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TAO AS THE GREAT MOTHER AND THE INFLUENCE OF MOTHERLY LOVE IN THE SHAPING OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

One important aspect of thought in the *Tao Te Ching*, the significance of which has so far been neglected, is its emphasis on the feminine. Of all ancient Chinese classics, the *Tao Te Ching* stands alone in explicitly speaking of Tao as the Mother of the world (25):[1] it is the dark female animal (6); to reach union with Tao man needs to abide by the female (28); the female animal overcomes the male animal by its stillness (61).

Recently, there has been speculation that the meaning of Tao in the *Book of Change* and the *Tao Te Ching* originated from the worship of the moon.[2] Lü Szŭ-mien[b] points out that:

1. The language of the *Tao Te Ching* is very archaic. Composed of rhymes of three or four characters, it uses terms which are very peculiar, e.g., it does not say man [*nan*[c]] and woman [*nü*[d]], but mare [*p'in*[e]] and horse [*mou*[f]].

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[1] To reduce the number of footnotes, I am giving the references to the text under discussion immediately in the body of the paper. Thus (25) means chap. 25 of the *Tao Te Ching*, etc. Superscript letters refer to the Chinese in the Glossary.

[2] See Tu Er-wei,[a] *Chung-kuo ku-tai tsung-chiao yen-chiu*[a] [Studies on the religions of Ancient China] (Taipei: Hua Ming Press, 1959), and *Chung-kuo ku-tai tsung-chiao hsi-t'ung*[a] [The religious system of Ancient China, studies of the gods, Dao, Ti and Hou-t'u] (Taipei: Hua Ming Press, 1960).

2. In the text of the *Tao Te Ching*, female rights are always above male rights.[3]

Among Western scholars, Eduard Erkes suggested that Tao originally was a Mother-goddess.[4] Duyvendak in discussing chapter 52 of the *Tao Te Ching* says that it "would seem to suggest a matriarchal society."[5] But apart from one or two short articles in which the feminine origin of Tao is mentioned in passing, this very unique and important aspect of the *Tao Te Ching* has not been seriously examined.

The *Tao Te Ching* first appealed to me as a work on naturalism and primitivism: nature is sacred, good, and harmonious, but human consciousness and its workings destroy the peace and organic unity of nature.

Then I came to examine the meaning of *ming*,[i] the Taoist term for spiritual enlightenment. It dawned upon me that the *Tao Te Ching* was indeed, as the religious Taoists claimed it to be, a work in search of immortality, but, like Socrates' search for immortality, it amounted to a search for death. *Ming* as the return of the bright to the hidden, the conscious to the unconscious, also means to return from the activities of life to the quietude of death. Only if we return to Tao, which would mean the annihilation of the individual as individual, are we reconnected with the fountain of life, thus the Taoist withdrawal to *wu*,[j] the dark and even darker (1). *Ming* is a return to the unconscious, to death. The Taoist search for immortality, like Socrates', was a search for immortality in reverse gear.

This was a frightful discovery, as I was suspicious of all philosophies that glory in death. I began to examine the concept of *wu* (nonbeing), this dark nothingness which is the fountain of all being (*yu*[k]) and to which the *Tao Te Ching* beckons us as to our destiny.

This time I was relieved to find that, as contrasted with consciousness which is considered by the *Tao Te Ching* to be static,

[3] Ku Chieh-kang,[g] ed., *Ku shih pien*,[g] 7 vols. (Peking, 1916–41), 2:369.

[4] See J. J. L. Duyvendak, *Tao Te Ching* (London: John Murray, 1954), p. 56. Erkes did not touch upon this problem in his translation of the *Ho-Shang-Kung's Commentary on Lao-tse* (Ascona: Artibus Asiae, 1950, 1958).

[5] Duyvendak, p. 115. But he hastens to add that "in the characteristically Chinese culture, developed out of many different influences, the patriarchal principle is predominant" (pp. 115–16). On the other hand, Marcel Granet and Kuo Mo-jo, who have delved into the early civilization of China and have covered to some depth the matriarchal phase of Chinese history, were unaware that the *Tao Te Ching* in its thought form was connected with the matriarchal experience (see Kuo Mo-jo, *Ch'ing-t'ung shih-tai*[h] [Bronze age] [Chungking, 1944; Peking, 1962]; Marcel Granet, *Chinese Civilization* [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1930, 1950, 1957]).

life negating, and change denying, *wu* reveals itself as the most dynamic and fertile life force. Now the return from the bright to the dark, from being (*yu*) to nonbeing (*wu*), which is the process and goal of enlightenment (*ming*), was no longer a search for death. It was really a search for a more integrated life, a life rooted in the hidden creative power. The training for *ming* is a training for experiencing the dark invisible power which sustains life that comes into light.

