimated revenues.\(^48\) In using the people's labor, not more than three days each year may be required.\(^49\)

On the roads, men take the right side, women the left, and carts the middle.\(^50\)

Fish or meat that is spoiled is not eaten.... Meat that is not properly cut is not eaten.... While eating, there should be no conversation. While in bed, there should be no speaking.\(^51\)

In Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching, however, it is almost exclusively abstract principles that are dealt with. One specimen suffices: "Therefore, the sage avoids excess, luxury, and arrogance."\(^52\) Searching through the 5000-odd-word book, one may find only these several passages on man's-tao in concrete action. What should be avoided by all means are the "five colors", "five tones", "five flavors", "racing and hunting", and "hard-to-get goods".\(^53\) All these are harmful to one's physique and spirit. Again,
When great numbers of people are killed, there should be weeping over them with grief and sorrow. When victory is won there should be observed the rites of mourning.

On happy occasions procedure is given to the left side. On sad occasions procedure is given to the right side. Aside from these mentioned above, hardly any other instance of concrete man's-tao may be detected.

To sum up, it is relevant to observe that, in general, abstract principles of tao are more or less inductions of the same sort of concrete actions. Of course, once some moral principles are formulated and accepted, there are possibly deductions therefrom as to what should be done under certain similar circumstances. In comparison, abstract principles of tao that are employed to denote actions to be good or bad, right or wrong, ought or ought-not, appear to be more extensive in utility and more enduring in time; while concrete-action tao varies, shifts, conflicts or changes in the long-range view in the sense that the same similar actions are deemed at different times and places as good or bad, right or wrong, ought or ought-not. Anyway, an understanding of this third classification of tao into abstract principles and concrete actions also facilitates our investigation of the origin, nature and function of tao.

III. THE ORIGIN OF TAO

Having understood the threefold classification of tao, we are in a better position to tackle with the inter-relationship between the three tiers of tao and particularly with a reexamination of the origin of man's-tao. One statement in the Tao Te Ching reads thus:


Herein Tao is taken to be an entity by itself, and it is placed above Heaven and below Nature. It is difficult to make out why. One thing is certain though: Nature is higher than Heaven in the hierarchy. What is more, if we do not take the passage literally word by word in ascertaining its meaning the significant assumption may be this: Man models after Heaven, and Heaven models after Nature. In other words, man's-tao is grounded on Heaven's-tao, and Heaven's-tao is grounded on nature's-tao. One evidence is rather convincing. As has been seen, Lao Tze teaches man to be weak, yielding and submissive. This is man's-tao. Meekness, according to this leader of Taoism, conquers strength, if given sufficient time. This is Heaven's-tao. And his exaltation of meekness comes from his observation of natural phenomena or natural laws such as the soft water, the female sex, the hollow valley, and the uncarved rock. Such is the tao of nature. In this connection another interesting and thought-provoking passage may be added here, also a specimen of nature's-tao:
Man while alive is soft and weak, and, when dead, stiff and hard. All creature including trees and grasses are soft and fragile while alive, and dry and brittle when dead. Thus, the hard and rigid are followers of Death whereas the soft and weak are followers of Life.56

The Confucian view on this matter may be learned from the opening remarks of the Chung Yung:

The endowment of Heaven is called Nature (hsing). Accord with Nature is called Tao. Cultivation of Tao is called Instruction (chiao).57

In this brief passage there is so much wisdom and truth that it may be said to constitute a summary of Confucius' teachings. The Chinese character "T'ien" (Heaven) practically means nature—nature as a moral order. The word "hsing" (nature) is usually identified with human nature; actually it denotes the nature of all things. Cultivation (hsiu) includes both understanding and practicing. And instruction (chiao) covers teaching, education and culture. The above opening statement of the Chung Yung must be read together with the correct and expansive interpretation by Tzu-ssu:

It is only with utmost constancy that one can fully develop his own nature. Able to fully develop his own nature, one can fully develop other men's nature. Able to fully develop other men's nature, one can fully develop the nature of all creatures. Able to fully develop the nature of all creatures, one can assist the transforming and nourishing work of Heaven-and-Earth. Able to assist Heaven-and-Earth, man can achieve partnership with Heaven-and-Earth.58

According to this valuable commentary by Tzu-ssu it may be concluded that in the opening sentence "The endowment of Heaven is nature" the term nature certainly includes not only the nature of man but also the nature of other things. And the sum-total of the nature of all things cannot but constitute Nature writ large. Perhaps the opening remarks of the Chung Yung may be paraphrased thus: What is ordained in creation is nature; to be in accord with nature is tao; and to understand and practices tao means teaching, education and culture. Such an interpretation would mean that Confucius, just as Lao Tzu, ranks nature over above Heaven. It would mean in turn that Heaven's- tao is modelled after nature's-tao. If, however, one sticks to the literal meaning of the passage, taking "the endowment of Heaven" as constituting "nature", Heaven occupies the highest plane and nature's-tao has to submit itself to Heaven's-tao. This is an entirely open and controversial issue. The writer's reexamination of the question is rather bold and unorthodox. Nonetheless, the writer sincerely believes that the Confucian "T'ien" (Heaven) is merely idealized nature.

That these two sages should epitomize Heaven's-tao has its raison-d'être. They are dissatisfied with the social and political conditions of their times. There is especially in the ruling classes greed, corruption, lewdness, and ruthless domestic
power struggle (such as patricide and regicide) and among the states constant intrigue and warfare. So they alike seek the way of betterment in human life. It must have been their belief that a thorough transformation of human life both individually and collectively cannot rely on mere human will and wisdom but, instead, must be based on Heaven's tao. It is to be remembered that the belief in Heaven, in Heaven's mandate, in tao, and in the tao of Heaven has long been traditional before their times; this is evidenced in the Shang Shu (the Book of History). At the same time they must have keenly observed, wondered at and pondered over the diverse phenomena of nature such as the awesome sight of starry heavens above and embroidery-like mountains and rivers below, the faithful rotation of the sun and moon, of day and night as well as of the four seasons, the regular succession of sprouting, growth and decay of plants and of the blossoming and withering of flowers, the sharp contrast between land and sea and between mountains and valleys, and the periodic recurrence of flood and draught and withal of famine and pestilence. Lao Tzu and Confucius must have realized, each in his own way, that back of and responsible for these and all other natural phenomena—at rest, in motion, changing and transforming, apparently contrary and yet substantially complementary, always with an up-and-down rhythm and with an endless life cycle—there must be silent, intangible, yet constant and operative natural laws in which there is balance, harmony and order. Such laws are what the two sages idealize as "the tao of Heaven" (or "Heaven's-tao"). Viewed thus, "man's-tao" conceived of by the two sages is actually and ultimately grounded on "nature's-tao" rather than on Heaven's tao. This is simply because, to repeat, what is termed as "Heaven's-tao" is nothing more than an idealized set of laws of nature. Let pertinent illustrative quotations serve as verification.

We may start with Confucius:

Duke (Ai) said, "I wish to ask: why does the chün tzu value Heaven's-tao so much?" Confucius replied: "It is valued because of its ceaselessness, for example, like the ceaselessness of the sun and moon following each other from the east to the west. This is Heaven's-tao.... While there is non-action things are produced. That, too, is Heaven's-tao." 58

From this passage it may be readily seen that the concept of Heaven's-tao stems from the observation of some phenomena of nature and that, therefore, it is grounded on nature's-tao. Indeed, the above revealing passage may best be read together with another one already quoted before:

Heaven displays strength in movement. Accordingly, the chün tzu sets himself to ceaseless self-strengthening. 60

The implied reasoning here may be traced step by step. "Ceaseless self-strengthening" on the part of the chün tzu is man's-tao. What is its origin? Evidently it is founded on this particular Heaven's-tao: Heaven displays strength in movement." And what in turn is the origin of this particular Heaven's-tao? Well, obviously it
is based on some such phenomenon of nature "like the ceaselessness of the sun and moon following each other from the east to the west. This is Heaven's-tao." What is then called "Heaven's-tao" means now "nature's-tao". Again, another sentence in the above quotation from the Li Chi may also be read together with a statement already quoted from the Lun Yü: "What does Heaven speak! Yet the four seasons pursue their course, and hundreds of things continue their production."61 The relevant point here is that both assertions, "While there is non-action things are produced" and "What does Heaven speak!....and hundreds of things continue their production"—both taken as "Heaven's-tao"—are really idealizations of observed phenomena of nature and the natural laws thereof. In other words, Heaven's-tao is only idealized nature's-tao.

A few examples may be given in addition to what have been furnished:

In the first month of spring....the cutting down of trees is prohibited. Do not overturn bird-nests. Do not kill baby insects....There may not be resort to arms....And do not be at variance with the tao of Heaven.62

Therefore, in the establishment of Heaven, the tao is called yin and yang.

In the establishment of Earth, the tao is called softness and hardness. In the establishment of man, the tao is called jen and yi.63

In plain words, man's-tao, jen and yi, is verily modelled after softness and hardness. and further back, modelled after yin and yang. To conclude, we may quote this: "Therefore, in making rules and regulations, the sage must take Heaven-and-Earth as the origin."64

The same verification is found in the teachings of Lao Tzu. His most obvious and meaningful as well as most often quoted passage reads:

Reversal is the movement of tao. Meekness is the function of tao.65

What is more,

The soft overcomes the hard; the weak overcomes the strong.66

Just because anything that reaches the extreme returns to the original position so the mean, the middle course, should be taken. And just because the meek gains in the long run so it is best to be humble, yielding and without contention. It is evident that the tao of "reversal" and "meekness" is ultimately grounded on the tao of nature.

A summary conclusion is now in order as regards the three levels of tao. (1) The tao of nature is the way, the totality of natural laws, that all creatures inevitably have to follow. (2) The tao of Heaven is the way, the totality of principles that, according to the sages, all men ought to follow; and such way, such totality of principles is in the last analysis a set of idealized laws of nature. (3) The tao of man is twofold, either proper or improper. The proper tao of man is the way, the totality of principles and practices that, according to the sages, all men ought to follow, and actually are followed by some people at some time.
All contrary principles and practices constitute, in the eyes of the sages, the improper tao of man.

That man's tao should be founded on Heaven's tao is the fundamental and wholehearted belief and teaching of both Lao Tzu and Confucius. The two sages have absolute faith in Heaven's being possessed of tao. But, as to what exactly and detailedly makes up Heaven's tao, both are vague and neither is certain. Perhaps it is precisely because of this vagueness and uncertainty that leads Tzu-kung to have expressed something very revealing:

Tzu-kung said: "The Master's elegant discourse on moral principles may be heard. The Master's description of nature and Heaven's tao cannot be heard." The fact that Confucius seldom speaks about nature and Heaven's tao is certainly in line with his epistemology:

Knowing it is knowing it. Not knowing it is not knowing it. This is knowledge. As a matter of fact, not only Heaven's tao is difficult to fathom; even nature's tao is hard to uncover. Man with his finite experience cannot decipher all that constitutes nature, which seems to be infinite. (For instance, it is merely inconceivable whether or not there is a limit to the universe.) Turning to Lao Tzu, we find the same sort of difficulty concerning the understanding of Heaven's tao:

There are things that Heaven detests. But who knows the reason why? So, even the sage finds it difficult to understand. Doubtlessly, Lao Tzu admits that Heaven's tao is hard to fathom and perhaps even harder to describe in words:

He who knows speaks not. He who speaks knows not. Since the tao of Heaven is but the idealized tao of nature it is bound to be elusive and indefinite.

It has been a persistent traditional belief, especially on the part of Confucian scholars for over two millennia, that man's tao ought to be grounded on nature's tao. "The great source of tao," according to Tung Chung-shu (c. 179–c. 104 B.C.), "stems from Heaven. Heaven does not change. Tao, too, does not change." Ch'eng Yi (1033–1107) says: "Li (Principle) stems from nature, and so it is called the li of Heaven." "Heaven has such li; the sage acts in accord therewith: this is what is called tao." The version of Chu Hsi (1122–1200) is practically the same as that of Tung Chung-shu: "The root-source of tao stems from Heaven." And in the words of Wang Yang-ming (1473–1529), "Mind is tao. Tao is Heaven. To know mind is to know tao and also to know Heaven." So, throughout the centuries eminent Confucian scholars have maintained the conclusion—even though from opposite angles and through different cogent reasoning—that man's tao is based on Heaven's tao. It is certainly unorthodox (to say the least) to hold otherwise. Now to strengthen the writer's theme, let it be pointed out that the philosophy of
Confucius as well as of Lao Tzu is grounded on naturalism. Western scholars are fond of labeling Confucianism as humanism and Taoism as mysticism. These respective characterizations are apt enough, and yet the overall distinctive characteristic of the two systems of thought is naturalism. Of naturalism there is a great variety. With Confucius and Lao Tzu it is a kind of idealistic naturalism because both of them believe in the rationality and teleology of nature. Their idealistic naturalism is embodied in their theology, cosmology and ontology.

First, let us examine their theology. True, there are a few perfunctory references to the spirits in the Tao Te Ching. Categorically, however, there is no mentioning either of life hereafter or of some sort of divine guidance over human destiny. With Confucius there appear to be contradictory statements. While acknowledging “My praying has been quite a long time”, he also asserts thus: “Having offended Heaven, one has no place for praying.” Again, while saying “Make sacrificial rites to the spirits as if the spirits were present,” he also indicates: “While unable yet to serve the living, how are we able to serve the dead?....While we do not yet understand life, how do we understand death?”

What then should be done? Here is the answer:

To treat the dead as dead is lack of humanheartedness; this should not be done. To treat the dead as living is lack of knowledge; this should not be done.

One should serve the dead as if they were still alive. One should serve the departed as if they were still present.

Such as-ifness is idealistic naturalism par excellence.

