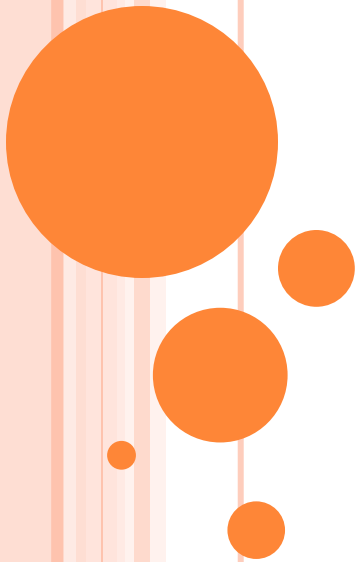


SESSION 9

Dao-De, Wuji-Taiji and Immortality

Friday 10am – 1pm
23rd April 2021

At Arts 5



COMMON CHARACTERISTIC BETWEEN LAOZI AND ZHUANGZI

- **1. both Lao and Zhuang/Chuang consider human nature as originally good but it is the social institutions and civilization that corrupt this good nature.**
 - They advocated a natural life, against the so-called life of culture. To lead a natural life, we must abolish culture, abandon knowledge and technology
 - **2. Both Lao and Zhuang hold that the prime truth—Tao/Dao is impossible to attain through intellectual procedures.**
 - In order to attain to Dao, we must practise meditation, reduce desires, keep the mind in quietness and live a life according to nature
- 

DISTINGUISHING POINT OF ZHUANG FROM LAO

- 1. **Their conceptions of Dao is different.**

In Lao, the nature of Dao is non-being.

according to Zhuang, being is nonbeing, and nonbeing is being, Tao is the unity of nonbeing and being.

- 2. **They disagreed on how to lead a natural life.**

- Both taught that a meaningful life cannot be found in civilised society but has to abandon laws, morality and all norms of life, and make sure that no culture nor techniques would hinder humans from living naturally.

- According to Lao, this should be **achieved by setting up an ideal society**, or return to the ancient society. Thus, although he propagated the simple life to repudiate human-made culture and civilization, Lao **did not reject this world**. Instead, he often gave advice to the rulers on how to govern the state, because for him government is needed, but it must rule by non-action.

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- However, **Zhuang Tzu showed a much stronger indifference to politics and government**. For him, this world is hopeless, not only hopeless, but also damaging, therefore, retreats is the only way to reach the ideal life.



FASTING MIND (LAOZI: DAODE JING)

- Laozi: 常无欲以观其妙（第一章） to be constantly in a condition of without desire in order to observe its wonderfulness
- 老子十六章：
- Way of Action: 致虚极，守静笃，万物并作，吾以观其复。 Reaching to the ultimate void/emptiness, guarding the earnest tranquility, when all beings appeared all in one go, I can the use it observe its repetition.
- Meaning: 夫物芸芸，各复归其根。归根曰静，是谓复命。 Things of various kinds all return to their roots respectively. The returning its root is named as tranquility, which is also called as back to the destiny.
- Why ? 复命曰常，知常曰明。----知常容，容乃公，公乃王，王乃天，天乃道，道乃久，没身不殆。 Return to the destiny is called as constant.----- knowing the constant one could contain, being able to contain one could apply justice, being able to do justice one could the ruler of the world, being able to be the ruler of the world, one is Heaven, Heaven is Dao and Dao is equal to long-life and never going to die.



DAO IN *DAODE JING* 道德经

- **Dao** is a name used to refer to the mystics and depth of the cosmos, the source or origin of the universe, or the way by which the universe came into being and in which all beings acquire life
- **The Metaphors of Dao:** (1)Ancestor宗; (2)Mother母; (3)Produce生; (4)Valley谷; (5)Mysterious Female玄牝; (5)Wu无—Nothing; (6) Root根, and (7) Water 水
- **Eternity of Dao:** (1) it exists before time and for all time; (2) it is self-existent; (3) it is eternal, infinite, complete, omnipresent
- It is impossible to name or define Dao, because human terms are only applicable to sensible and limited beings.

WU JI AS THE FIRST: MANIFESTATION OF DAO?

- Wu Ji无极 is a state where all possibilities are held within but not taking into form, due to it was beyond needing to take form.
- In Wu Ji state, Dao manifested itself as wu无, or nothingness.
- Wu presented itself as the primordial chaos, which is a sphere or matrix that holds within itself the whole universe, but in a diffuse, undifferentiated and potential state



BEING = NONE BEING?

THERE IS NO ABSOLUTE SELF IN ZHUANGZI

- Zhuang's dream of butterfly:
- Once I, Chuang Chou, dreamed that I was a butterfly and was happy as a butterfly---
- Suddenly I awoke, and there I was, visibly Chou. I don't know whether it was Chou dreaming that he was butterfly or the butterfly dreaming it was Chou.'