Meanwhile, *wu* as the dark (nonbeing) aspect of Tao struck me more and more as a feminine principle.[6] I became convinced that the *Tao Te Ching* aims at conveying to us the presence and efficacy of a female creative power. Its origin was rooted in the worship of the Mother-goddess. As soon as I grasped this point, the *Tao Te Ching* became an open book, all its utterances are now seen to be organically integrated. A reading of Erich Neumann's works confirmed me the correctness of my approach.[7]

All the symbols of the Great Mother—dark, night, chasm, cave, abyss, valley, depths, womb—are present in the descriptions of Tao. Tao is the empty vessel (4), the bellows (5), the dark (1) unborn, preceding all gods (4), the mystical female which is the door of heaven and earth (6), the mother (1, 20, 25, 52), the hen (*tz'u*[1]) (10, 28), the mare (6, 61), the Great Mother (25, 34). Tao is also water (8, 78) that nourishes and benefits all things, the valley (6, 28, 32, 39, 41) that is productive due to its lowliness. Tao as *wu* is the archetypal *en sich*, the Urobores, the Archetypal Feminine, which contains and produces all things from within its emptiness (40, 42).

Typically, the *Tao Te Ching* mentions only motherly, not fatherly, love: it speaks of *tz'u*[m] (67) that spreads evenly (32), that embraces all and excludes none (27, 62), that never withdraws itself and yet never claims credits (34). At the same time, it speaks against the evils of opening and developing one's consciousness (24, 47, 52), the futility of making distinctions (2), the limitations of language and speech (1, 5, 32, 81), the adverse effects of civilization and culture (18, 38, 53), and the uselessness of multiplying statutes and laws (57, 74, 75). It even speaks against

[6] See my article "Nothingness and the Mother Principle in Early Chinese Taoism," *International Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 9, no. 3 (September 1969).

[7] Erich Neumann, *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, trans. from the German by R. F. C. Hull, with a foreword by C. G. Jung, 2 vols. (New York: Pantheon Books for Bollingen Foundation, Harper Torchbook, 1962); also *The Great Mother, an Analysis of the Archetype*, trans. from the German by Ralph Manheim, Bollingen Series 47 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1955).

traveling (47, 80). These symbols and achievements of the father are all summarily dismissed by the *Tao Te Ching* as useless to the smooth functioning of life.[8]

This discovery—that the *Tao Te Ching*, or as it is more fittingly regarded, the old wisdom, is in its essence a hymn to the power and love of Tao as the Great Mother—opens my eyes to the unique nature of Chinese philosophy. In the rest of this paper I shall discuss a few texts and persons in classical Chinese philosophy to illustrate my point.

THE EMPTY CIRCLE AS THE SYMBOL OF "I"[n]

First on the list of Confucian texts is the *I Ching*. With its emphasis on the male, the bright and manifesting, with "its progressive direction leading to the development of society, morality, and civilization,"[9] the *I Ching* is understandably a Confucian text. One gets the impression that while the *Tao Te Ching* acknowledges but goes beyond the male-female duality to Tao as the Archetypal Feminine, thus celebrating mainly the love of the Great Mother (while the male principle plays only the role of the child), the *I Ching* fastens its gaze on the interaction of the masculine and the feminine, its concept of love is bisexual, it speaks of the love between heaven and earth, *yin*[o] and *yang*,[p] male and female.

Still, when we look deeper, we find that the duality of male and female in the *I Ching* is founded on a unity. *I*, Tao, or the Great Ultimate (*t'ai chi*[q]) is represented by an empty circle, which as the Great Round is a familiar symbol of the Great Mother.[10] Thus the *I Ching*'s celebration of love between heaven and earth is founded ultimately on the fertile productive activity issuing from the Eternal Mother as the Great Round. Then this Great Round bifurcated into a duality of *yin* and *yang*. Eventually the *yang* became strong and dominant, and we have the *I Ching* since Chou

[8] Cf. Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving* (New York: Harper & Row, Colophon Paperback, 1962), pp. 41–43.

[9] Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 263.