Next comes their cosmology. Lao Tzu definitively has his own. It is very modernistic. Much can be read into the following passage:

There is something nebulous and composite. Born before Heaven-and-Earth, silent and remote, self-existing and unchanging, turning round and unfailing, it may possibly to taken as the mother of the world. Knowing not its name, I term it as Tao. Arbitrarily, I call it great. Great. it is receding. Receding, it is far-reaching. Far-reaching, it is returning....Man imitates Earth. Earth imitates Heaven. Heaven imitates Tao. And Tao imitates Nature.

Modern astronomy has ascertained the existence of millions and billions of heavenly bodies in outer space. Whether or not there are actual centripetal and centrifugal forces that interact so as to keep them in constant balanced relationship, these countless heavenly bodies are out there “self-existing”, “turning round and unfailing”, “receding”, “far-reaching” and “returning”. In describing the vast universe, Lao Tzu certainly has wafted himself beyond finite experience. If would be over-enthusiastic to take it as a sort of intuitive knowledge and far-fetched to see in it as an early theory of expanding universe. Maybe to ascribe to it a freakish flight of imaginative wisdom is not too much.
In the Confucian philosophy, which is primarily dedicated to the amelioration of human society, there is not much to be spoken of as a cosmology except that the theories of yin-yang and wu-hsing— theories apparently metaphysical but originally and substantially naturalistic—may be construed as one, dealing with the vital forces and essential materials in the composition of the universe. Then, too, the very lack of any hint at the divine creation of the cosmos is also an indirect evidence of a naturalistic viewpoint.

As for ontology, there is no discussion as such in the Laotzian and Confucian classics, but there are a few passages, even though originally not intended for, but most fascinatingly suggestive of something metaphysical, nay, something more realistic than metaphysical. In the Tao Te Ching we find:

Looked at and not seen, that is called Invisible. Listened to and not heard, that is called Inaudible. Grabbed at and not touched, that is called Intangible. That which eludes these inquiries is taken to be a composite one. Its upper part is not bright; its lower part is not dark. Unnamable, it continues to move on and returns to nothingness. This is called the Formless Form, the Imageless Image. It is called the Subtle and Elusive. Faced, its head is not seen. Followed, its back is not visible. Adherence to the tao of the old still governs the being (yu) of today. The ability to know the primal beginnings leads to the system of tao.82

All the things of the world are produced from being (yu) and being is produced from Non-being (wu).83

What is described above is the integral and all-inclusive tao of nature. The tao of nature as a whole is the totality of the laws of nature and not the totality of the phenomena of nature, which is visible like, for instance, the countless heavenly bodies seen with the naked eye or through the telescope. The totality of nature's-laws (constituting nature's-tao) is literally "invisible", "inaudible", "intangible", "composite", "the Formless Form", "the Imageless Image", and "subtle and elusive".

From the Confucian classics man be quoted two passages that are particularly pregnant with ontological implications. Indeed, a flight of fancy leads one to suspect that the totality of nature's-tao may be identified with what are now known as matter and energy.

The tao of Heaven-and-Earth may be completely summarized in one statement: it affects things with no double standard, and so it produces things in an unfathomable manner. The tao of Heaven-and-Earth is all-inclusive and all-deep, high and shining, far-reaching and ever-enduring.84

One yin and one yang comprise what is called Tao.85

In the first passage, "Heaven-and-Earth", as has been repeatedly pointed out, means "nature" to us moderns. Evidently, "high and shining" are the attributes of Heaven (meaning sky here); and "all-inclusive and all-deep" those of Earth. Space seems to be suggested here. "Far-reaching and ever-enduring" denotes time. The interest-
ing and provocative thing is that what is being characterized is not nature ("Heaven-and-Earth") but the tao thereof. To say that "it affects things with no double standard" is to reaffirm the constancy of tao; and to say that "it produces things in an unfathomable manner" is to indicate the creativity of tao. The implication of all this amounts to identifying nature's-tao as something ontological, the ultimate being or substance of the universe. And a little stretching of our imagination may identify such substance as matter. In the second brief passage the "one yin and one yang" that comprise tao and that give rise to change and transformation of all things may be likened to positive and negative electricity. If so, tao may be identified with energy. Actually, it is asserted thus: "In the establishment of Heaven, the tao is called yin and yang." Anyway, it would be sheer absurdity to claim that in these two passages there is an embryonic theory of the oneness and convertibility of matter and energy. But it does make some sense to assert that therein tao is suggested as something ontological.

To sum up, the philosophic systems of Lao Tzu and Confucius are grounded alike on naturalism. Because the two sages believe in the order, rationality and moral value of nature theirs is idealistic naturalism. The sole purpose of this section is relevantly to strengthen the thesis taken up in this paper that what is called the tao of Heaven is really the tao of nature and therefore the origin of man's-tao is nature's-tao.

IV. THE NATURE OF TAO

This section is designed to discuss the nature of tao. By the problem of nature is meant the problem of existence, namely, the question whether tao is fact or fiction. So, existence here does not refer to the metaphysical problem of being, substance, ultimate stuff or the elementary building block of the universe—even though we have suggested at the end of the previous section that we might read into several Laotzian and Confucian passages something ontological. The query posed by the present writer as regards the nature of tao is whether, according to science or common sense, tao is something that does exist. In plain words, therefore, whenever and wherever there is a thing or object, an action or event, a law or principle, there is existence. What is more, as there is a threefold classification of tao in regard to scope, order and subject matter, we cannot probe the exact nature of the entire tao; we have to examine carefully each category as to whether it is fact or fiction.

Inasmuch as every particular and piecemeal tao of nature is itself a particular and piecemeal law of nature it certainly exists. And inasmuch as the total and all-inclusive nature's laws, it, too, exists. For instance, this is asserted in the Li Chi: "Drink and food and sex, these are human beings' great wants." This, as nature's-tao of the particular category, exists; it is fact and not fiction. On the other hand, the statement that Heaven is round and Earth square is an untruth, a
fiction. So, we have to be on the look-out all the time. What is assumed or pretended to be the tao of nature may not exist. The pertinent point is this. Any abstract principle, referred to as wu (non-being) in taoist terminology, must be embodied in and verifiable by some visible concrete action or phenomenon; then it is ascertained to have existence. Otherwise it is mere fiction. However, the problem is not altogether so simple. Let a few relevant points be kept in mind. For one thing, a law of nature may have existed long before its discovery by man. Take for example the laws governing the wireless, the airplane, the atomic bombs, etc. So, the existence of nature's laws—and withal of nature's-tao—has nothing to do with man's knowledge or ignorance thereof. For another, all laws of nature are neutral, amoral. Of them nothing good or bad, right or wrong, ought or ought-not can be said. Why? Simply because it is up to man to make the choice. Life has its tao; so has death. The governance or misrule, the rise or fall of a regime or of a nation, each has its interwoven, complicated laws, namely, its tao of nature. At the same time it must be admitted that man has some degree of libertarianism in the choice and following of laws of nature in sustaining a healthy life, in achieving governance and prosperity of a nation. Furthermore, whether or not there is in the integral tao of nature a sort of teleology, that is a philosophical question incapable of either proof or disproof. "Heaven-and-Earth is unkind, treating all things as (sacrificial) straw-doge." This saying of Lao Tzu is neither fact nor fiction but a subjective evaluation of the teleology of nature (though rather contrary to his main concept of nature's-tao). Finally, what the two sages have observed are mostly natural phenomena and not natural laws even though back of natural phenomena the pertinent natural laws must be there.

Now let us examine the nature of the tao of Heaven. As regards the integral, all-inclusive Heaven's-tao in both abstract principles and concrete actions, with a unique and uniform set of virtues or qualities such as goodness, rightness and oughtness, does it really exist? Asking this question is like asking: Does God exist? The answer depends on one's faith in, definition of, and supposed evidences of Heaven's-tao or of God. On the one hand the claim for existence may be advanced on such evidences: young crows gracefully feeding their parent birds by disgorging, kid lambs kneeling down to suck their mothers' milk, dependable roosters unfailingly crowing at daybreak, faithful dogs keeping their night-watch, busy bees and ants fulfilling their respective cooperative duties by division of labor, and the like. On the other hand, the opposite view (namely the non-existence of such tao) may be as plausibly forwarded by pointing one's finger at the savagery and ruthlessness either of the struggle for survival in the jungles or of the struggle for power in the realm of politics. It can be readily seen that the existence or non-existence of Heaven's-tao as a whole is contingent upon the individual thinker's stand as to whether there is aim, plan and rationality in both animal life and human history. On this there can hardly be any concensus of opinion.
As to specific Heaven's-tao, the question of its existence admits of rather objective solution. Specific Heaven's-tao being idealized specific nature's-law, the "nature's-law" part exists, and the "idealized" part may or may not exist according as the idealization is or is not, as a rule, capable of being embodied in or translated into some concrete action. For example: "Heaven's-tao plays no favoritism. It is always on the side of the good man." This is idealized law of nature. That the law of nature cannot play any favoritism is a fact; that it is always on the side of the good man is idealization, indeed. There is a proverbial saying: the notorious brigand Chih enjoyed longevity whereas the virtuous scholar Yen Hui died young. Its insinuation is that there is hardly any heavenly retribution. Again, according to Lao Tzu, "Achievement of success, attainment of fame, and retirement from office: such is the tao of Heaven." This is another instance of idealization, and its existence is very doubtful. For possible illustration, one may, of course, cite the case of Chang Liang, the successful and renowned Marquis of Liu under the Han dynasty. His master, the empire founder (Liu Pang as Han Kao Tsu), became in his last years suspicious of his original, highest-ranking supporters and maneuvered to put a number of them to death for fear that after his demise the throne might be snatched away from his child successor. Chang Liang, however, managed to survive—by professing Taoist beliefs, by disdaining mundane affairs, by practicing abstention from cereals, and by pretending to be a follower of an immortal. But a case like this is very rare. Historically the reverse is true. After the establishment of a new dynasty many meritorious ministers are, as a rule, put to death on one pretext or another. Hence the old adage: With flying birds shot down, the good bows are stored away; with cunning rabbits hunted out, the running dogs are cooked up; with enemy kingdoms destroyed, the resourceful ministers are wiped off.

The same sort of idealizations is found in Confucian classics. Two passages suffice for our purpose. "Heaven covers all without partiality. Earth supports all without partiality. The sun and moon shines over all without partiality." While there is non-action things are produced. That, too, is Heaven's-tao. It is self-evident that these are certainly facts: "Heaven covers all", "Earth supports all", "the sun and moon shine over all", and "things are produced". As to the other portions, "without partiality" and "while there is non-action", they are fictions only. Yet, they are useful and beautiful fictions. Not all such fictions are necessarily beautiful to all parties concerned. Take the so-called "mandate of Heaven" as Heaven's-tao. This political theory is pre-Confucian. According to this doctrine, a new dynasty, a new regime, may claim its receipt from Heaven the right to rule. This may be suitable eulogy in certain cases of transference of political power. But to say that each and every regime change is ordained by Heaven is untenable, unfair. Many a regime is founded through treachery, slaughter and on brutal force. In such cases the following slogan is more apt and truthful: Victorious,
one becomes a king; defeated, one becomes a bandit. Anyway, idealization as Heaven's-tao gives rise to ethical judgments and corresponding moral actions. This leads us to a reiteration of what has been presented. The question of existence or non-existence of Heaven's-tao in abstract principles depends on whether or not given samples of concrete action (such as Heaven's covering, Earth's supporting, things' being produced) do embody and verify the alleged abstract principles of there being no partiality and there being non-action. Conversely, the question of existence or non-existence of Heaven's-tao in concrete actions hinges on whether or not the alleged abstract principles (such as filiality and faithfulness) are really embodied in and verified by certain given examples of concrete actions (such as young crows feeding their parent birds by disgorging, roosters crowing at dawn, and the like).

The last and most important problem is the nature or existence of the tao of man. Is man's-tao fact or fiction? The prerequisite to a satisfactory answer is the ascertainment of what man's-tao is. Man's-tao, in any given society and at any given period, is man's actual and ideal way of doing things individually and collectively, considered as proper or improper. Historically, concrete actions must have preceded long before the gradual emergence of abstract principles. Later on, as concrete actions come to be called good or bad, right or wrong, ought or ought-not, they become crystallized into ethical judgments and moral principles (both backed up by public opinion) and legal commands (backed up and enforced by coercive power). So, practically there is no concrete human action that is not pronounced as either moral or immoral on the one hand, and, on the other, there are no ethical judgments, moral principles or legal commands that are not readily applied to the corresponding human conduct that may occur. Based on the above summary observation (accurate, it is hoped), the following conclusions are made. First, tao does not exist in vaccum or as a sort of metaphysical substance. Nor does tao exist in complete purity or in complete impurity. There does exist in any given society at any given period the tao of man, both abstract and concrete, both specific and total, both proper and improper. The total tao of man is always and everywhere a mixture of proper and improper tao. Second, the tao of man spoken of here refers to what is accepted by society, that is, by the articulate and dominant portion of the particular society and thus it is embodied in customary and written rules, regulations or laws there. (Man's-tao as individually taught or pretended will be discussed in the next section on the function of tao.) The society-accepted tao (both regarding abstract principles and concrete actions) varies, changes and evolves over a long period of time. Third, the distinction between the prevalence of tao (yu tao, literally meaning presence of tao) in the world and the non-prevalence of tao (wu tao, literally meaning absence of tao) therein—both identical terms used by Lao Tzu and Confucius—amounts to the high or low degree and the wide or narrow extent to which the proper tao of man is being upheld.
and practiced, especially by the ruling class.