TAO AND ETERNAL LIFE

- The ideal of man is to transcend this world and become unified with Tao, so there is no more differentiation between subject and object, life and death, the human and the divine.
- Chuang Tzu believed that the only way to be one with Tao is to merge one's self into the Tao:
- Through
 - 1. fasting of the mind (Hsin/xin Zhai 心齋) and
 - 2. sitting in forgetfulness (zuo wang 坐忘),
- which means more or less the ways similar to meditation or contemplation in other tradition.



WHAT IS THE FASTING OF THE MIND?

Fasting the mind/heart is to liberate the mind/heart from all external influences:

‘Concentrate your attention, listen not with your ears but with the heart; listen not with the heart but with Chi/Qi. The ears are limited to understanding, the heart is limited to applying itself to things. It is Chi/Qi which, when it is empty, grasps reality. **The union with Tao/Dao cannot be achieved except in emptiness; the emptiness is the fasting of the mind/heart.**’

Only in emptiness, we can realize this unity and identify ourselves with it, we shall know that the members of our body are but parts of the universe, and our life and death are but the succession of day and night, so that their changes cannot disturb our inner peace, and the worldly gain and loss, good fortunes and calamities should not trouble our mind.



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DAO AND QI

Dao	Qi
Wu (无: nothingness nonbeing, empty, void, formless)	You (有: being, something visible, formable, can be seen, heard, and felt)
Yi (一: the One)	Duo (多: the Two: Yin & Yang; the Congenital Qi & the Acquired Qi)
Wuji (无极 Source of all potential)	Taiji (太极 Grand Harmony, Perfect Balance of Yin-Yang)



LAOZI CHAPTER 11: THE USEFULNESS OF THE WU 无

- 三十辐共一毂(gu), 当其无有车之用。
 - 埴(shan)埴(zhi)以为器, 当其无有器之用。
 - 凿户牖以为室, 当其无有室之用。
 - 故有之以为利, 无之以为用。
-
- Thirty spokes join one hub, the art's use lies where they are absent.
 - Throwing clay to make a vessel, the vessel's use lies where the clay is absent.
 - Sculpting windows and doors to make a room, the room's use lies where they are absents.
 - So we treat having something as beneficial and treat lacking something as useable.
- 