[10] Cf. Neumann, *The Great Mother*, p. 25. The representation of the *t'ai chi* as an empty circle began with Chou Tun-i[r] (1017–73), who wrote the *T'ai-chi-t'u shuo*[r] [An explanation of the diagram of the great ultimate] and the *T'ung-shu*[r] [Penetrating the *Book of Changes*] under Taoist influence. Within the Confucian system which considers the male to be the ultimate creative principle, the symbolism of *I* as the empty circle or Great Round is hard to comprehend. Thus James Legge's comment that the empty circle as the symbol of *I* is unintelligible and unsuccessful is well made (see James Legge, trans., "The *I Ching*," in *The Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 16, *The Texts of Confucianism* [London: Clarendon Press, 1899; New York: Dover Publications, 1963], pt. 2, pp. 12–13).

times as a text which celebrates the creative power of the male.[11] I believe the *I Ching* had undergone a long history of evolution, reflective of the evolution of consciousness in China. There is a significant lead in the *Li Chi* that Confucius once discovered an earlier version of the *I Ching*, called the *K'un Ch'ien*,[s] in which the feminine power was given priority.[12]

FILIAL PIETY IN MENCIUS

Confucianism and Taoism appear to have different sources of inspiration. Taoist naturalism holds as its model of love Mother Nature, who gives but claims nothing for Herself. Confucian humanism is exclusively consecrated to the love of the Father, and only by extension it is applied to brother, oneself, and other men. When we examine Mencius's ethical teachings, however, we find that they are just as deeply rooted in naturalism as Taoism. On the nature of love he says: "A gentleman shows care [*ai*[u]] toward things but not benevolence [*jen*[v]]; he shows benevolence [*jen*] toward the people but not attachment [*ch'in*[w]]. Toward his parents he is attached, but towards the people he is benevolent; toward the people he is benevolent but with things he is careful" (VII.A.45).

A true Confucianist, Mencius distinguishes between three grades of love. The lowest form of love, love for things, is *ai*, a careful, nonabusive and nonwasteful use of things. This Confucian concept of *ai* is equivalent to the idea of *chien*,[x] the frugality of nature, in the *Tao Te Ching* (67). Love for people is *jen*, which in the *Mencius* as benevolence, pity, and compassion, originates from the heart that cannot bear (*pu jen*[y]) the sufferings of others (II.A.6). *Jen* as such is a life-giving and life-sustaining force. What Mencius constantly harps on is the love and nurture of the people by the ruler,[13] a love not unlike the motherly love (*tz'u*) in the *Tao Te Ching* (67). Mencius and Confucius both believed in first taking care of the physical needs of the people; only then are they to be instructed in the rites, music, and other fatherly disciplines.

In Mencius's portrayal of *ch'in*, love for father and family, the

[11] See Hellmut Wilhelm, *Change, Eight Lectures on the I Ching*, trans. from the German by Cary F. Baynes (New York: Pantheon Books for Bollingen Foundation, 1960; Harper Torchbook, 1964), p. 11.

[12] The *Li Chi*, Li Yün[t]:5. See *Li Chi*, trans. James Legge, 2 vols. (New York: University Books), 1:368. (This was originally published by Oxford Press in 1885 as vols. 27 and 28 of *The Sacred Books of the East* and was also designated as pts. 3 and 4 of *The Texts of Confucianism*.)

[13] See also *The Analects*, 5:25.

supreme form of love in Confucianism, we see how deeply the Confucian doctrine of love reflects the naturalistic roots of Chinese ethics. Mencius, in his search for a model of love, goes back to the legendary emperor Shun (third millennium B.C.) who was treated cruelly by his father, the Blind Man, and his brother, Hsiang. "Shun's parents sent him to repair the barn. Then they removed the ladder and the Blind Man set fire to the barn. They sent Shun to dredge the well, set out after him and blocked up the well over him. Hsiang said, 'The credit for plotting against the life of Shun goes to me. The cattle and sheep go to you, father and mother, and the granaries as well. But the spears go to me, and the lute and the *ti*[z] bow as well. His two wives should also be made to look after my quarters'"[14] (V.A.2).

Accounts on how Shun managed to escape with his life belong to the realm of myth and fairy tales.[15] The important point is that he showed no rancor. He enfeoffed his brother (V.A.3) and, as to his father, "he went to see the Blind Man in the most respectful frame of mind, in fear and trembling, and the Blind Man, for his part, became amenable" (V.A.4).

In Shun's behavior toward his father there was a determined, irrational will to be filial. This cannot be explained except that the Blind Man, no matter how wicked, was his father, his root, the origin of his life, and thus he was destined to be good and loyal to him, even to the point of forsaking the Empire (VII.A.35). Such behavior reminds us of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac to show his absolute obedience to God.