Another pertinent point is related with the abstract principles and concrete actions the *tao* of man concerns itself with. For the sake of brevity, let us confine to Confucian teachings. Herein *man's-tao* covers practically all phases of human life. Individually, it starts with pre-natal care; a pregnant mother's behavior (in deed and thought) may have permanent influence on the child yet to be born. Early educational steps consist of childhood chores such as sprinkling water, sweeping the ground, answering questions and the like. Serious learning starts with the six arts: rites, music, archery, charioting, writing, and arithmetic. A *chün tsu* aspires to take these steps: cultivation of the person, regulation of the family, governance of the state, and pacification of the world. Collectively, good conduct in the five human relationships is of paramount importance. They are the relationships between ruler and minister, father and son, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother, and friend and friend. Proper rites and ceremonies regarding matters such as marriage, burial, ancester worship and the like are to be observed. *Man's-tao* is vitally concerned with the understanding and fulfilment of the respective duties and responsibilities of the prince as well as of the ministers. It lays utmost stress not only on intra-state policies and measures like taxation, revenues, expenditure, administrative justice, and famine relief, etc., but also on interstate affairs like conferences, agreements, and war and peace. More will be presented on this topic when we come to the discussion of the respective contents of the Laotzian and Confucian *tao*. Suffice it to say here that the *tao* of man—both what is ideally accepted and what is actually practiced—does exist.

After having explored the nature of *man's-tao*, we may now add a word or two about its actual origin. Man has instincts and impulses by which certain things are done without having to be taught and learned. At the same time man has reason and rationality, with which he reflects, theorizes and evaluates. This may be how at first vaguely and later on definitively a set of *man's-tao* emerges. Man has to live in society; and somehow and anyhow social life has to have a set of common rules. Take for instance the need of and desire for food and sex.

Drink and food and sex, these are human beings' great wants.\(^{65}\)

The need of food and sex is by nature.\(^{66}\)

However, if the instinctive and impulsive need of and desire for food and sex is not restrained through reason and rationality, by moral principles and legal commands, the consequences would be far much worse than what is described in the *Book of Mencius* as "twisting an elder brother's arm and snatching his food" and as "climbing over a neighbor's wall and dragging away his daughter".\(^{67}\) The problem of food and sex calls for the emergence of *man's-tao*; and so does the struggle for power, position, fame and wealth. Since reason and rationality just like instincts and impulses are part of human nature they are part of nature itself, too. Thus, in probing the nature or existence of *tao*, we incidently find another
evidence that Man's-tao is grounded on nature's-tao.

V. THE FUNCTION OF TAO

The search for the nature of tao inevitably leads to the probing into its function. One overall statement may be made at the outset: only the tao that has its existence also performs its function. On the contrary, what is alleged to be tao and yet directly or indirectly gives no evidence of its function or operativeness is merely fictitious, non-existent. In studying the function of tao, the approach may be made through two avenues: one, to study the three levels of tao one by one, and the other, to study the contents of tao in successive order. The first approach is to find out how tao operates and the second what sort of effect it produces.

The tao of nature (identified with the laws of nature) always and everywhere operates of itself and by itself. In other words, it is automatic, self-operating, singly and combinedly; and there is action, interaction, and reaction. For example, bacteria may cause diseases; one's inborn resistance may overcome them; suitable medicines may prevent or cure diseases and yet may also bring about other diseases. All that is the functioning of nature's-tao. Again, the rise and fall of a nation is—oftentimes altogether contrary to the hopes and expectations of the parties concerned—necessarily the result of the hidden and complicated operation of nature's-tao. To repeat, laws of nature automatically operate of themselves and by themselves; here abstract principles themselves generate concrete actions and produce visible, tangible events or phenomena. In the physical world, sciences like astronomy, physics and chemistry have uncovered many laws of nature, neatly embodied in numerical and alphabetic formulas and equations. In the realm of human affairs, this is impossible because there can be no isolated, repeated experiments as quantitatively to measure and express the relevant laws of nature. Moreover, natural sciences deal only with how while social sciences usually also ask why; this further complicates the problem.

Concerning what is termed as the tao of Heaven (actually a chosen set of laws of nature), its function or operativeness is contingent upon the people's deep faith therein and actual practice thereof. The point is that Heaven's-tao does not and cannot operate of itself and by itself. Take for example filiality as Heaven's-tao. The Hsiao Ching contains this teaching:

Filiality is the invariable principle of Heaven, the ultimate standard of Earth, the primary conduct of man. It is the constant pattern of Heaven-and-Earth and it is followed by man.28

The tao of father-and-son relationship is based on heavenly nature.29 Such statements identify filiality as Heaven's-tao, but only in abstract principle. There must be concrete action of filiality so as to verify the function of the principle.

One's body, hair, skin and all, is derived from his parents. One dare not
have any injury thereof. This is the starting point of filiality. To establish one's own personality, to practice tao, and to achieve posthumous fame so as to glorify one's own parents: such is the end of filiality. So, filiality begins with serving one's parents, continues in serving the ruler, and completes in the establishment of one's personality.\textsuperscript{100}

It is obvious that only in some such concrete actions can the abstract principle of filiality be verified for its function. And over the centuries Chinese scholar-officials do endeavour to live up to such an ideal. Perhaps we may repeat one passage from the \textit{Tao Te Ching} as another example:

It is the \textit{tao} of Heaven to diminish the excessive in order to make up the insufficient. The \textit{tao} of man is otherwise; it diminishes the already insufficient in order to augment the excessive.\textsuperscript{101}

Here again we have an example of abstract Heaven's-\textit{tao}: "to diminish the excessive in order to make up the insufficient". From ancient times many thinkers favor such a principle, such an ideal. Granting that such is Heaven's-\textit{tao}, its function or operativeness may be regarded as initially verified only until there is in existence something like the modern legislation on graduated, progressive income and inheritance taxes and unemployment benefits. It may be concluded that only when abstract principles are translated into concrete actions can the function of Heaven's-\textit{tao} be verified.

Turning now to the \textit{tao} of man, we need take note of the most salient points. Since, as presented before, the \textit{tao} of man in both the abstract and concrete categories has its existence, so it performs its functions in both cases, too. But man-chosen moral principles, just as man-made legal stipulations, do not automatically operate; they cannot. Only those moral principles that have been socially accepted and continuously propagated and thus charged with emotion do become a myth-complex, a set of idea-forces. As such, those moral principles effectively function in the moulding and guidance of human behavior. Thus, "\textit{tao}" and "\textit{chiao}" (instruction and propagation) are inseparable. \textit{Chiao} has to have \textit{tao} as its basis and \textit{tao} must depend on \textit{chiao} for its operativeness. On the other hand, relevant concrete actions embodying and demonstrating certain moral principles may, when widely and continuously repeated, serve as a powerful agent in the upholding, deepening and spreading of these certain moral principles. Such is the way in which the abstract as well as the concrete \textit{tao} of man operates. And such is exactly how the principles and practices of filiality, chastity, loyalty, \textit{jen, yi}, propriety and the like are carried on over the centuries. What is described above as the function of the proper kind of man's-\textit{tao} applies also to the improper kind. The principles and practices of bribery, corruption, deceit, treachery, betrayal, treason, violence, aggression and the like operate in the same manner. Of course, such principles are neither propagated nor professed, nay, as a rule, even denounced by the perpetrators; but they are practiced so often and so much. Actually, continuous and abundant
practice is contagion. This is because "wordless instruction" (pu yen chih chiao) is often more fruitful than wordful instruction. It may appear ironical to say that the statement "Man can enlarge tao; tao cannot enlarge man"\textsuperscript{93} is true and applicable to both positive and negative tao (namely, yu tao and wu tao).

There is another important aspect of the function of abstract man's-tao. Its operation is by no means confined to the support and maintenance of the existing social order. Oftentimes, over a long period there gradually arises a new set of man's-tao the effect of which is to challenge, to attack, to modify, even to overthrow and replace the existing order in some or all of the different spheres of life, religious, social, political, economic, ethical and even artistic. Such a change or evolution is brought about also through abstract principles and concrete actions. What is more, during such a transitional period the traditional tao of man may in ways many and varied have its own malfunction, and yet malfunction is a sort of function.

Apart from the question in what way tao fulfils its function, there is the other prominent problem as to what kind of effect tao may produce. This relates to the contents of tao, especially the fundamental teachings contained therein. It is proposed that we examine and compare the respective systems of Lao Tzu and Confucius.

Concerning the tao of nature, the Laotzian emphasis is put on two principles: relativity and non-action. The doctrine of non-action has been sufficiently dealt with. By relativity is meant the ever-present duality in oneness: for example, long and short, high and low, before and after, easy and difficult, disaster and fortune, good and bad, yin and yang, being and non-being, compassion and courage, frugality and generosity, submissiveness and lordship. Here are the pertinent passages:

Thus being and non-being manifest each other; difficulty and ease complement each other; length and shortness compare with each other; height and depth incline toward each other; tone and sound harmonize with each other; front and back follow each other.\textsuperscript{104}

Disaster? That is what luck depends on. Luck? That is what disaster hides in.\textsuperscript{104}

Good and bad—how far apart are they?\textsuperscript{105}

Everything carries yin and embraces yang; these two vital forces blend into one harmonious whole.\textsuperscript{106}

I have three treasures to possess and preserve. The first is compassion; the second, frugality, and the third, no venture to lead the world. Compassion leads to courage; frugality to generosity; and no venture to lead the world to becoming lord of vessels.\textsuperscript{107}

Confucius, on the other hand, does not stress on non-action and relativity. He does, however, acknowledge yin and yang, thus admitting the waxing and waning, the growth and decay, and the cyclic movement of things.
As to the tao of Heaven (the idealized tao of nature), Lao Tzu holds these cardinal beliefs: "Tao is always thus: while doing nothing, nothing is undone." "Heaven's net is vast and wide; and nothing slips through its coarse net." "Reversal is the movement of tao. Meekness is the function of tao." With Confucius, Heaven's-tao centers on constancy, jen, "strength in movement", and "the full development of the nature of all things", repeatedly referred to already.

It appears that the two sages differ not too much on their concepts of the tao of Heaven or of nature. But their deductions therefrom as to what the tao of man should be are wide apart, indeed. There is neither space nor need to list and compare the detailed contents of their teachings. It is sufficient to make clear some specific, representative differences in their views and to point out their significant implications. The basic differences between Lao Tzu and Confucius are on these four items: jen (benevolence or humanheartedness), yi (righteousness or justice), li (rites, ceremonies or propriety), and fa (law). Confucius exalts all these four things in both abstract principles and concrete actions whereas Lao Tzu belittles and even condemns them.

Here is the firm stand of Confucius:

The whole set of li is what differentiates the grades of close kinship and distant relationship, decides doubtful and perplexing cases, distinguishes similarities from differences, and clarifies right and wrong....Moral virtues including jen and yi may not be achieved without li. Instructions, commandments and regulatory usages may not be provided without li. Disputes and lawsuits may not be settled without li....Therefore, the sage formulates a set of li to be taught to the people, enabling them to understand that by following the li man is distinguishable from birds and beasts.

How much importance Confucius attaches to these four constituents of man's-tao can very well be gathered from the above passage. Lao Tzu takes an opposite view.

After the loss of tao comes te (virtue or power). After the loss of te comes jen. After the loss of jen comes yi. After the loss of yi comes li. Li is the thinning away of loyalty and faith and the beginning of disorder.

When the great tao is abandoned there is jen and yi. When cleverness and smartness arises there is great hypocrisy. When the six relations get into disharmony there emerges filiality and compassion. When the state is filled with misrule and turmoil there appear loyal ministers.

Abandon sageliness, discard cleverness, and the people will be benefited a hundredfold. Abandon jen and discard yi, and the people will restore filiality and compassion. Abandon ingenuity, discard profit, and there will be no robbers and thieves.

The more prohibitions exist in the world, the poorer the people become. The more sharp weapons men have, the more chaotic the state turns. The
more technologies men develop, the more odd novelties are made. The more
laws and decrees are issued, the more robbers and thieves there are.\(^{114}\)
Indeed, all such denunciation of \textit{jen}, \textit{yi}, \textit{li}, and \textit{fa} seem to stem from this dictum
of his (both meaningful and meaningless, depending on how it is interpreted):
"The reason why we have great trouble is because we have a body. When we no
longer consider our body what trouble have we?"\(^{115}\) From these passages one can
see readily how the two sages conflict on the \textit{tao} of man.

Having noted their specific, representative differences, we must next turn to
the significant implications thereof. To the present writer, they reveal each sage's
fundamental stand, primary objective, main approach, and resultant ideal. For Lao
Tzu the fundamental stand is detachment or above-worldliness, and for Confucius
it is this-worldliness, namely, energism, amelioration and transformation. For Lao
Tzu the primary objective is the individual, especially the sophisticated individual,
while for Confucius it is the organized and organic society as a whole, including
the welfare of the ruling and the ruled, the rich and the poor. For Lao Tzu the
main approach is \textit{laissez faire} and non-action whereas for Confucius it is selfless,
public-spirited exertion by all concerned, each fulfilling his duty according to his
station born or acquired. For Lao Tzu the resultant ideal is the return to a life
of simplicity and naturalness, without contention or confusion, and for Confucius
it is an orderly, stable and harmonious body politic. The Laotzian utopia may be
found in the following:

Let there be a small state with scanty population. Though there are
plentiful tools and contrivances the people do not use them. Let the people
take death most seriously and refrain from distant migration. Even though
there are boats and carts they do not resort to their use. Even though they
have armour and weapons there is no occasion to display them. Let the
people return to the knotting of ropes as a means of communication. Make
good their food. Make fine their clothes. Make secure their dwelling-places.
Make them happy with their ways of living. Neighboring states are within
sight of one another. The crowing of cocks and barking of dogs may be
heard across the borders. And yet the peoples, from cradle to grave, do not
make mutual contact.\(^{116}\)

As a contrast here is the Confucian utopia:

When the Great \textit{tao} (way) prevails, the world community is equally
shared by all. The worthy and able are chosen as office-holders. Mutual
confidence is fostered and good neighborliness is cultivated. Therefore
people do not regard as parents only their own parents, nor do they treat
as children only their own children. Provision is made for the aged till
their death, the adult are given employment, and the young enabled to grow
up. Old widows and widowers, the orphaned, the old and childless, as well
as the sick and the disabled are all well taken of. Men have their proper
roles and women their homes. While they hate to see wealth lying about on the ground they do not necessarily keep it for their own use. While they hate not to exert their effort, they do not necessarily devote it to their own ends. Thus evil schemes are repressed, and robbers, thieves and other lawless elements fail to arise, so that outer doors do not have to be shut. This is called the Great Harmony (Ta T'ung).\[17\]

It is no exaggeration to say that there is in this ideal Confucian state the spirit of democratic socialism.