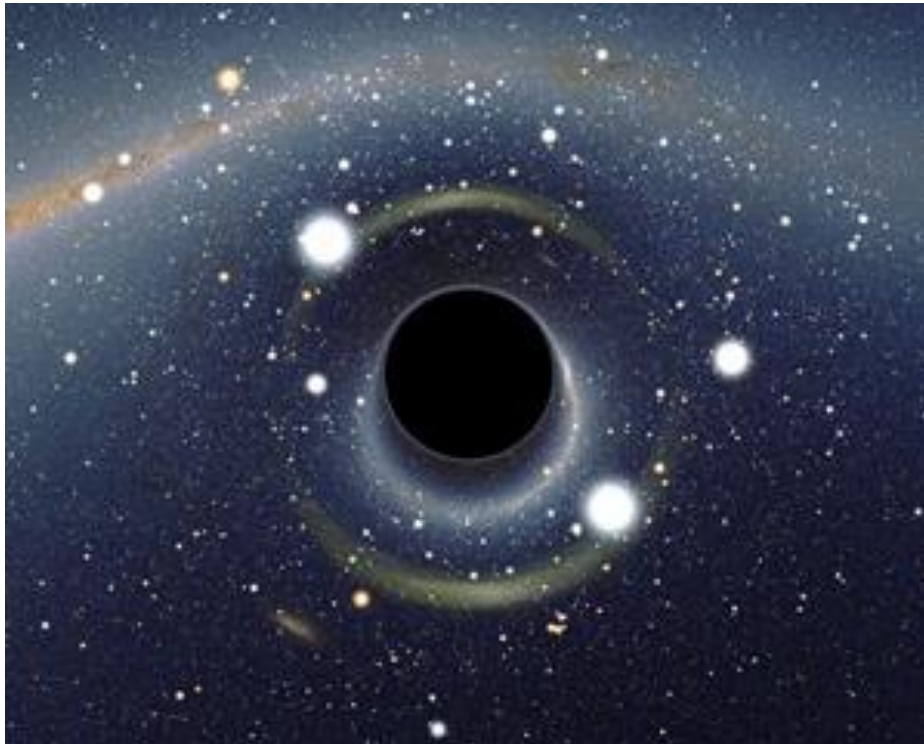
THE USE OF EMPTY/SPACE IN ARTS

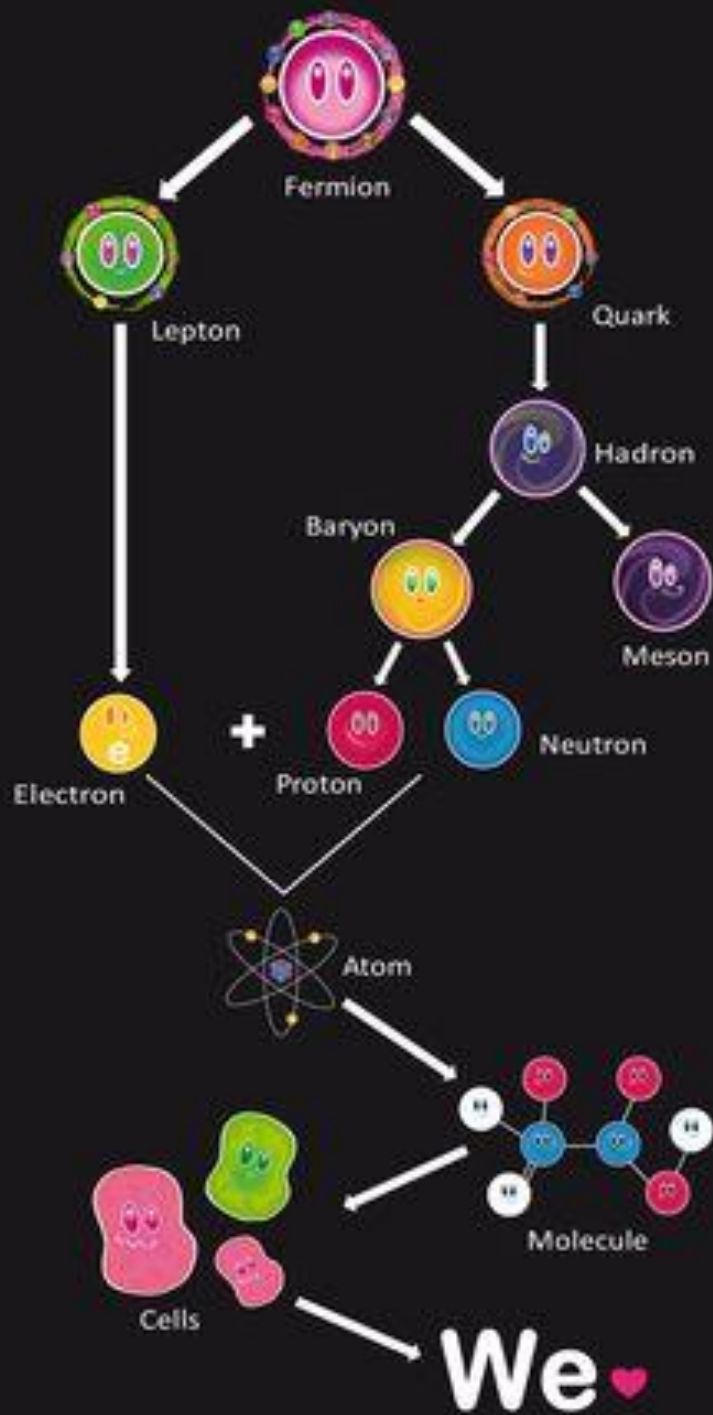




DAO AND THE BLACK HOLE

EMPTY & CREATION
FORMLESS AND FORM
NONE-BEING AND
BEING



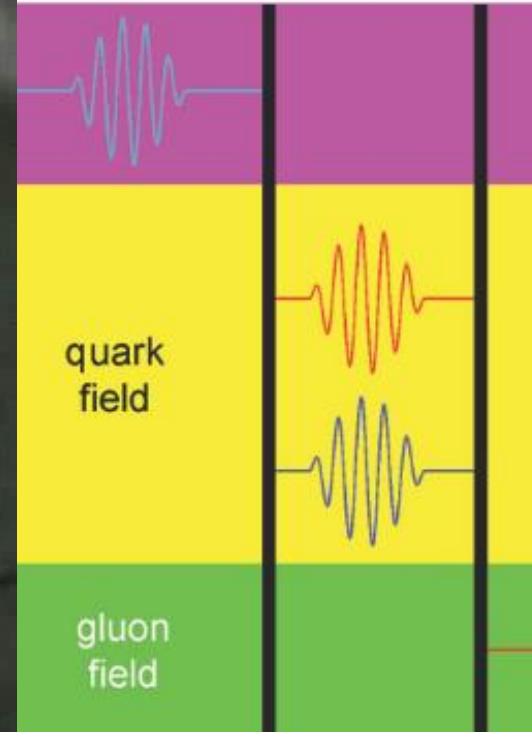
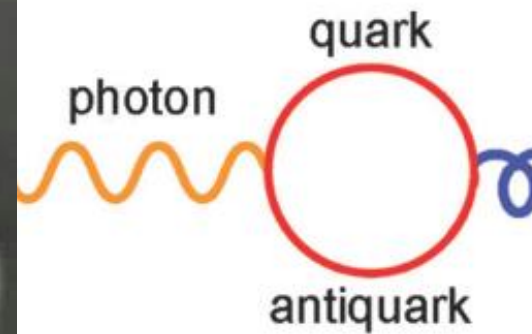
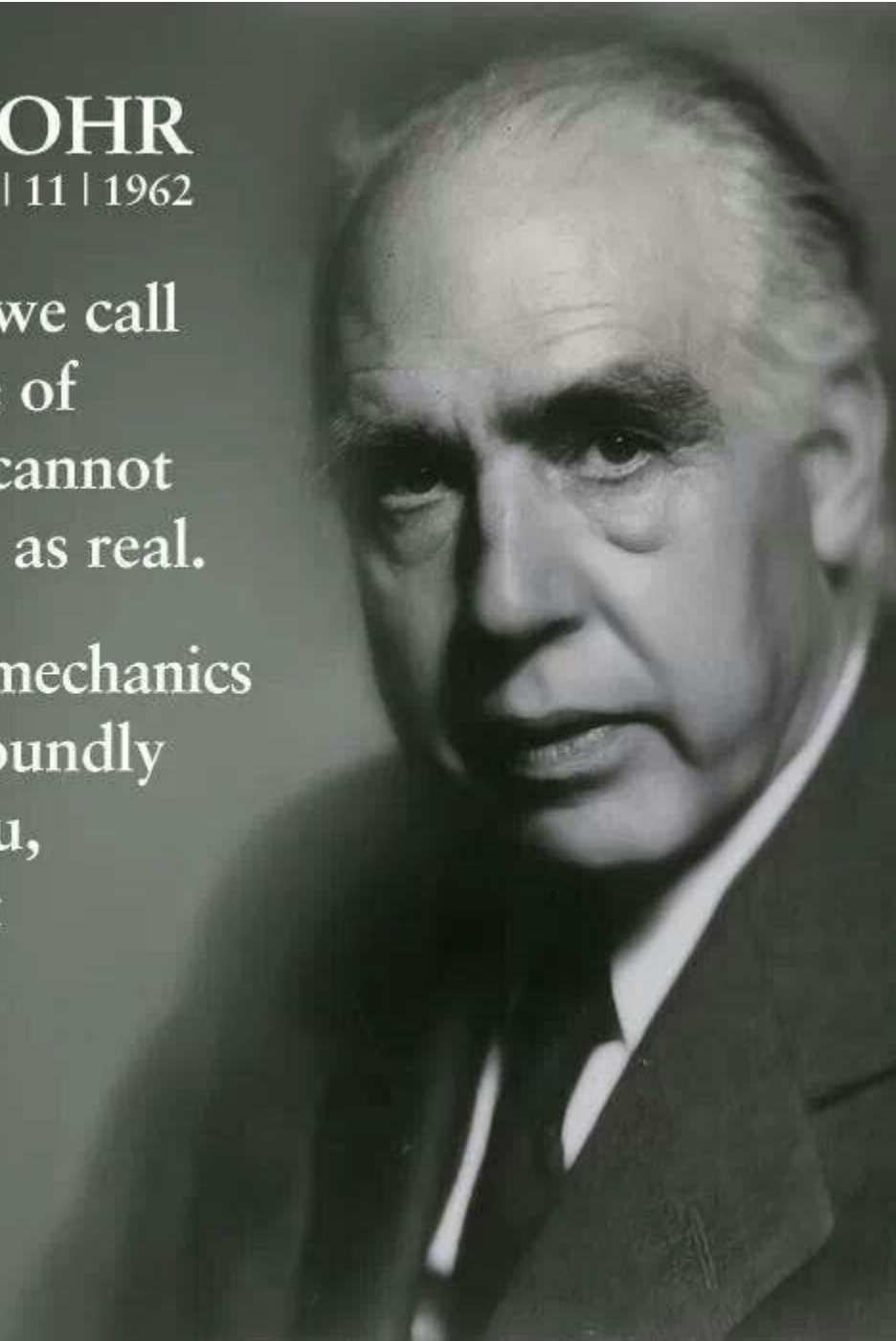


NIELS BOHR

7 | 10 | 1885 – 18 | 11 | 1962

Everything we call
real is made of
things that cannot
be regarded as real.

If quantum mechanics
hasn't profoundly
shocked you,
you haven't
understood
it yet.



TRUE MAN OR TRUE PERSONS

- Cultivating one's nature and fasting one's mind/heart, one is able to become a true person.
- A true person is one who has attained Tao/Dao, meaning being the one with the Tao/Dao, by detaching himself from the worldly worries and concerns, by following nature and by acting freely.
- Chuang Tzu deliberately put the image of a true person against the background of the ancient times, when the man-made culture has not yet corrupted the natural way of the world.
- According to him, the true person of ancient times did not resist against his desire, did not boast his richness, and did not arrange his plan. He could commit an error but not regret it, and could enjoy his success and not boast about it. He could climb up to a high place and not be frightened, could enter into the deep water and not get wet, and could jump into the fire and not get burned. His knowledge could ascend all the way up to the Tao.(chapter 6)



CHARACTERISTIC OF THE TRUE PERSON

- A. The true persons have no worries and anxieties.
- B. The true persons have overcome the fear of death.
- C. The true persons are not only an achievement in spiritual cultivation but they are also invincible and immortal in their body.
- D. The true persons are those who have attained Tao/Dao.