In holding Shun up as the epitome of virtue we find that in Confucian China the movement from female to male consciousness did not proceed in the same manner as in other cultures. Instead of claiming his independence by rebelling or even killing the father to establish his own manhood, the son always remained a son in China. Filial piety means acceptance and subservience to the father, no matter what kind of father one has.[16]

For Mencius, who represents orthodox Confucianism, morality is rooted in nature. There is this ambivalence in Mencius, which

[14] This translation and the next are from D. C. Lau, *Mencius* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970), pp. 139–40, 143.

[15] The story goes like this, Shun's two wives, knowing the evil designs of Shun's father and brother, made him wear a bird suit before he set out to repair the barn, thus enabling him to transform himself into a bird and fly away when the barn was set afire. Then when he was to enter the well, they put on him a dragon suit, so he changed himself into a dragon and swam out from another well (see Yuan K'o, *Chung-kuo ku-tai shen-hua*[aa] [Ancient myths of China] [Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1951, 1957], pp. 164–65). Original source is quoted in the *Shih chi cheng-i*[ab] [Correct meanings of the records of the historian] by Chang Shou-chieh (fl. 1736).

[16] *The Analects*, 4:18.

characterizes all Confucian ethics, that while he sinks morality in nature so that virtue is merely the right cultivation of nature, at the same time he lifts it out of animal nature to make it a distinctively human value (VI.A.2).

Still, the Confucian teaching on love, all appearances to the contrary, has not moved far from the Taoist. Both can be best illustrated with the plant imagery as the symbol of man. The difference between Taoism and Confucianism lies in this. In Taoism, love means Mother Nature as the Earth bearing forth all creatures from Her womb; it also means man's clinging to nature like the plant clings to its soil for life and sustenance. The idea is of a single tree of life representing all creatures born from the Earth; thus all creatures, human or otherwise, share in one single universal life. Love means the acceptance of all as a part of the self; it is to imitate the unmotivated and undifferentiated love of Mother Nature. As the sage says in the *Tao Te Ching* (49):

> The good I accept them as good,
> The not-good I also accept them as good.
> This is the goodness of nature (*te*^{ac}).
> The faithful I accept them as faithful,
> The faithless I also accept them as faithful.
> This is the faithfulness of nature (*te*).

In Confucianism, the concept of one's life force, and consequently the concept of love, is narrowed down to man and, eventually, to one's own family only. The focus is now not on the inseparable relationship between the plant and its soil, but on the inseparable relationship between parts of the same plant. The father and male ancestors are the roots of a tree while other members in the family are like its branches. Thus a Confucian practices graded love. He returns injury with justice[17] when dealing with those outside the family. But when it is a matter of love for members of his own family, like in the case of the sage king, Shun, a Confucian becomes a Taoist who returns injury with the all-accepting love of Mother Nature.[18] Shun's love for his father can be explained only as the unquestioning adherence, the willed identity of a plant with its root.

LOVE IN YANG CHU (440–360 B.C.?) AND MO TZU (FL. 479–438 B.C.)

It would not be right in a discussion of love in Chinese philosophy to pass over Yang Chu and Mo Tzu, both of whom were vehemently

[17] Ibid., 14:36.
[18] See the *Tao Te Ching*, chap. 63.

attacked by Mencius (III.B.9; VII.A.26) exactly on account of their theories of love.

Yang Chu practiced a philosophy of self-preservation. The *Lü-shih Ch'un Ch'iu* (17:7) says that he "values the self," and in the *Huai-nan Tzu* (chap. 13) he is someone who "preserves his life force by holding on to the original nature. He does not allow his person (*hsing*[ad]) to be perturbed by things." The *Han Fei Tzu* (chap. 50) tells us that he would not go into any city that was in danger or any place that was at war. In the *Mencius* (VII.A.26) we read: "The principle of Yang Tzu was each one for himself. Though he might have benefited the whole world by plucking out a single hair, he would not have done it."