Such being the differences between the two systems of man's-\textit{tao}, the kind of function that may result therefrom can be surmised. In fact, their respective function is evidenced by the history of the Chinese people. The Laotzian \textit{tao} persuades man to practice, in particular, meekness, humility, tolerance, and contentment. These principles and virtues actually serve both as self-imposed restraints on one's conduct at the height of power, success and triumph on the one hand and on the other as self-comforting defense mechanism in hours of despair, failure and defeat. On the whole, the practice and effective function of the Laotzian \textit{tao} takes place with individuals and very seldom with governments as such. Only during the first sixty years of the (Former) Han dynasty is put into practice the "Huang-Lao" (Taoist) philosophy—mainly because the first batch of successive rulers happen to believe in Taoism and also because immediately after the founding of the new empire there is acute need of a reversal to the practice of Legalism of the Ch'in regime so as to give the people a respite. In contrast, the Confucian \textit{tao} is activism. It is social as it is pragmatic. It urges the individual to be a \textit{chün tzu}, to participate in public affairs, to serve the ruler and to promote the well-being of the people. Its fruitful function (and inevitably not without some malfunction) may be seen in the following things, uniquely Chinese and evolvably enduring: ancestor-worship and court etiquette; the family system; the governmental apparatus; institutions of examination, censorship and remonstrance; the nation-wide public granary system; standardized famine relief measures; the maintenance of a scholar-officialdom; the constant codification of laws, regulations and precedents, and the like—all approximations to the ideals of \textit{jen, yi, li, and fa}. Anyway the Laotzian and Confucian \textit{tao} in theory and practice is part and parcel of Chinese culture and Chinese life.

Finally let it be remembered that with the change of times and conditions—with monarchism turned into democracy, with isolation and self-sufficiency turned into the tide of nationalism as against the onslaught of imperialism and aggresion, with agricultural economy and capitalism turned into industrialization and socialism—the Confucian \textit{tao} in theory and practice has to be modified so as to meet the demands of a new epoch. Although the basic ethical judgments and moral principles may remain identical in terminology their meaning and function may necessarily depart from some of the traditional ways. The point is that we are
not interested in the exact, detailed effect the propagated \textit{tao} has had in the past but that we are concerned with what kind of function such \textit{tao} does have. And this also explains why the concluding section on \textit{tao} in general may not be extraneous but rather vitally relevant.

\textbf{VI. AMPLIFICATION AND APPRAISAL}

In the persistent groping after the fundamental significance of the exact \textit{whatness} of the \textit{tao}, both Laotzian and Confucian, the present writer realizes bit by bit and step by step that the involved problems of classification, origin, nature, and function apply, too, to the many and varied systems of \textit{tao} in the world. And, what is more, it becomes eventually evident that whatever satisfactory answers may be given these four questions for the two sets of \textit{tao} must be applicable, too, to the other major sets of \textit{tao} in the East and the West. Thus the writer ventures to submit the following points. (1) "\textit{Tao}" is the same as "\textit{ism}" and almost identical with "\textit{chiao}". Each of these three, \textit{tao}, \textit{ism}, and \textit{chiao}, has its proper and improper kind. (2) Each and every system of \textit{tao} or \textit{ism} claims something higher as its own origin. Each claim has its strength and weakness, its difficulties and perplexities. (3) The importance of \textit{tao} lies in its function and therefore in its concrete action. Yet the spirit, the motive and the goal, namely, the spiritual and intangible elements that go into the concrete action, constitute the inseparable ingredients of the \textit{tao} involved. (4) In any attempt at comparing and evaluating the various sets of \textit{tao} or \textit{ism} or \textit{chiao}, the prerequisite is the ascertainment of some objective measuring yardstick for appraisal.

First, it is asserted that "\textit{tao}" is "\textit{ism}" and almost identical with "\textit{chiao}". Literally, \textit{tao} means the way, the set of rules and principles for individual behavior and governmental undertakings. So it includes both the abstract and concrete aspects. What is traditionally called \textit{tao} in the East is referred to especially in the modern West as \textit{ism}. \textit{Tao} or \textit{ism} is made known only through \textit{chiao}. With any organized religion, any form of government and any system of economy, there must be its thelogy, its political philosophy, and its economic theory. In logic we can differentiate between the way and its propagation; but in fact they are the two sides of the same coin. Of course, what is taught may not be the original intent of the thinker. But who is to tell the difference? Now to verify their practical identity, two interesting cases may by cited. In China we speak of the work of Western missionaries there as \textit{ch’uan chiao} (literally, spreading teaching or religion) or as \textit{pu tao} (literally, preaching \textit{tao}, the gospel). So, \textit{tao} and \textit{chiao} mean the same thing. The \textit{tao} taught by Confucius and his endless followers is known in English as Confucianism and that by Lao Tzu and his disciples as Taoism. This helps confirm the interchangeability of \textit{tao} and \textit{ism}.

It may be objected that \textit{tao} and \textit{chiao} are not only different but sometimes even opposite. For instance, the \textit{chiao} (teaching) that the sun rises and sets is
far from the truth (the *tao*). Actually, however, this proves at the same time their practical identity because the *chiao* about sunrise and sunset had been taken as the truth for over thousands of years, and it was found mistaken only recently. In medieval Europe, Christians contributed gold coins and other things to redeem their sins—in accordance with the *chiao* of the church. In ancient China a prime minister was put to death in response to some ominous portent of Heaven—also in accordance with the teaching of the then learned scholars. In both instances how closely associated are prevalent *chiao* and the assumed *tao*. Anyway, *tao* cannot go far without *chiao*. Perhaps no illustration is more convincing than the need of *chiao* today in disease prevention and health maintenance. The maximum resort to timely vaccination, taking X-ray, checking breast-cancer, going through a physical each year, and so on and so forth: these depend on publicity and propagation. Thus, even nature's *tao* (nature’s set of laws) has to depend on man's-*chiao* for its utility. How much more so then must it be with man's-*tao*! Again one is led to recall the meaningfulness of this passage: "Man can enlarge *tao*. *Tao* cannot enlarge man."\(^{118}\)

Next, each set of *tao* in the realm of human affairs is claimed to be grounded on some super-human origin; and each theory of ultimate origin has its strength and weakness, its difficulties and perplexities. Few thinkers dare to say that their *tao* stems from mere human will and wisdom. Instead, all theorists prefer to declare that their *tao* or *ism* and withal their *chiao* is grounded on something higher: either the will of God, the purpose of Heaven, the ultimate substance of the cosmos, or the laws of nature. For example, the Ten Commandments through Moses are believed to emanate from God. The absolute hereditary power of the king is once considered as divine right. Today the Catholic Church's ban on divorce and abortion is alleged to be God's will. The eighteenth century movement for human liberties bases its claim on nature and the term "natural rights" is used. Utilitarianism, too, propagates that the seeking of pleasure and avoidance of pain is by human nature, and thus also by nature itself. Materialistic dialectics and economic determinism are upheld by Marx and Marxists as laws of nature. And so on nature, too, is Hitler's racism, taking the Germans as the master race. During the last decades of the Manchu Ch'ing dynasty thinkers like K'ang Yu-wei and T'an Ssu-t'ung, influenced by the then new Western learning, come out with a new interpretation of the central Confucian virtue "*jen*", identifying it with ether and electricity and thereby grounding man's-*tao* on nature's-*tao*. As to Hinduism, their different schools agree on one supreme goal, namely, the attainment of moksha, the return of the individual atman into the universal Brahman. Perhaps the best analogy is the melting of an iceberg back into the ocean, symbolizing the union of the Self with the ultimate reality. On the other hand, Buddhism believes in the impermanence of things; so its various schools unanimously hold out one final aim: the achievement here or hereafter of *nirvana*. All this is just to show
that there are different theories concerning the origin of the *tao* of man.

No matter what is taken as the origin of man's-*tao* there are always unsurmountable difficulties and perplexities. The divine-will origin theory seems comparatively foolproof. But many challenges are posed by skeptics ancient and modern. Which God is the genuine one? Why is Devil still there? In issuing commands, can God be arbitrary, or is He subject to absolute, constant and uniform ethical principles? If the latter is true then God is no more almighty because He has to submit Himself to something above him, the ethical principles themselves. As for moksha or nirvana, the respective different schools disagree on their meaning. If it is a state of eternal bliss then its seeking still is selfish desire. If it is utter unawareness, why should one bother? On the other hand, if man's-*tao* is taken to originate from Heaven's-*tao* the central perplexity is found in its non-prevalence.

The Master said: "I know the reason why the *tao* does not prevail: the knowledgeable ones go beyond it and the stupid ones do not come up to it. I know the reason why the *tao* is not understood: the worthy ones go beyond it and the unworthy ones do not come up to it. Nobody does not eat and drink. Few distinguish flavors." The gist of the above statement does not seem to run in line with what is definitively implied in another teaching previously quoted:

What is called *tao* is that which may not be momentarily departed from. That which could be momentarily departed from is not *tao*.

Finally, to ground man's-*tao* on nature may sound plausible. But it is not without difficulties. Theories may conflict as to what nature is regarding this or that human problem and also as to how there may be harmony between man and nature. Above all, the greatest perplexity remains here: neutral or amoral laws of nature belong to the realm of science whereas the *tao* of man primarily involves evaluation, which is essentially ethics and philosophy.

Still next, some reiteration and additional comments are called for with respect to the function of concrete *tao* of man. True, abstract principles have to be verified by concrete actions. Yet whether or not the particular concrete actions do embody the corresponding *tao* demands the closest scrutiny. This is because the motive behind, the spirit in, and the objective with, which the concrete actions are performed must needs be taken into consideration. Take the matter of filiality, for instance. Says Confucius: "Nowadays filiality means the support of one's parents. But even dogs and horses are able to do something in the way of support; — without reverence, what is there to distinguish the one from the other?" This bit of teaching is very illuminating, indeed. The amplification of its meaning should lead us to understand a great deal. For instance, even if the food, clothing and shelter of the people were taken care of by the state and yet at the same time the people were deprived of their liberty and denied the expression of their
spiritual nature and made tools of external aggression, then the very original purpose of their feeding, clothing and sheltering would be annulled. Again, if the people were let to have so much permissiveness as to be able to practice with ease mugging, rape, robbery, murder and other acts of wanton violence so as to make citizens afraid of walking the streets in broad daylight, then what the people have would be not liberty but licentiousness. Likewise, this bit of teaching applies to the signing of treaties and entering into alliances. Such acts might be done (as many times they were) initially in a contrary spirit and with an opposite motive. So, actions do not necessarily embody the alleged principles. Furthermore, in carrying out moral principles, seemingly conflicting actions may be required. Here is another passage on filiality:

Tseng Tzu said. ..."May I ask if a son obeys all his father's commands, is it filiality?" The Master replied: "What kind of saying is this? ... If a father had a remonstrating son he would not be involved in unrighteousness. So, when there is a question of unrighteousness a son must not fail to remonstrate against his father. How can mere obedience to one's father's commands constitute filiality?"132

It is implicit here that where filiality and righteousness conflict righteousness should have precedence. This is in accord with the old teaching that according to the principle of great righteousness one may even destroy his own kin. And yet we find that Confucius does not consider a son's conduct upright when he acts as a witness against his father, verifying the latter's having stolen a sheep. According to the sage, "The father covers up his son's misdeed; the son covers up his father's misdeed: and therein is uprightness."133 All these teachings point to one lesson: morality is not a rule by the thumb. There are situations and priorities.

As to what constitutes the proper or improper tao of human life, there have been changes many and varied in the different parts of the world. The problem should be studied and understood. A few examples suffice. The establishment of a state religion has been replaced by freedom of worship. Absolute hereditary monarchy has yielded to representative government. Sex equality is now taking the place of sex discrimination. And today's burning issues include abortion, birth-control, population limit, abolition of death penalty and the like. In the realm of tao there is always evolution. Naturally, there is much controversy, confusion and trouble in each transition period. This leads us to the last item, the search for an objective standard in the appraisal of the existing different systems of tao.

The problem posed here is not evaluation itself but whether there may be some possible standard with which to appraise the different sets of tao or ism that compete for adoption today. To begin with, it must be emphasized that mere temporary success, namely, some mere fait accompli, is no standard at all. This
is because while right alone can never overcome might, likewise mere might does not make right. Then, too, there is with the progress of time the development of and thus the difference in human needs and therefore the evolution of the tao of man. It seems that mankind always and everywhere, and especially in this nuclear age, seeks these five things: order, security, justice, welfare, and freedom. In other words, all peoples want the maintenance of domestic order, the security against external aggression, the administration of justice, the promotion of economic welfare, and the enjoyment of freedom in belief, expression, and movement. There are times and circumstances wherein one or two of the five objects demand utmost and immediate exertion, possibly at the expense of some others. Actually, there are priorities. Where there is no order there can hardly be justice. Where there is no security there can be little welfare. And what is the most important and yet the least understood is this: order and freedom appear to conflict and yet freedom cannot be enjoyed without order. Freedom is real only when there is freedom through law. How can there be freedom of speech at a conference if the parliamentary law of procedure is not observed? How can there be freedom of movement on the highways if the traffic regulations are ignored? Indeed, law and order is indispensable not only for freedom but also for security, for justice, and for welfare. In the present nuclear age what is sorely needed by all the peoples the world over is a well-balanced realization of order, security, justice, welfare, and freedom. Such should be taken as the goal of mankind today. The accord or conflict with such a goal, the promotion or retardation of such a goal, may perhaps be taken as the measuring yardstick for the value of any set of tao or ism or chiao.