TRUE PERSON OR IMMORTALS

- The immortals in later Taoist/Daoist religion was a further development and transformation of the philosophical ideal propagated in the classic of Taoist/Daoist philosophy.
- In Confucianism the sage who takes it as his responsibility to bring peace and harmony to the world is the final goal of self-cultivation, while in Taoist literature the true person or immortal is the embodiment of being one with Tao/Dao.
- True in this phrase is 'zhen', related to spiritual perfection and to death. It is defined in the *Shou Wen Jie Zi*, an ancient Chinese dictionary, as 'an immortal changing form and ascending to Heaven.'
- The 'immortal' in this case is a person who is xian(人), whose cognate qian (迁) is defined as 'rising high' in the sense of 'flying on fire', a person being burnt and ascending to the sky



WHY FOLLOWING DAO IS THE ONLY WAY TO ATTAIN IMMORTALITY?

- Attaining to Tao/Dao is a metaphor for the integrity and harmony of the cosmos and the origin of all things and beings, including human beings, in the cosmos.
- Tao/Dao is not external to human person, which one can obtain only by giving up one's being. Tao is the internal core of a being or thing and exists and functions within beings and in the process of person-making
-
- In this sense, cultivation of Tao/Dao in Taoism/Daoism is deemed a process of self-transformation(although it is believed in religious Taoism that Tao is given to humans by the heavenly deities).
- Cultivating Tao and its power (de, te) is thus taken to be the way the temporal to the eternal, from man-made culture to the natural way, and from degenerating to one's end to returning to one's beginning



THE STEPS OF FASTING OF THE MIND

- This is a gradual process and consists of several steps:
 - union with the beginning,
 - <Returning to the origin state of Te/De
 - < Cultivation of one's nature.
-
- In one chapter, Chuang Tzu describes such a process of fasting the mind/heart as this:
 - 'after 3 days, he was able to detach himself from the external world; after 7days he could detach himself from the things around him; after 9days, he could detach himself from his own existence.
 - After he was detached from his own existence, he attained luminous perception, he saw that which is unique.
 - After seeing that which is unique, he was able to arrive at a condition in which there was neither past nor present.
 - Finally he attained the condition in which there is neither life nor death.' (chapter6)



DAO AND DE;

- 道德经21章:
- 道之为物唯恍唯惚，恍兮惚兮其中有物。窈兮冥兮其中有精。其精甚真，其中有信。
- DAO brings about all things, so chaotically, so darkly. Chaotic and dark are its images. Unfathomable and obscure in it is the seed. This seed is wholly true. In it dwells reliability.
- 恍惚, dimly, faintly, seemingly
- 窈冥: dim, dusky; deep, abstruse
- 精: refined



TO CULTIVATE TAO IS THE SAME AS TO CULTIVATE TE

- De (Te) is the power and individualization of the Universal and eternal Tao.
- It is possible for humans to cultivate Te because Te has been in human person, in human community and in the cosmos.
- The more cultivation one does, the more one is in unity with the power of Tao:
- Cultivate te in the self, te will be real; cultivate it in the family, Te will be rich; cultivate te in the village, Te will grow; cultivate te in nation, Te will abundant; cultivate te in the universe, Te will be everywhere. (Tao Te Ching, Chapter 54)



WAYS TO CULTIVATE DAO AND DE

- the first step is to cultivate Dao and De within one's own being and existence. Cultivation of Dao is a process of transforming one's self
- To go back to the origin of one's being, one has to follow an unusual way. This is a process from complication to simplicity, and from the cultural to the natural.
- To return to one's babyhood is to clear up one's knowledge which Daoism regards useless and harmful to one's eternal happiness.
- This is a Daoist way to resolve the paradox between knowledge and happiness.



致中和LIVE UP TO ZHONG AND HE

- **What is Zhong? —— Wuji of Daoism**
- When feelings, such as pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy are not stirred, such a state of mind may be called as zhong中, the state of equilibrium; 喜怒哀乐之未发谓之中
- **What is He? —— Taiji of Daoism**
- When those feelings have been stirred and they act in their due degree, there ensues what may be called as He和, the State of Harmony. 发而皆中节谓之和
- The state of equilibrium is the great root under heaven and the state of harmony is the universal way under heaven.
- 中也者，天下之大本也；和也者，天下之达道也。
- **The Result of acting in the way of Zhong and He**
- Let the states of equilibrium and harmony exist in perfection, a happy order will prevail throughout heaven and earth and all things will be nourished and flourish.

TAI CHI: HARMONY OF YIN AND YANG

- In Chinese Tai means the highest or supreme, as in describing the highest heaven or the supreme ruler. Its literally means large or great. 泰山
- Chi/Ji means the last or the ultimate. The word Chi connotes superlative of a word, such as biggest, richest, deepest.
- So Tai Chi literally means ‘The maximum biggest’, and it often translated by variations on the same theme such as ‘the supreme ultimate’, ‘the grand supreme’, or the ‘great terminus’.
- Bruce Frantziz, *Tai Chi: Health for life, How and Why It Works for Health, Stress Relief and Longevity*, Blue Snake Books: Berkeley, California, 2006, p.3