While Mencius (III.B.9) is right in saying that such lack of concern for the welfare of society amounts to forsaking one's prince, to accuse Yang Chu of being selfish and teaching a hedonism is to miss the point of his philosophy entirely.[19] For a Taoist like Yang Chu who values the primordial bliss in the womb of Tao there is no need to dedicate himself to the cause of mankind. Only when this perfect state is over and man finds himself severed from the ocean of Tao does the need for fellow feeling arise, as the *Chuang Tzu* (6:5) says: "When the spring is dry and the fish find themselves on land, they spit moisture at one another and smear one another with froth. It would be better if they forget one another in rivers and lakes. Rather than denounce Chieh or praise Yao, it would be better if both are forgotten in the transformation of Tao." The same is said in the *Huai-nan Tzu* (chap. 2): "As the fish forget one another in rivers and lakes, So men forget one another in practicing the art of Tao."[20]

Yang Chu was an individualist who had chosen to return to the condition of the child. In the consciousness of the child, self-love and love for mother are indistinguishable. Like the fetus in the womb or the seed in the soil, he is unaware of the existence of others. Thus he feels no love for others, but neither is there any selfishness in him. Selfishness, presupposing an awareness of others and a comparison of the self with others, leads to strife. Yang Chu's brand of self-love, however, can only lead to universal peace. The *Lieh Tzu* (book 7) says: "The man of old, while he

[19] Yang Chu was described as a hedonist in book 7 of the *Lieh Tzu*, a third- or fourth-century forgery (see Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, trans. Derk Bodde [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1952], 1:113).

[20] The same impassiveness is found in Zen Buddhism (see Heinrich Dumoulin, *A History of Zen Buddhism* [Bern: A. Francke AG Verlag, 1959; New York: Random House, 1963; Beacon Paperback, 1969], p. 240).

would not give one hair to benefit the world, neither would he take the world to serve himself. When no one lost a hair, when no one benefited the world, the world was at peace."

Mo Tzu's doctrine of universal love, making no distinction in loving one's own parents and the parents of other people (the *Mo Tzu*, chaps. 14–16), in Mencius's (III.B.9) judgment amounts to forsaking one's father. Though there is little evidence that Mo Tzu in advocating universal love was consciously harkening back to a more primitive form of consciousness, his nondiscriminating heaven, loving, caring, and accepting all, reflects the motherly love of Tao described in the *Tao Te Ching*.

With the establishment of a male-dominated hierarchical structure in Confucianism, the feminine consciousness was preserved in the masses, and Mo Tzu was their spokesman. Everywhere he was prosaic and down to earth; in his sayings there is not a hint of arrogance as we find in Confucius. His teaching on frugality (chaps. 20, 21); his banning of music, dances, and luxurious living of the aristocracy (32); his condemnation of war (17, 18, 19); and his advocation of simple burials (25) were all in the interest of the masses. His concern was for life and the livelihood of the people. Though some of his disciples became logicians, he was himself against book learning and metaphysical speculation that had no direct bearing on the practical side of life.

Mo Tzu's philosophy was a mass movement against Confucian elitism (38, 39). In Confucianism in which the father image is supreme, heaven is the abode of one's ancestors who watch over the well-being of the family on earth, hence the teaching of graded love. Mo Tzu, in searching for a greater rationality, broke through the narrow limits of Confucian love to reach the concept of universal love. Thus, by advancing beyond Confucius he recovered the values of a more ancient age.[21]

Yang Chu, who loved only himself, and Mo Tzu, who loved all without distinction, were two forms of reaction against Confucian graded love. Both revert to the love of the mother. Yang Chu's idea of self-love models upon the child or fetus, contented in the

[21] Here I beg to disagree with Professor Chan who says that Mo Tzu failed to hold the consciousness of the Chinese because "philosophically Moism is shallow and unimportant" (*A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 212). In my view, Mo Tzu failed because he tried to compete with Confucianism on the same ground, in the name of reason and enlightenment (see the *Chuang Tzu*, 11:3). As a rational system Mo Tzu's philosophy could not compete with Confucianism. But while Moism failed, Taoism succeeded. Taoism succeeded by repudiating what Confucianism held as sacred; by being openly against the male values of reason, knowledge, and action; and by harkening back to the feminine values on life, instinct, and intuition.

womb of Mother Nature and oblivious of the existence of others. Mo Tzu's idea of universal love is modeled on the love of Mother Nature, caring and loving equally all that She has borne into existence.

LOVE OF LIFE AND TRANSFORMATION IN THE "CHUANG TZU"

We read in the *Chuang Tzu* that once upon a time there existed a matriarchal society in which people "knew their mothers, but not their fathers" (29:1). Universal peace reigned in this pre-rational and premoral stage of human existence. But, as soon as consciousness developed and morals appeared, the history of mankind became plagued with bloody events.