The emergence of some such appraisal standard together with the formation of some such world goal will be a slow and distant phenomenon. And the realization of this phenomenon must depend on other component and complementary elements like the following: the step-by-step establishment of necessary institutions like a system of global population control, a world legislature, the codification of international law; the gradual and steady replacement of unsound ideas (such as class struggle, perpetual revolution, world domination) with sound ones (such as one world and live-and-let-live); the free and enlightened selection into high office of far-sighted and genuinely peace-loving personalities; and the cumulative building up of effective forces like a world public opinion and an international police. Toward all these factors, and toward the happy blending of a much-needed world tao, the teachings of both Confucius and Lao Tzu have, each in their own way, a great deal to contribute. Let it be observed that how to achieve is as important as what to achieve and that for any set of ideal tao, regional or world-wide, there can only be gradual approximation thereto.
NOTES

All translations in this paper are mine. I do acknowledge my indebtedness to many scholars, Western and Chinese, for their various English renderings I have consulted over the years.

1. Tao Te Ching (Book of Lao Tzu), Bk. 1, Ch. 1.
2. Ibid., Bk. I, Ch. 37.
3. Chung Yung (Doctrine of the Mean), Ch. 1, 2.
4. Lun Yü (Analects), Bk. XV, Ch. XXVIII.
5. Tao Te Ching, Bk. I, Ch. 30.
6. Ibid., Bk. I, Ch. 35.
7. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 41.
8. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 65.
9. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 42.
10. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 51.
11. Ibid., Bk. I, Ch. 8.
12. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 78.
13. Chung Yung, Ch. XXVI, 7-8.
14. Lun Yü, Bk. XVII, Ch. XIX, 3.
15. Yi Ching (Book of Changes), Hsi Tz'u, Sec. I, Ch. XI, 73.
16. Ibid., Sec. II, Ch. X, 64.
17. Li Chi (Book of Rites), Yüeh Chi, Ch. 9.
18. Yi Ching, Ch'ien Kua.
19. Ibid., Feng Kua.
20. Tao Te Ching, Bk. I, Ch. 16.
21. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 73.
22. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 77.
23. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 47.
24. Chung Yung, Ch. XX, 7.
25. Ibid., Ch. XXX, 3.
26. Tao Te Ching, Bk. II, Ch. 77.
27. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 81.
28. Chung Yung, Ch. XX, 3.
29. Ibid., Ch. XX, 18.
30. Tao Te Ching, Bk. I, Ch. 3.
31. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 44.
32. Lun Yü, Bk. IV, Ch. V, 1.
33. Ibid., Bk. IV, Ch. VIII.
34. Ibid., Bk. XI, Ch. XXIII, 3.
35. Ibid., Bk. XIV, Ch. XXX, 1.
36. Chung Yung, Ch. XXVII, 1.
37. Ta Hsüeh, (Great Learning), Ch. 1, 1.
38. Chung Yung, Ch. XII, 1.
39. Tao Te Ching, Bk. I, Ch. 21.
40. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 40.
41. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 46.
42. See Note 3.
43. Chung Yung, Ch. XIII, 1.
44. Lun Yü, Bk. XV, Ch. 31.
45. Ibid., Bk. XV, Ch. 39.
46. See Note 18.
47. Chung Yung, Ch. XXX, 3.
48. Li Chi, Wang Chih, Ch. XXIX.
49. Ibid., Ch. XXXVII.
50. Ibid., Ch. LII.
51. Lun Yü, Bk. X, Ch. VIII, 2, 3, 9.
52. Tao Te Ching, Bk. I, Ch. 29.
53. Ibid., Bk. I, Ch. 12.
54. Ibid., Bk. I, Ch. 31.
55. Ibid., Bk. I, Ch. 25.
56. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 76.
57. Chung Yung, Ch. I, 1.
58. Ibid., Ch. XXII.
59. Li Chi, Ai Kung Wen, Ch. VI.
60. See Note 18.
61. See Note 15.
62. Li Chi, Yüeh Ling, Ch. X.
63. Yi Ching, Shuo Kua, Ch. II, 4.
64. Li Chi, Li Yün, Ch. XXVI.
65. Tao Te Ching, Bk. II, Ch. 40.
66. Ibid., Bk. I, Ch. 36.
67. Lun Yü, Bk. V, Ch. XII.
68. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. XVII.
69. Tao Te Ching, Bk. II, Ch. 69.
70. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 56.
71. Ch‘ien Han Shu (History of the Former Han Dynasty), Vol. 56, p. 16.
72. Ch‘eng Yi, Yü Lu (Recorded Sayings), IV, p. 36.
73. Chu Hsi, Chung Yung Chu Chiai (Commentaries on the Doctrine of the Mean), 1.
74. Wang Yang Ming, Ch‘uan Hsi Lu (Instructions on Practice), I, p. 27.
75. Lun Yü, Bk. VII, Ch. XXXIV.
76. Ibid., Bk. III, Ch. VIII, 2.
77. Ibid., Bk. III, Ch. VII, 1.
78. Ibid., Bk. XI, Ch. XI.
79. Li Chi, T' an Kung, Part 1, Ch. LXIX.
80. Chung Yung, Ch. XIX, 5.
81. Tao Te Ching, Bk. I, Ch. 25.
82. Ibid., Bk. I, Ch. 14.
83. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 40.
84. Chung Yung, Ch. XXVI, 7.
85. Yi Ching, Hsi Tz'u, Sec. I, Ch. V, 24.
86. See Note 63,
87. Li Chi, Li Yün, Ch. 23.
88. Tao Te Ching, Bk. I, Ch. 5.
89. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 79.
90. Ibid., Bk. I, Ch. 9.
91. Li Chi, K'ung Tzu Hsien Chü, Ch. 4.
92. See Note 59.
93. Ibid.
94. Vide ante, the third paragraph of this section.
95. Li Chi, Li Yün, Ch. 23.
96. Mencius (the Book of Mencius), Kao Tzu, Part 1, Ch. IV, 1.
97. Ibid., Part 2, Ch. I, 8.
98. Hsiao Ching (Book of Filiality), Ch. VII.
99. Ibid., Ch. IX.
100. Ibid., Ch. I.
101. Tao Te Ching, Bk. II, Ch. 77.
102. Lun Yü, Bk. XV, Ch. 29.
103. Tao Te Ching, Bk. I, Ch. 2.
104. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 58.
105. Ibid., Bk. I, Ch. 20.
106. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 42.
107. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 67.
108. See Notes, 2, 21 & 65.
109. See Notes 8, 13, 18, 29, 46 & 60.
110. Li Chi, Ch'ü Li, Part 1, Chs. 5 & 6.
111. Tao Te Ching, Bk. II, Ch. 38.
112. Ibid., Bk. I, Ch. 18.
113. Ibid., Bk. I, Ch. 19.
114. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 57.
115. Ibid., Bk. I, Ch. 13.
116. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 80. Another passage may be added here: "Governing a big state may be likened to frying a small fish." (Bk. II, Ch. 60.)
117. *Li Chi, Li Yun*, Ch. I. Here I am using word by word Dr. S. S. Liu's excellent translation except that according to my preference I have changed the past tense (actually used in the original Chinese text) to the historical present.

118. See Note 102.


120. See Note 3.

121. *Lun Yu*, Bk. II, Ch. VII.

122. *Hsiao Ching*, Ch. XV.

123. *Lun Yu*, Bk. XIII, Ch. XVIII, 1–2. It may be interesting to observe that the following saying of Lao Tzu may perhaps be aptly used to describe the flexible application of concrete *tao*: "Great *tao* is all encompassing, indeed; it allows the turning to the left as well as to the right." (*Tao Te Ching*, Bk. I, Ch. 34.)
老子與孔子之“道”：類別根源性質及作用

浦 蕭 鳳

壹：目的與範圍

老子與孔子雖各自道其所道，但彼此均以道為其全部思想之中心，則不容否
認。究竟所謂“道”者，含義為何？此即包括下列具體項目：道之類別有幾，根源
何在，性質何若，與作用如何。易言之，“道”果可區分為幾種，本原本果何所自，
是否存在（即俠事實抑係虛構），又如何而運行並發生何種影響？對此四項乏辯複
雜問題，傳統解釋，或則付諸闕如，或則含糊闡斷，或則權利義貶。今欲求得一套
頗及全盤而客觀透底的答案，自屬不易，然值得大膽嘗試。筆者久加思索，願將一
得之愚，就正於高明。茲有幾點似宜闡而聲明：即本文研究之材料僅限於傳統認為
記載兩哲思想之經書，而且不遑涉及其中內容之真僞或字句之正誤。

貳：道之類別

吾人着手研究道之真相，首宜仔細分析道之類別。老子與孔子分別反覆所言之
道實均包含三種類別。其一，有關範圍之大小；此即為整個總括之道與個別零星
之道。其二，有關層次之高低；此即為自然之道，天之道與人之道。其三，有關
所指之實；此即為抽象原則之道與具體行為之道。明瞭此三種類別以後，則對
於探闡道之根源、性質及作用，當可迎刃而解。茲請分門別類，一一引證說明。

茲先述第一種類別。就道之範圍大小而論，有整體總括之道，有個別零星之
道。道德經中“道可道非常道”（章一）及“道常無為而無不為”（章三七），繼中庸
中“道者不可須臾離也，可離非道也”，或論語中“人能弘道，非道弘人”（衛靈公
章二八），此之所指顯皆整體總括之道或一般的道。反之，例如大學，中庸及論語
所述君子之道，夫婦之道，生財之道，君臣之道，繫治與國之道，此自為個別
零星之道或部分的道。道德經中如“以道佐人主者不以兵強天下”（章三十），
“道之出口，淡乎其無味，視之不足見，聽之不足聞，用之不可既”（章三五），”上
士聞道勤而行之”（章四一），或“古之善為道者，非以明民將以愚之”（章六五）；
舉凡不以兵強天下之道，出口之道，所聞之道，或愚民之道，其必為個別零星之道

35
而不可能為整體總括之道，無可置疑。

後次，有關層次之高低，道有三種：即自然之道，天之道及人之道。“天之道”（或“天道”）與“人之道”（或“人道”）兩種名詞，老子與孔子均曾使用。至於“自然之道”，兩哲雖未明白指陳，卻曾意會暗示，不著間接承認。蓋有時所稱“天之道”或“天地之道”，實指自然之道而言。道之範圍既有大小，故每一層級的道各有其整體總括與個別零星之類別。

老子云，“道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物”（章四二）及“道生之……”是百萬物莫不尊道”（章五一）：此指之道，當係整體總括的自然之道。在另一方面，“上善若水，水善利萬物而不爭，處衆人之所惡，故幾於道”（章八）；又“天下莫柔弱於水，而攻坚強者莫之能先”（章七八）：此蓋以水之柔弱為個別零星的自然之道。它若以靜性之“無”、虛性之“谷”、整性之“棟”，作為規範，亦屬部分自然之道之例證。以言孔子，中庸（第十六章，八）所載“天地之道，博也，厚也，高也，明也，悠也，久也”；論語（陽貨第十九章）“天何言哉！四時行焉，百物生焉，天何言哉！”以及易經（繫辭，上十一，下八）“天地變化，聖人效之”，與“道有動”：此皆整體總括的自然之道。至如“天地之道，寒暑不時則疾，風雨不節則穢”（禮記，樂記，九），“天行健，君子以自強不息”（易經，乾卦），“日中則昃，月盈則食，天地盈虛與時消息，而況於人乎”（同上，艮卦）：上述“疾”、“穢”，“昃”，“食”，分明均是個別零星的自然之道。

所謂“天之道”，其特點蓋在具有理性含義及道德價值。老子相信“天乃道，道乃久”（章十六），及“天之道不爭而善勝，不言而善應，不召而自来，繡然而善謀。天網恢恢，疏而不失”（章七三）。即此描寫當是全體的天之道。“天之道損有餘而補不足”（章七七）：此則指部分的天之道——因為天道決不祇“損有餘而補不足”而已。此正謂“不窺牖而見天道”（章四七），其所見者決不是天道之整體而祇是天道之部分。孔子亦云，“忍人不知人不可知天”（中庸，第二十章，七）。知天殆即知天道；所能知者不過部分的天之道。至若“誠者天之道也”（同上，第二十章，十八），即與“萬物並育而不相害，道並行而不相悖”（同上，第三十章，三）：則殆指整體總括的天之道。

層次最低而重要性最大且為兩位聖哲所思考之主題者，厥為人之道。人之道有善惡、是非、及應當不應當之分，故又大別為二。為便利計，吾人姑稱此兩類為正道（即“大道”或“有道”）與邪道（即“不道”“非道”或“無道”）。道德經中“天之道損有餘而補不足，人之道則不然，損不足而奉有餘”（章七七），及“天之道利而不害，聖人之道為而不爭”（章八一），中庸（第二十章，三及十八）“人道敏
政”，與“誠者天之道也。誠之者人之道也。……，將善而固執之……”，此皆陳明人
之道各有別於——不論其為抵觸或順合——天之道。兹有一點頗特別提請注意：即通
常提到“道”字，總作正道解。大抵因為苟非正道，即不屑稱為道。殊不知“盗亦
有道”。實際上確有正道邪道之分，但所指則可因時因地而異。