THE ORIGINAL MEANINGS OF TAIJI

- **Tai太:** 1) 大: great (the same as da; showing one man placed over another. Later the lower man was simplified as a dot)
 - 2) 泰: highest, peace, harmony
- 太 is composed of 一(one), 人(human), and 丶 (centre): a man standing at the centre of the universe
- **Ji極:** is composed of 木(wood), 二(two) (heaven and earth), 人(human), 口(mouth) and 手(hand). It refers to 1) the beam of a house; 2) the highest peak; 3) perfection, completion
- **Tai Ji太極 means:** human in the center of the Heaven and Earth can speak and act, which is the manifestation of the highest point or perfection of the creative cosmos



木及

極

極

木

wood

—

—

TWO
(Heaven
and
earth)

人

man

口

Mouth

↓

Speak

手

Hand

|

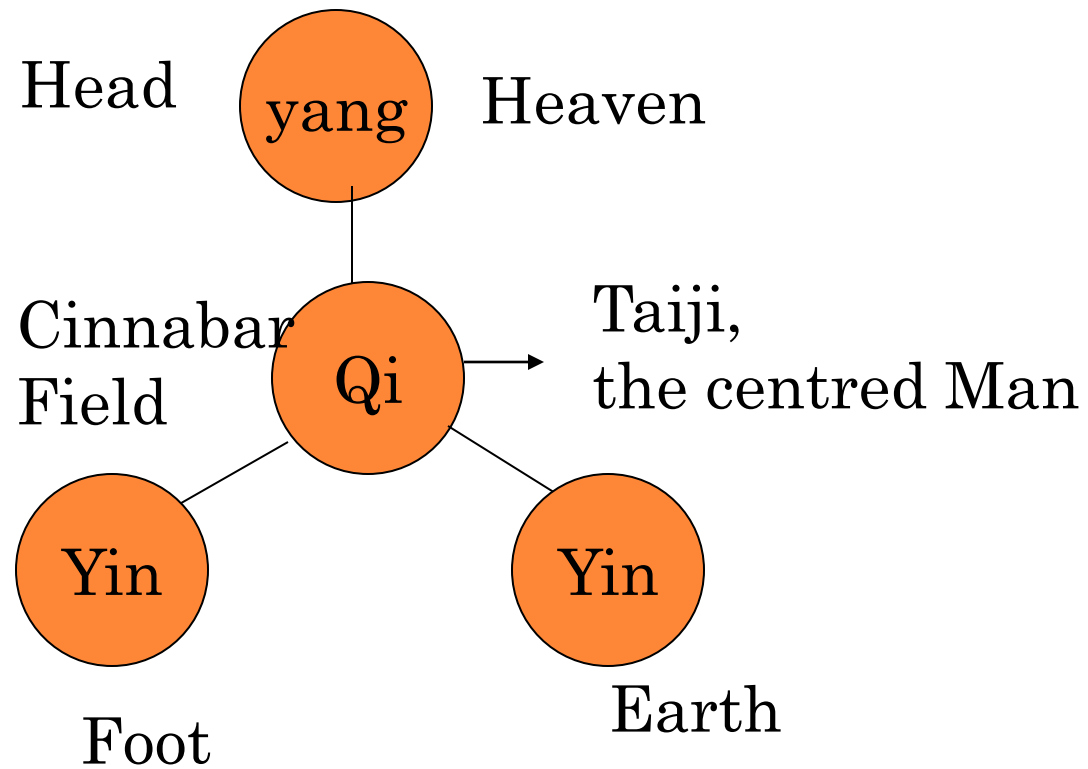
act
do

Wood ~~symbol~~ symbolizes Life and vigorous

Man in the Centre of Heaven and Earth

Can speak as well as act.