人之道亦自有其範圍之大小。道德經第三章殆最接近整體總括的人之道，其辭
如下。“不尚賢，使民不爭。不貴難得之貨，使民不為盜，不見可欲，使心不亂。
是以聖人之治，虛其心，實其腹，弱其志，強其骨，常使無知無欲，使夫知者不敢
為也。為無為，則無不治。”至於例如“知足不辱，知止不殆”（章四四），則顯係個
別零星的人之道。就孔子言之，下列引句均是指陳個別零星之道。“富與貴是人之
所欲也，不以其道得之，不處也。貧與賤是人之所惡，不以其道得之，不去也。”
(論語里仁，宰我五)“朝聞道，夕死可矣。”(同上，有子)“所謂大臣者，以道事
君，不可則止。”(同上，先進，章廿三)“君子道者三……仁者不愛，智者不恥，
勇者不懼。”(同上，八佾，章三十)其餘如父慈、子孝、兄愛、弟敬等等，無一非
個別零星的人之道。子思所謂“大哉聖人之道，洋洋乎發蔚萬物，峻極於天”(中
庸第廿七章)，論大學開端“大學之道，在明明德，在親民，在止於至善”，此則
代表孔子心目中整體總括的人之道。整體總括的道（不論其為自然之道，天之道或
人之道）容易想像，卻難從全知。人道之可區分為整體與個別，其最好暗示在是：
“君子之道，貴而隱；夫婦之愚可以與知焉，及其至也，雖聖人亦有所不知焉；夫
婦之不肖可以能行焉，及其至也，雖聖人亦有所不能焉。”(中庸第十二章)凡夫
婦之愚與不肖，尚且可知而能行者，必然為個別零星而簡易淺顯的“君子之道”。
至於艱難奧秘的“君子之道”，雖聖人亦有所不知不能。是則整體總括的人之道，
雖可大略想像而甚難全知。

關於道之層次高低，僅僅一個人“道”字即已含有個別，初不必另加標明。此點
殊值注意。茲請略舉數例。“道之為物惟恍惟惚。”(道德經，章廿一)此“道”僅
整體的自然之道。“反者道之動，弱者道之用。”(同上，章四十)此“道”當指天
之道，固像觀察自然現象而加以理想化。至於所指“天下有道，……天下無道”(同
上，章四六)自指一般流行的人之道。試再檢討孔子之訓示，亦復如是。“道不可
須臾離也，可離非道也。”(見前)此“道”乃一切自然之道。“道不遠人，人之
為道而遠人，不可以為道。”(中庸第十三章，一)“道不遠人”之“道”乃是天
之道；“人之為道”及“不可以為道”則指人之“道”。例如論語(衛靈公，章卅一
及卅九)“君子謀道不謀食……君子憂道不憂貧”之“道”，及“道不同不相為謀”
之“道”，其屬個別零星的人之道，更不言而喻。
第三種類別乃以道之虛實為分野。虛者乃抽象原則，實者乃具體行為。以故，有抽象原則之道，有具體行為之道。抽象與具體，亦即原則與行為，此二者當分清諸人之道，即在自然之道或天之道中，亦可尋得。以言自然，例如“天行健”此是抽象原則，而“四時之循行”，“日月之代明”則是具體行動。以言天，仁義為抽象原則，而春生秋殺則是具體表現。以言人，則人道有抽象與具體之分，自更明顯。

孔子說道，兼重虛實兩面。老子則不言重原則。孔子之最大原則莫過於“忠”及“仁義”“忠恕”與“禮”。禮記與論語所提之具體行為之道，屢見於此。大之如“制國用，壹入以為出”，及“用民之力不煩三日”（禮記，王制，二九與三七）；小之如“道路男子由右，婦人由左，卒從中央”（同上，二二）及“魚餌而肉敗不食，穀不正不食，食不語，寝不言”（論語，鄉黨第八章，二，三及九）；此皆屬於具體行為的人之道。老子之“無為”與“去甚去奢去泰”（幸廿九）等等盡是抽象原則。五千餘言之道德經僅有下列數段勉強可作具體行為方面之論：有害人身之“五色”、“五音”，“五味”，“駭囂田獵”及“難得之貨”務宜屏除。（幸十二）“殺人眾多以悲哀泣之。戰勝則以喪禮處之。”“吉事尚左，凶事尚右。”（幸三一）

總而言之，人之道之抽象原則大抵均具具體行為措施歸納出來。當然，抽象原則流行以後，也可從中抽釋出若干應有的具體行為。比較言之，為善為惡，為真為假的抽象原則，似屬顛撲不破，可能用義而持久；而具體行為之為善為惡，為真為假則易有紛歧變化。吾人深切認識此第三種“道”之類別，當亦有助於探開道之本源，性質與作用。

卷：道之根源

吾人既知“道”之層次類別，當易探討其間相互關係以及道——特別是人之道——之真實根源。

道統經中下列一段對於道之層次高低指陳明確。“人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。”（幸廿五）此處把“道”作一獨立單位，放在天之上，自然之下，自屬合理，但其認為自然高過於天，則無疑問。吾人如不刻舟求劍，以詞害義，則其段文字之要旨當為人法天，天法自然，亦即人之道本於天之道，天之道本於自然之道。老子尊重“柔弱”而本之於“水”、“雌”、“谷”、“樸”各自然現象，前已引述；茲再補充一段（幸七六）。“人之生也柔弱，其死也堅強。萬物草木之生也柔脆，其死也枯槁。故堅強者死之徒，柔弱者生之徒。”此可證明“柔弱”人之道實本於自
然之道。

中庸開端即云："天命之謂性，率性之謂道，修道之謂教。" 此中"性"字通常作"人"性解，然亦未始不可包括"物"性。以"性"一字總括一切人與物（人類與萬物）之性，其最好證據乃在中庸所載子思之引伸解釋："惟天下至誠為能盡其性，能盡其性則能盡人之性，能盡人之性則能盡物之性，能盡物之性則可以贊天地之化育。可以贊天地之化育則可以與天地參矣。" （第廿二章）由此以觀，"性"乃本性，乃指人類與萬物之本性，而人類與萬物之本性之總和，當即是整個自然。因自然而盡即遵循自然之道。 "天下至誠"能使一切遵循自然之道，則實即贊助自然（"天地"）之化育而與自然融合。依此，則中庸開端云云，其委旨在是：造化所定，乃是自然；遵循自然，乃是道理；研鑽道理，乃是教化。照此解釋，孔子如老子，將自然之道放在天之道之上。反之，吾人若將性解作自然，而對於"天命之謂性"之"天命"，望文生義，拘泥字面，則孔子殆認為天在自然之上，天之道在自然之道之上。惟筆者深信孔子當時所指之"天"（或"天地"），在今日言之，當即指自然。

老子與孔子之所以尊重天道自亦有其原因。此兩聖哲對於其身經目擊之政治社會——貪淫殘暴，戰亂吞併——深感不滿，因而思考如何徹底改善之途徑。他們必曾深信徹底改善不能僅憑人之智慧與意志而必本諸"天"，"天命"，與"天道"。（此項傳統信念，在尚書中記載甚多。）他們對於各項自然現象，例如日月代明，星辰渦動，風雨雷電，四時更替，乃至高山深谷，花草榮枯，必曾深刻觀察與反覆思索，而且領悟到種種切切動靜變化，相反相成，循環起伏，生生不息的自然現象，其背後，必有其無形無形的自然法則與夫一套長期觀點的平衡和諧合中庸秩序。凡此自然規律亦即自然之道——在兩位哲人則稱之為天之法則，亦即天之道——應知為人羣生活與社會法制之本原。因此之故，人之道之真實根源，與其謂為在天地，毋寧謂為在自然，在理想化的自然規律。茲略引兩哲之垂訓以資佐證。

記（哀公問）有此一段問答："（哀）公曰，敢問君子何貴乎天道也？孔子對曰：貴其不已，如日月東西相從而不已也，是天道也。不開其久，是天道也。無為而物成，是天道也。已成而明，是天道也。" 可見天道概念本於自然現象。前曾引用易經二句"天行健、君子以自強不息。" "自強不息"是人之道。此處所指日月東西相從而不已，分明就是理想化的"天行健"之本原。"天"指"自然"，顯而易見。又此處所稱"無為而物成"可與前曾引述（論語）"天何言哉！四時行也，百物生也。天何言哉！" 比照。蓋"無為"與"天何言哉"同是自然現象之理想化。再舉一例。每到春天，萬物滋生：此是自然現象，包含自然規律或自然之道，加以
理想化，則可稱為天之道。因為人之道應該本於天之道，故《禮記·月令篇》有此一段：
“孟春之月……禁止伐木，毋覆巢，毋殺孩蟲……不可以稱兵……毋變天之道。”
易經說卦有之：“是以立天之道曰陰與陽，立地之道曰柔與剛，立人之道曰仁與義。”
此乃以仁義本於柔剛，且本於陰陽。易經說之，此乃以人之道仁義，本於理想化的自然規律陰陽。綜觀之，《禮記·月令篇》“故聖人作則必以天地為本”，其中所
稱天地實即若干（個別零星）自然規律之理想化。以言老子，則人之道之應當本於
理想化的自然規律，更屬顯然。其尤著者當推“反者道之動，弱者道之用”（見前）
之訓示。因為物極必反故宜守中。因為“柔勝剛，弱勝強”（道徳經，第八十六），
故尚謙遜而不爭。而“反”與“弱”之為“道”均本於自然規律而加以理想化。此
在上節道之理中已有充分說明，茲不多贅。

概括言之，層次分類之理，其客觀意義可作結論如下。（一）自然之道乃是自
然規律，即宇宙間一切人物事物所必由之理路。（二）天之道乃是聖哲認為人羣生
活與社會制度所應由之理路，實則乃是若干理想化的自然規律。（三）人之道為別為
二：即正道與邪道。正道者云，乃是指哲所認為一切人羣（包括治者與被治者）所
應遵循，而且部分人羣有時實際遵循之理路。凡反背哲學所訓示者，即為邪道。不
論正道與邪道，均可計諸行為措施及納入習俗法制。

人之道之應本於天之道，此固老子與孔子所共同強調；但對於天之道之內容究
竟，似祇體會到一鱗半爪，而且有時殊感渺茫。大概普遍此之故，子貢曾經吐露如下：
“夫子之言性与天道，不可得而聞也。”（論語，公治長，章十二）孔子少談天道
殆亦表示“知之為知之，不知為不知，是知也”（同上，為政，章十七）的精神。
其實，不特哲學家難知天之道，即今日之科學家亦難知天之道，例如宇宙之如何
開始及宇宙之有無終境，殊非經驗有限之人生所能想像。老子亦云，“天之所惡，
孰知其故，是以聖人猶難之。”（道徳經，第七三）足見天道難知且更難言。此殆
所以有“知者不言，言者不知”（同上，章五六）之感歎。盖天之道可想像而不可
捉摸，可言會而不可形容。

傳統解釋一向認為人道應本天道，此在儒家尤甚。董仲舒謂“道之大理於
天。天不變，道亦不變。”（漢書，董傳；卷五六，章十六）程頤云：“理出於
自然，故曰天理。”“天有是理聖人循而行之，所謂道也。”（伊川語四，章三六及
七下，章一）朱熹註解中庸首章，謂“道之本然出於天。”王陽明則認為“心即道
道即天。知心則知道知天。”（傳習錄，上，章二七）各儒先後立論殊有不同，而
其認為人道應本天道則一。今筆者探討結果，認為孔子正譏老子，實際上仍將人之道
本諸自然之道，恐有誤詖之嫌。茲為考古筆者論據，願就孔子與老子兩套哲學之基
本性質加以研析，倣作佐證。一般西方學者向稱孔子哲學為人本主義，老子哲學為玄奧主義。此固恰當。然而吾人如再深入推敲，當可發現老子與孔子之哲學，方向雖異，而其基礎則同為自然主義。自然主義名稱雖一，大有出入；有唯心的自然主義，有唯物的自然主義。老子與孔子之兩套哲學即同以唯心的自然主義為其基礎。兹就兩位聖哲之神學，宇宙觀，及本體論（亦即形上學）三項，加以佐證。

先言神學。道德經中提及鬼神，但次數極少。細察全書，絕無半句隻字涉及來世，亦未言及或暗示個人與社會受着神靈之安排支配。至於孔子，雖云“丘之於天久矣”，言其行義；“罪於天，無所為也。”雖又曾謂“祭神如在神”亦即曾云“未能事人，焉能事鬼？”“未知生，焉知死？”（論語·幸還而，四；八佾，十二，十三；先進，十一）關於祭祀祖先，孔子之表示最為激越。“孔子曰：之死而致死之，不仁而不可為也。之死而致生之，不知而不可以為也。”（禮記·檀弓上，六九）然則如何之何？“事死如事生，事亡如事存。”（中庸第十九章，五）此種視死如生，視亡如存之“宛如”存在哲學無疑為自然主義。

老子之有其宇宙觀亦甚清楚：“有物混成，先天地生。寂兮寥兮，獨立而不改，周行而不殆，可以為天下母。吾不知其名，字之曰道，強為之名曰大，大曰逝，逝曰遠，遠曰反。”（章二五）以今日天文知識而言，太空億萬星辰，不論其有無“向心”、“離心”兩項相反“力量”互相牽制平衡，總是彼此“獨立而不改”；惟有來往圍繞椭圓軌道，乃能繼續“周行而不殆”。另又加以“大”、“遠”、“速”、“反”之形容，其為一種不可思議之宇宙推測似難否認。總而言之，此段文章，可謂神遊六合以外，思遊混沌之初，描寫一種時空無限境界，竟出人生有限經驗。謂為直覺知識，自保附會；謂為卓越智慧，則不盡偏頗。至於儒家，尊重人倫社會如何而能有和諧安定生活之道理，對於宇宙之如何形成，除掉陰陽五行理論外，似未遑深求。但有一點相當肯定：即未嘗將“天地”（當指“自然”）之由來歸諸上帝之創造。此即自然主義之反證。

關於本體論（或形上學），老子有其獨到見解。一則曰“視之不見名曰玄，聽之不聞名曰希，搏之不得名曰微。此三者不可致詰，故混而為一。……是以無狀之狀，無象之象，是謂恍惚。”（章十四）再則曰“天下萬物生於有，有生於無。”（章四十）古今詮疏者之見解自有出入。筆者認為此兩段文字乃指陳整個自然之真相，亦即整個自然之本體。昔人肉眼所見之月日星辰以及今人利用天文儀器所能觀察推論，與證實的億萬倍多及億萬倍遠之天體，均係自然現象。自然現象與自然本體絕異。太空星辰有生有滅；惟有育化此恆河沙數之日月星辰之自然規律總和才是宇宙本體（宇宙之最後真實）。此種本體自係“不見”，“不聞”，“不得”，“恍惚”，
與“無”孔子之學說似無包括本體論之可能。然而中庸及易經載有兩段文字，如經細推敲，則似暗示“道”是一種本體，不僅有“質”，而且有“能”。第一段見於中庸（第廿六章，八）：“天地之道可一言而盡也。其為物不象則生物不測。天地之道，博也，厚也，高也，明也，悠也，久也。”第二段見於易經（繫辭上，四）：“一陰一陽之謂道。”第一段中“天地”實指自然。“高”“明”本指天；“博”“厚”本指地。故則用以形容自然（“天地”之道）則“道”有其本體。“悠”“久”則指時間之無窮盡。”為物不貳”殆即“誠者天之道也”，亦即永恆固定而存在。至於“生物不測”更合生生不息，長期演化之意。由此以觀，第一段所指，不當謂天道（自然之道）有其本體。第二段所謂“一陰一陽之謂道”則彷彿指陳道有其能。益陰陽暗合正負兩種電（普通稱作陰電與陽電），而電乃宇宙中間最廣大的原動力，亦即“能”，併合中庸及易經兩段而簡括引申，似是自然之道，既有其“質”，復有其“能”。若謂孔子曾為當代質能同一的本體論開其先河，誠屬荒唐附會。但謂上述兩段文字或可解作暗合或暗示“道”之具有“質”“能”之本體，未始不值得考慮。

總之，老子與孔子之哲學均基於自然主義。正因兩哲皆信自然具有理性與秩序，故可稱為理智的或唯心的自然主義。兩哲之抱持自然主義，亦可佐證本文之立場：即兩哲所稱之“天之道”實指“自然之道”。

肆：道之性質

本節檢討道之性質，即要檢討道之是否存在。筆者此處所指之存在並非哲學中聚訟紛紛之玄奧存在（即所謂本體，質能或最後真實）而係科學所指與常識所認的存在。率直言之，舉凡確有其物，果有其事，與真有其理（即理之表現於事物之中者）：均屬存在。如上所述，道既有其類別，吾人自不能圖圖吞棗解答道之是否存在，而必先分層次，按區別，逐一探究道之存在問題。

自然之道，前已引證解釋，即係自然規律。果爾，則個別零星的自然之道（即個別零星的自然規律）固屬存在。而整體總括的自然之道（亦即個別自然規律之總和）自必存在。可是，任何號稱自然之道（或規律）苟無現象或事物足以佐證其何，則無其存在。例如“食色性也”，乃是事實，其存在無疑。至於“天圓地方”則是假定並非存在的事實。上所云云，皆在強調抽象原則（“無”），必須表現於具體行為（“有”），乃真存在。因此，另有相關數點值得略加引伸。其一，每一自然規律，在人類尚未發現以前，早已存在（例如有關無線電與飛機、原子弹等自然規律），初不因人之知與不知仍受絲毫影響。其二，純然“自然”之立場，每一個別的自然規律，初無善惡，是非，應不應之別。盖生存有生存之道，死亡亦有死亡之道，治
興有治興之道，亂亡亦有亂亡之道：均受許多錯綜複雜相反相反的自然規律所控制。人固有相當然選擇運用之可能，但究難完全地與絕對地支配。其三，整體總括的自然之道究竟有無理性，有無計畫，有無目的，此則屬於另一種問題——一種難有貫證或否證的哲學問題。道德經中“天地不仁，以萬物為芻狗”（章五），寓有脅脅之意。但是自然（即所云“天地”）而果不仁，竟以萬物為芻狗，乃是自然已有其計畫與目的。筆者提此點，旨在說明每一問題之複雜困難。其四，孔子與老子所觀察者，大抵只是自然現象而尚非自然規律本身；可是每一自然現象之背後自必有其自然規律。

後次，請探討天之道之性質。先問整體的抽象原則之天之道是否存在？此一話問好比質詢上帝是否存在。要答覆天之道是否存在或上帝是否存在，其關鍵端在個人之信仰，在所持天之道或上帝之定義，在所舉之具體例證。例如鳥反哺，羊跪乳，鶉司晨，犬守夜，母狼養瘦幼獅，蜂蟻分工合作，類此種切皆可作為天道存在或上帝存在之佐證。另一方面，大魚吃小魚，虎奪食鹿鹿，原野荒林中一切弱肉強食事實亦可佐證天道或上帝之不存在。由上觀之，整體總括天之道之是否存在，要視思想家對於自然現象及人類歷史認為有無理性、計畫與目的而定。此則難有客觀而一致的結論。

然則個別零星的天之道是否存在？此則不難解答。個別零星的天之道，實即理想化的若干個別自然規律。其中自然規律部分，自必存在，而其中理想化部分可能存在或不存在，全視其是否見諸於行為措施。例如“天道無親，常與善人（道德經，章七九）”，此乃理想化的自然規律。自然規律無一不是鐵而無私。“無親”是事實，故有其存在。至於“常與善”，則是理想化，善善人不見得常有善報。（往往“盜跖毒而顰回天！”）又例如“功成名遂身退，天之道。”（同上，章九）彼張良從赤松子遂，固得保全首領以沒於地；此一史實殆可佐證此一“天之道”有其存在。可是歷史上烏盡弓藏，晁死狗烹，縱欲身退而不可得之悲劇比比皆是。此亦足見“功成名遂身退”的“天之道”未必存在。禮記（孔 difíc閔居，四）載：“天無私覆，地無私載，日月無私照。”天之覆，地之載，日月之照，各有其自然規律。以言“無私”之覆，之載，之照則顯屬理想化。又“無為而物成，是天道也。”（見前）“物成”固是自然規律，“無為”則屬理想化。茲再舉皇帝之升基於“天命”之例。歷史上政權更迭，堪稱為應天順人者固亦有之，但“成王敗寇”此比皆是。此曰全保天命顧屬片面理想化。凡屬理想化者均已成為倫理原則，此卽天道道之第三種類別及其分別存在問題。

所謂道之第三種類別，前曾指陳：即道有虛實，有抽象原則之道有具體行為之
道。"無為而物成"（猶諸 "無為而無不為"）及 "天道無親常與善人" 均是抽象原則的天之道。或也有其具體行為事實，足資證明，方見存在。至於所舉之具體行為事實能否真正證明其抽象原則，則端賴立場與信仰，前已指出，自不免仁者見仁，智者見智。

最後，請就最重要的道之類別，亦即就人之道，試探其是否存在。究竟所謂人之道，果何所指？此乃先決問題。人之道實乃社會人羣所作之一般行為措施，及於其先知先覺所揭棄之道德原則而經納入風俗習慣及法令制度之中。就人類歷史言之，遠在道德法制之抽象原則形成以前，早已久有種類具體行為。其後各項具體行為，分別被判為善為惡，為是為非，為應當為不應當，而漸次統約為道德規律與法令制度。此其結果，則幾乎無一行行為不可用原則加以準繩，不會每一原則可對發生之事加以判斷。基於上述，似可得到下列結論。其一，人之道不能產生於真空之中，而必存在於現實社會之中。故整體總括的人之道，不可能全部為正為邪，而必瑕瑜互見，混雜並存。其二，人之道大抵係社會之中具有權位勢力及左右言論思想之優秀分子所能形成，而由大衆所接受，並能化成習俗與法制。但每一社會所流行之道總在變遷演化。其三，所謂天下有道或天下無道，乃指當時當地傳統正道之流行程度與範圍（尤其指統治階級與知識人士而言），有其深淺大小之別。

以言人之道之抽象原則與具體行為，則孔子之教訓至為精練而深廣。就個人言，在出世以前，"道" 自胎教開始。幼時訓育或在日常薰陶應對之中。稍長則務習六藝（禮樂射御書數）。及其長大，應以君子自許，期能修齊治平。人與人之關係，首重五倫。關於政治經濟，內政外交以及治亂興亡之道亦莫不涉及。以故，孔子及歷代儒者所標榜之人之道，其範圍至廣。

由於上述種種，可見現實社會中之人之道，不論其為正為邪，不論其為抽象原則或具體行為，且不論其為個別零星或整體總括，均有其存在。茲另有一點，值得略提，即所稱正道果何由而發生？吾人須知人有本能亦有理性。若干行為乃僞本能而能，不教而知者：此蓋基於本能。至於分善惡，辨是非，尚價值，此則基於理性。人之正道，蓋即根據理性在長期生活經驗中逐次形成而繼續演化。茲以食色為例。禮記（禮運，二三）即云："飲食男女，人之大欲存焉。" 孟子載告子語（告子上，一）："食色性也。" 假若食色本能生活，盡情放肆而漫無制裁，則豈祗所謂"鈇刃之臂而奪之食"及"踰東家牆而搂其處子！"（孟子，告子下，第一章，八）種種流弊禍害，不堪設想。食色尚且如此，它如有關權、位、名、利各項，若無與時俱進之正道，子以範疇與制裁，則社會之混亂不言而喻。由是以言，理性與本能，既然同為人性之部分，亦喻同為自然之部分，則胚胎發育於理性之正道，自必
同為自然之部分。

伍：道之作用

探求之道之具性質，終必導涉道之如何發生作用。一言以蔽之，凡屬實際存在
的道，就是發生作用的道。反之，倘若吾人不能發現其能直接間接引起作用，則所
謂道者亦是虛構。研究之道之作用，可從兩方面着手。一方面就道之層次類別，探求
其如何而能發生作用。另一方面，就道之內容方向，檢討其果能發生何種作用。

先論自然之道，亦即自然規律。一切自然規律，不論何時何地，永在發生其作
用。易言之，此種運行與作用，乃是機械地，自動地，永恆地在繼續着。小而言
之，例如細菌可以引起疾病；人身內部本有抵抗力量；對症藥物可以治病，亦可意
外發生副作用。大而言之，一國之治亂興亡（往往超出當事人之料想）亦均基於若
於複雜隱藏的自然規律。在物理界中，例如天文、物理、化學等自然科學，現已發
現許多自然規律而能以數目字母之計算公式，表列出來。但在人事界中，則因任何
事實現象，不能加以隔離獨立而反覆試驗，故未由斷定其中運行支配之自然規律。
再則自然科學缺問如何，而社會科學，且問為何，更使問題複雜，解答困難。

所謂天之道，實即若干理想化的自然規律；其能發生作用，自與自然規律之完
全自動，絕對不同。蓋天之道必賴人羣之深切信仰與實際遵行。今以孝乃天之道為
例。孝經（三才章）云：“夫孝，天之經也，地之義也，民之行也。天地之經而民
則之。”又（聖治章）云，“父子之道，天性也。”此皆表示孝乃天之道，而亦本
於自然之道。然欲就孝之為天之道，僅保抽象原則；必須另有應有之具體行為，
方能證實原則之能發生作用。孝經（開宗明義章）有云：“身體髮膚受之父母，不
敢毀傷，孝之始也。立身行道，揚名於後世，以顯父母，孝之終也。夫孝，始於事
親，中於事君，終於立身。”此乃以孝為天之道而必需的應有行為。另如道德經中
所謂“天之道損有餘而補不足”，亦祇是天之道之一項個別的抽象原則。古今來提
倡損有餘而補不足者，不乏其人。假定其確為天之道，則亦必等到今日各國實施累
進稅所得稅與遺產稅等項之後，始有具體行為以證實此項抽象原則。由此可知：天
之道必具具體事項乃能由虛而實。

今可轉到人之道果如何而能發生作用問題。如前所述，抽象與具體兩類的人之
道均有其存在。既有其存在，即已證實其已發生作用。抽象的人之道，即保道德規
律。道德規律不能自動發生作用。祇有久被社會接受，久經士大夫宣扬，而且已帶
情感已成風氣之各項道德規律，方能形成一套“道德力量”，足以鼓舞影響乃至指
導支配人羣行為。此因正道之發生其作用。由此觀之，“道”與“教”確難分離獨
立。“教”之施行固必本於其“道”；而“道”之能生作用，自必有赖於“教”。同时，在另一方面，凡係包含並表現義理原則之道德行為，祇要長期推廣，亦可於无形中化成一種強大的推動力量。上所云云，乃是指出人之道（包括抽象原則與具體行為）如何而能發生作用。上所云云，亦是明示例如孝、貞、忠、仁、義、禮等各項道德所以能歷數千年而不衰。反之，各項非道惡德，例如賄賂、貪污、欺詐、強暴、反叛、侵略等等，其所以亦能到处存在者，正亦基於上述理由。所不同者，非道惡德向來不經宣揚，不經承認，適得其反，當事人往往自己公開抨擊；可是一經反覆實踐，自有一種散佈蔓延之力量。所謂“不言之教”，信而有徵！因此之故，“人能弘道，非道弘人”，實可兼指正邪兩道；但就邪道而言，當為“人能損道，非道損人。”

關於抽象人之道之可能作用，另有一點，至屬重要。此無它，即空洞理想不盡在支持當時當地流行之社會體系與生活方式，抑且可在批評、攻擊、破壞現狀，進而創建一套新的系統——不論其在宗教、社會、政治、經濟、倫理，甚至藝術方面。每當青黃不接，新舊交替之際傳統的道與教，往往發生反作用。當然，反作用亦是作用之一種。