THE ANCIENT DIAGRAM OF TAIJI



THE ORIGINS OF TAI CHI = 元气

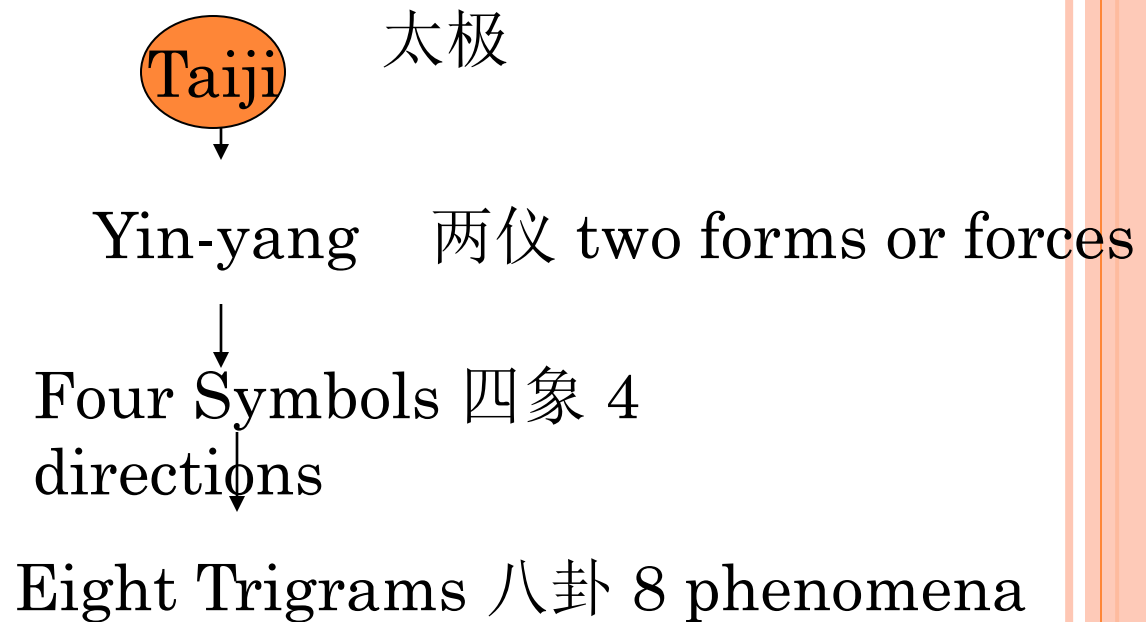
- The word of Tai Chi first appears in *the Book of Changes*, ... in a reference to the most primitive state of the universe, the origin of all changes, or the highest realm of existence.
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- In 'The Great Interpretation' essay in the Commentaries section of *The Book of Changes*, Tai Chi was first mentioned as follows: 'Yi 易 contains Taiji 太极 which gave birth to the two basic elements; the two basic elements gave birth to the four symbolic figures; the four symbolic figures then gave birth to the eight elementary trigrams 八卦 that can predict fortune and misfortune, which enables great accomplishment.'
- Here Taiji refers to the origin of changes, the most primitive state from which everything evolves. It is the highest state of existence.
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- Li Deyin, *Taiji Quan*, Beijing, Foreign Language Press, 2004, p.29.



TAI CHI AND HE和: THE HARMONY OF THE TWO (YIN AND YANG)

- Tao/Dao transforms itself from Non-existence (无极) to Existence (太极)
- Tai Chi = the One/元气(Original Qi) where Yin and Yang have not yet divided into two (gendered Qi)
- Ta Chi = harmony/Unification of Yin and Yang, which is a state where Yin and Yang is united/integrated together harmoniously.
-
- Yin and yang represent a dynamic balance of forces in the natural world, a form of evening things out.
- Our aim in life is not to try to hold on to either one of these polar forces but to keep the two in balance.
- Yin and Yang forces are constantly trying to overwhelm each other, but in truth one cannot live without the other, and they are both mutually necessary.

TAIJI AND THE PROCESS OF THE SELF-EVOLUTION OF THE COSMOS IN 'APPENDED REMARKS' OF YIJING



八卦 means eight basic existences: Heaven, earth, wind, thunder, water, fire, lake and mountain, which are the basis of all other existences

CHINESE SCHOLARS HAVE OFFERED DIFFERENT PHILOSOPHICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE WORLD BASED ON THE TAIJI YIN-YANG THEORY.

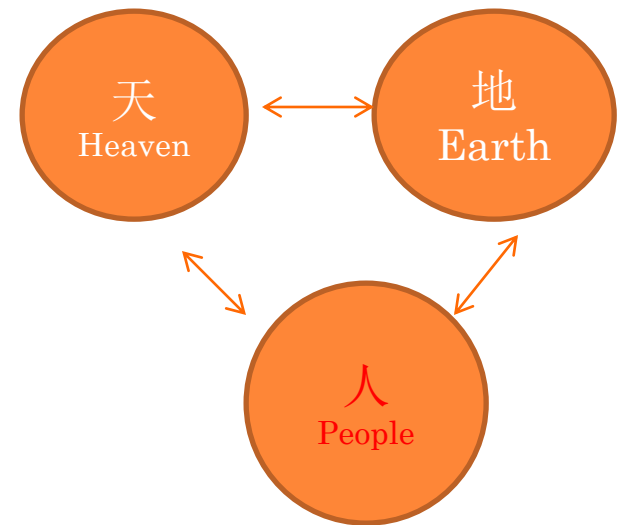
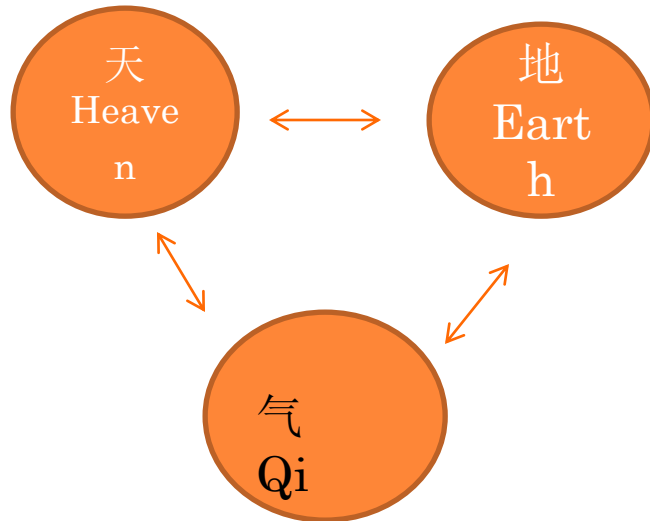
- **Kong Yingda 孔颖达 of the Tang 唐 Dynasty (618-907):** ‘Before Heaven and Earth were divided, the primal fluid—primary elements that form Heaven and Earth—were combined into one. That is the beginning of the great Unity of Tai or the great oneness of Tai.’
- **Wang Tingxiang 王廷相 of the Ming 明 Dynasty (1368-1644):** ‘Taiji was the primeval chaotic and primitive state of the universe before Heaven and Earth were formed.’
- **Zhou Dunyi 周敦颐 of the Song 宋 Dynasty (960-1279):** ‘When Taiji moved, it gave birth to Yang. When the movement reached its peak, it quieted down into motionlessness to become yin. At its extreme point yin began to move and turn toward yang. The polarized motion and stillness or yang and yin produce and promote one another. The theory of Five Elements 五行 came from yin and yang; yin and yang came from Taiji.’
- **Zhu Xi 朱熹 of the Song Dynasty:** ‘Taiji covers everything in the universe.’
- **Shao Yong 邵雍 of the Song Dynasty:** ‘Taiji is the heart and mind’; and ‘Taiji is the Dao.’

RELATIONSHIP AMONG 天地人

- For both Confucianism and Daoism, the most important pair of Yin-Yang forces is Heaven (the Great Yang) and Earth (the Great Yin).
- Humanity is formed by the creative and active mode of Heaven working on the submissive and passive mode of Earth.
- Humanity is the mixture of Heaven and Earth, in order to maintain harmonious life, the humans need to find the perfect balance to Heavenly and the Earthly.
- On the other hand, the humanity is not only a passive object who can only receive impacts from Heaven and Earth, but also a **active subject who can understand** the Way of Nature and the Dao of Harmony, and **who can use** this right understanding to support the Heaven and Earth in prevailing the their harmonious perfect Way of Heaven and Earth toward the universe, especially toward the human world.



TRINITY IN DAOISM AND CONFUCIANISM



SAN 三 (THE THREE) IN DAOISM & CONFUCIANISM

- The light and transparent yang qi rises and form the Heaven; while the heavy and opaque Qi sink and form the Earth. Qi can produce various forms of life in the middle.
- Thus, Daoism takes Heaven, Earth and Qi as the Three which is produced by the Two (Yin and Yang);
- Confucianism takes the Heaven, the Earth and the People 人 as the Three to be produced by the Two (阴阳).



KO HUNG'S DESCRIPTION OF HEAVENLY IMMORTALS

- Some immortals ascend to the clouds, their bodies upright and they fly among the clouds without the beating of wings;
- some glide across the clouds vapour by harnessing a dragon and ascend up to the very steps of Heaven;
- some transform themselves into animals and foam through the azure clouds;
- yet others dive deep into rivers and oceans, or flutter on wings to the peaks of famous mountains.'
- (*The River Encyclopaedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, 1989, p.137).



COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF IMMORTALITY

- They possess an indefinite prolongation of life; their body is incredible, and any violence, fire or water cannot harm them, at the same time their body and face remain the same as when they became immortals.
- Their spirit and body have been combined into a perfect unity. Being immortals, they still have their body. However, their body now can be transformed into any shape at their will, for example, a tree, a mountain or even invisible air or light;
- Immortals have all kinds of supernatural powers, for example, to evoke rain, to call in the wind, to make thunder and lightening, depending their relations to the gods who are in charge of these;
- Immortals are moral and ready to help other people. Above all the benevolent immortals show is that they will pass on the everlasting life blessing to creatures and methods to cultivate Dao, sharing their immortality with others.



IMMORTALITY AND LONGEVITY

- Longevity consists of maintaining one's health, slowing down the aging process, living without illness and pain, and dying peacefully without bothering other people
- Longevity thus is taken as the first step in one's cultivation of immortality and is symbolic of the attainability of immortality
- Daoist Yangsheng is to cultivate ones longevity and than immortality



THE CENTRE AND BASE OF DAOISM RELIGION

- To gain eternal life is the centre and ideal for Daoist religion.
- Taoism as a religion is based on the possibility of immortality.
- Immortality is desired in its full sense, both of the bodily life and the spiritual life.
- However, immortality as eternal life is not attainable unless one first achieves longevity



DAOIST ATTITUDE TOWARDS LIFE AND DEATH

- Summarily, the Daoist attitude to life and death has three aspects:
- 1. Life is more important than wealth and power;
- 2. death is to return to nature;
- 3. life and death are one link of the eternal and constant process of transformation.



REVERSE THE POSTNATAL TO THE CONGENITAL

- The basic principle of Daoism is to return to the source of all.
- To Unify with Dao is to return to emptiness (无/无极)
- The Universe (Macrocosm) was divided from one (Dao) to Two (Yin yang) to myriad through creation,
- So did human body (Microcosm) from congenital Qi to a postnatal physical and energy body through 9 months mother's pregnancy.
- This method of 'Reverse the Postnatal to the Congenital' is reversal of the process of creation within the energy body through Nei gong (内功) practice (Dao Yin, Internal Alchemy and Qi Kong).