上所指陳乃在闡明道之如何而能發生作用，亦即有關作用之方式（即是否自動，是否直接）。茲就方式而論內容，試探“道”果能發生何種作用。所謂內容當然即指道之基本原則。請就老子與孔子之道，扼要比較。先言自然之道。老子之所最着重者，厥在無為與相對。關於無為，前已指陳，不必贅及。所謂相對，乃指萬事萬物均有其相反相成之雙元性；例如長短、高低、前後、難易、福禍、善惡，乃至陰陽、有無，或慈愛與勇猛，節儉與廣施，謙退與領導。道德經中指出下列各項。（章二、二十，五八，四二及四十。）“故有無相生，難易相成，長短相形，高下相傾，……前後相隨。”“善之與惡相去何若！”“福兮禍所倚，禍兮福所伏。” “萬物陰而抱陽。”老子又曰“吾有三寶，持而保之。一曰慈，二曰儉，三曰不敢為天下先。慈故能勇；儉故能廣；不敢為天下先，故成器長。”此之所謂亦指相反相成。以言孔子，雖認一陰一陽之為道，故亦重視盈虚消長與來復循環；但對於無為與相對則未強調。

至於理想化的自然之道亦即天之道，老子重視下列數項：“無為而無不為。”“天網恢恢，疏而不失。”“反者道之動，弱者道之用。”（均見前引。）就孔子言，則天之道之重要內容當為“誠”，為“仁”，為“行健”，為“盡事物之性”。兩哲最關切而及宣揚者自為人之道。關於天或自然，兩哲之概念似尚接近，但由此而演進出來的人之道卻大有出入。吾人不必詳舉其背異之點，而祇須指陳四項：仁、義、
老子與孔子之“道”：類別根據性質及作用

在抽象原則方面，老子與孔子既已距離如此之遠，則在具體行為方面，其必背道而馳，自可想像。就基本立場言，老子志在出世，故鄙賤世俗，不事紛擾；孔子則甘願入世，欲努力從政以改善社會而轉移世運。就立論對象言，老子乃為個人着想，尤其為優秀分子著想；孔子則着眼整個社會，包括尊卑上下，男女老幼，智愚賢不肖。就入手方法言，老子採取放任無為；孔子則重拾私為公，人人各盡其職。就最終目標言，老子企求回返自然境界，生活簡樸而無紛亂；孔子則期待一個秩序穩定而且和諧平衡的政治社會。老子之理想社會有如其述：“小國寡民。使有什伯之器而不用。使民重死而不遠徙。雖有舟與無所乘之。雖有甲兵，無所陈之。使人復結繩而用之。甘其食。美其服。安其居。樂其俗。鄰國相望。鶉犬之聲相聞。民至老死不相往來。”（道德經，章八十）孔子之理想大異於是。“大道之行也，天下為公。選賢與能，講信修睦。故人不獨親其親，不獨子其子。使老有所終，壯有所用，幼有所長，矜寡孤獨遊病者，皆有所養。男有分，女有歸。貨，懼有私於地也，不必藏於己。力，惡其不出於身也，不必為己。是故謀閉而不興，盜竊亂賊而不作。故外户而不閉。是謂大同。”（禮記檀禮。）如此則此中生活體制與精神含有民主社會主義，當非誣罔。

兩哲對於人之道之內容，既如此相異，則其所能發生之作用，必不相同。就事實言，兩哲思想之不同作用可於吾國人民生活歷史中求之。老子之道既然教人柔弱，謙虛容忍與知足，則自必使人得意，在位、握權之時，要節制自己行為，同時使人失望失敗之餘，有以自解自慰。大體言之，老子之道之作用，乃在個人生活思
想方面，而亦見諸宗教藝術。以言對於政治之影響，殊屬不多。在西漢開國之初六
十年中，一則因在位之人文主好儒篤信黃老，再則因暴秦亡滅以後，人民正需休養生
息，故黃老放任無為之道遂漸發生作用。孔子之道自屬不同：性質積極，旨在有
為，其對象為整個社會，尤其在鼓勵知識分子修成君子，俾能參政服務，事君愛
民。此種作用可在下列各種法律制度見之：祀禮、朝儀、官制、考試、科試、納職、
廩舍、貯蔵、賦稅、法典等等。凡此皆屬仁、義、禮、法之具體化作用。無論如
何，儒道兩家之“道”與“教”，確為中華民族文化生活歷史之構成分。)

可是時代變更，世界潮流另有趨向：君主政體已改為代議制度，孤立自足已轉
成應付侵略之族國主義，農業經濟已躍進為民生主義。是則儒家之道勢必發生而且
確已發生調整，俾能適應新時代之需委。基本的倫理判斷與道德規律，僅可依照傳
統，而其解釋精神與具體應用，自必有所適應。蓋演化乃自然之道；人之道亦不免
有其演化。

陸：推論與標準

多年以來，學者在探索孔子與老子之“道”之基本含義，亦即探求道是什麼，
毫無中點點滴滴逐漸發現古今中外各種的道，同樣有其類別、形式、性質與作用諸
問題，而其中所含之原理正與相同。用是不論誤差，引伸推論，計共四點。其一，
“道”即是“主義”，亦名為即“教”。二者均可分別為正道。其二，言道必言
根源；言根源則各有其長短，各有其因惑。其三，道之所以重要，全在其能發生具
體作用；但具體作用之為正道或邪道，端賴於動機與目的。其四，各色各樣的道紛
歧變化，欲加比較評估，當先求客觀的共同標準。

請先陳述“道”即是“主義”亦名為即“教”。道字之本意為路，故轉成為
理路，為規律。以故，道指抽象原則，亦指具體行為。昔日東方所稱之道即佛今日
西方習稱之主義。任何宗教，任何政體，任何經濟系統必有其神學政治哲學或經濟
理論。在邏輯上，道自為道而教自為教。在實際上，則道之昌明必賴於教，而教之
發揮必本於道。當然，或人所教者，未必必合於其所標榜之道，但由誰來判定？茲
舉兩例以證明“道”、“教”與“主義”之貫通。吾國向稱西方哲師本華“傳教”或
“佈道”。西方學者稱儒教為“孔子主義”道家哲學為“道家主義”。

或人可謂道之與教，不辨分立，而且往往相反。例如日出與日入，並非真理。}
殊不知數千年來人類信仰所及，實際上“教”確是“道”。中古世紀，歐洲基督
教徒必信聖經於此為向神詮罪之有效途徑。古代中國，皇帝曾殺宰相以代應不祥
之天變。此皆“教”確為“道”之例證。即就今日自然之“道”——亦即自然規律
言之，例如及時打防疫針，種牛痘，每年作體檢一次，並有定期的“教”（即書面與口頭，廣播與電視之宣傳導引），乃能減少疾病死亡。自然之道，尚有賴於教，況人之道！“人能弘道，非道弘人（論語衛靈公，章廿九）”信乎斯言。

復次，言道必言根源，言根源則各有其長短，各有其因由。一切思想家大抵不願將其所持之主義終結於個人之意志與智慧而必歸諸於超人的根源：如神命、天道、宇宙本質，或自然。例如摩西之十誡為上帝所授；而君主之專制權力亦必歸於神授。今日天主教會不准其教徒離婚或墮胎，亦云此乃神之意旨。十八世紀之人權運動揭棄自然權利（中文舊譯作天賦人權）。十九世紀歐洲或行之功利主義蓋以超樂避苦由於人性而本諸自然。馬克思之唯物辯證與經濟史觀，亦以自然為其依據。甚至希臘拉丁以日耳曼民族為世界最優秀而應居領導地位之種族主義，何嘗不本諸自然。謂未有為為 현실同因受西方科學之影響，儒言仁乃為仁，仁乃是以太。是將傳統認為本於天地之義者改作本於自然之道。至如印度教各派神學認為個人之最高成就莫若以小己歸入大我，完成脫胎。脫胎之最好譬喻，猶如一座冰山融化為水而返回大海懷抱。此言冰山猶如小己，大海無邊猶如大我，亦即宇宙本質。佛學則否認宇宙有固定永恆之本質故以求得涅槃，脫離輪迴，為無上成就。筆者不謂脫胎，祇在強調證明一點：即言道必言根源。

任何一種根源理論具有其長短與因由。例如以神命為人道之根源；古今諸難甚多。既有各教，究竟誰是真神？又何以有魔鬼對抗？且神之所命，若云依憑神之喜怒好惡，殊不合理；如謂依據固定的道德規律，則道德規律反處於神之上而使神不復萬能。雖然如此，神命根源論，比較起來，還是接近真相不破。以言根源乃是天命，亦有其因由。中庸（第四章，一及二）載：“子曰道之不行也，我知之矣。知者過之，愚者不及也。道之不明也，我知之矣。賢者過之，不肖者不及也。人莫不飲食也，鮮能知味也。”此段意義，如與前引“道者不可須臾離也；可離非道也”兩相比較，殊難貫串。至以自然為道之本源，固可持之有故，言之成理。但是究竟如此而順合自然，如何而違反自然，一涉道德，一涉價值，往往聚論紛紜莫衷一是。蓋自然完屬科學範圍；純就科學主場求其事實，祇求公式，不求價值或道德之判斷。以故將人之道之根源歸諸自然，亦有其欠缺。

今捨根源而論作用。道之所以重要在其能發生作用，但具體行為之是否合於正道則亦有賴於無形因素，例如動機、精神、及目的各項。不審惟是，有時表面上相反的具體行為，恰可表現相同的抽象原則。今以孝道為例。孔子曾云：“今之孝者是謂能養。至於犬馬，皆能有養。不敬，何以別乎？”（論語，為政，章七）此中
意義至為深刻。推而論之，設若一國之中，人人之衣食住問題可稱解決，而自由卻
被剝奪，人性卻被抹煞，則此國人民何異於監獄中之囚犯。再推而論之，一國人民
如果實際上不當隨時可以暢所欲為，因而強其監獄，殺人放火，無日無有，使大都
市居民，即在光天化日之下，熱鬧市區之中，亦無安全之感。是則此國人民並非享
受自由而較受奴役之痛苦。此種推論更可包括國際行為。例如訂定和約，締結聯
盟，其本意固在恢復和平與相約互助，然而有時實際動機與隱藏目的，乃是恰恰相
反。此則史例眾多，不可盡述。可見具體行為不一定代表其所揭橥之抽象原則。不
寧惟是，形似相反的具體行為，有時卻可表現同一抽象原則。孝經（誅誡章）有云：
“曾子曰……‘敬問子從父之令，可謂孝乎？’子曰，‘是何言與！……父有爭子則
不陷於不義。故當不義，則子不可以不爭於父。……從父之令，焉得為孝乎？’”。
此蓋明示孝與義不能兼顧，則義在孝先。此固與大義滅親之道違貫。然而孔子對
於“其父攘羊而子證之”，不加譴許，卻以“父為子隱，子為父隱，直在其中矣”。
（論語，子路，弟十八）由是觀之，具體行為之道，不可一概而論。至若時代不
同，境況變遷，觀點易變，則所謂正道與邪道，隨之而異。例如國立教育已由信仰
自由所替代，世界專制政體已由代議政府所推翻，而男女平等正在逐漸消弭性別歧
視。餘如打胎，限制人口，廢止死刑等項，仍為目前劇烈爭論問題。人之道經常亦
在演化。在過渡期間，自不免多所紛擾。此則引起最後一項，即能否尋出客觀的共
同標準，俾以評估當今流行各色各道的道。

此處所擬提出討論者，不是評估各“道”，而是用以評估的標準尺度。吾人似
宜首先承認：事實上之所謂成敗決非判別高低優劣之道德標準。蓋單單正義自不能
克服強權；反之，僅僅強權亦絕對不能成為公理。今日人類所企求實現者似可歸納
為五大項目：即秩序、安全、公正、福利與自由。此蓋指社會秩序之維持，國家安
全之確保，司法公正之建立，生活福利之增進，以及言行自由之擴充。但此五大目
的與事實，有時勢難兼顧。實則其中含有先後緩急。如無秩序，何來公正。苟無安
全，那能自由。最屬重要而最易誤解者，厥為秩序與自由之形若矛盾抵觸，而實則
相反相成。欲有秩序，必守法律；惟有守法，乃有自由。試舉兩例。如果不受議事
規則之束縛，則開會辯論，可謂言論自由？若不遵守交通管制規則，則風駭電掣之
汽車何能在寬廣大道上來往自由？當茲核子時代，舉世人民所渴望者厥為上述五大
項目之平衡和諧之發展。此乃當今全球性之企求。此項全球性之企求，殆可作為衡
量目前流行各色各套的道之標準尺度。易言之，即視其是否順合或違反，及能否促
進或阻礙此項全球性之企求，而評估其價值之高低優劣。

類此衡量標準之形成，以及類此共同企求之實現，自將為一種理想而遠遠的
"现象"。此项现象之渐次进展，自必有赖于其它不可缺少的构成因素：即逐步建立若干“制度”，例如全球性人口限制，设置世界立法机构，编纂国际法典；逐渐改造“观念”，例如抛弃阶级斗争及永恒革命话语而树立和平共存及世界一家诸信仰；推展见解开明真爱和平的“人物”，执政当权；以及努力建设无形与有形的“力量”，例如世界舆论及国际警察。对此种种必需的条件，对此世界性的一套新道，孔子与老子之“人之道”，皆能异途同归，各显其莫大贡献。吾人尤宜切记：人类生活所择的目标固属重要，而其实现目标所采之途径或手段，亦属重要。盖目标与途径同属于道之范围而有其正正之别。至于世界正道之形成与实践，必赖多方努力继续不断，乃能渐次接近理想。