Taoism repudiates any form of love based on distinction. As consciousness advances, it steps out of the primordial fullness of Tao. Now the part is severed from the whole, it suffers a reduction, and becomes partial. As a result, love, which means partiality, is born. The Confucian ideal of love as *jen* (benevolence to one's fellowmen), *i* (righteousness within a group), and *li* (respectful ritual behavior relative to the position occupied by the revered object in the hierarchy of being) results from the narrowing of consciousness from the all-embracing Tao. Such love is treated by the *Chuang Tzu* as a disease; to be educated in the Confucian morality is like having one's nose cut off, it is to suffer a mutilation of nature (6:13).

Confucianism speaks of passion and dedication to the world, to superiors, and parents. The *Chuang Tzu* pointedly repudiates such love (6:13). To be a true man, the Taoist must shed the human and all too human, he has the form (*hsing*[ad]) but not the feelings of man (*wu ch'ing*,[ae] 5:5). The Taoist transcends allegiance to family, society, even heaven (*tien*[af]); he breaks loose the bonds of father, ruler, god—the three male powers that claim the complete devotion of the Confucian—in order that he may consecrate himself to the love of Tao (6:5).[22]

Against the Confucian graded love, the Taoist sinks back to the unconscious, unmotivated, and nondiscriminating love of Tao. He behaves in such a way that "The benefits and favors [of a sage] go down to ten thousand generations, but he did not do it out of love [*ai*] of men. Hence, to rejoice in the knowledge of things is

[22] The *Chuang Tzu* (6:5) says: "He who takes heaven to be father, and loves it, how he ought to love that which transcends heaven. People consider their ruler superior and are willing to die for him. How they ought to be willing to die for the true (Tao)."

not to be a sage; love of parents [*ch'in*] is not benevolence [*jen*] [6:3]."[23]

Behind the impassive detachment of the Taoist (6:3; 6:13) burns a passionate love for the creative power of the world. The *Chuang Tzu*'s repudiation of human, motivated love is dictated by a higher love for the Maker (*tsao wu che*[ag]) (6:13), of all things.

This creative force, this absolute ground of all things, is grasped by the *Chuang Tzu* to be change: "Silent and formless; changing, transforming endlessly; 'tis dead, 'tis alive; 'tis heaven, 'tis earth. Its spiritual power is moving, what has it become? Wither has it gone? Ten thousand things all appear, yet they do not fully contain it—This was one ancient way to Tao. Chuang Tzu heard this and rejoiced therein" (33:6).

Enraptured with this vision of change, all apparent differentiations melt away. The line between life and death is blurred; the comparison between great and small, long and short, loses its cogency; language, the intellect, they all have to be realigned to become one with the process of change.

Fascination with change leads to fascination with death, change's most drastic form. The *Chuang Tzu* is full of musings on death. Death as the end of individual existence seems tragic. But the Taoist identifies himself not with his individual life, but with Tao, the creative Life principle which takes on various forms, at the same time constantly changing itself into other forms. To the endless changes that constitute Life the Taoist is resigned; indeed he willingly, actively, and joyfully participates in this change.

> Then it happened that Tzu-yu fell sick and Tzu-ssu went to inquire about him. "How great that the Creator should have doubled me up like this!" He had become hunchbacked and the five vital organs were on top of him. His chin hid in the navel, his shoulders were higher than the neck.
>
> "Do you dislike this?"
>
> "No. How could I dislike it? Suppose my left arm were changed into a rooster, I could use it to determine when night was over. Suppose my right arm were changed into a crossbow, I could use it to get doves to roast" (6:9).

This fascination with change and death reveals itself to be a desire to blend with the transformative Life of the Mother, (29:1; 6:7). In Taoism, whether in the philosophy of Yang Chu, Chuang Tzu, or the *Tao Te Ching*, man plays the role of a child; he shows a childlike trust and abandonment to Mother Nature (6:7). He disdains all activities, including officialdom, which might foreshorten his natural life span, but he cheerfully accepts death as good, if it comes from Mother Nature Herself. "The

[23] See also ibid., 6:13.

Great Earth [*Ta K'uai*^{ah}] carries me by giving me body, toils me by life, lightens my burden by age, and rests me by death. Therefore That Which has made my life good in the same way makes my death good" (6:6).

In Taoism the ideal of love is the Mother's unmotivated love for all her children and the child's unquestioning devotion to the Mother. True and full love for a Taoist means the acceptance and rejoicing in whatever life brings. The *Chuang Tzu* celebrates Life in all its transformations. Every form of life, long lived or short lived, ugly or beautiful, receives its affirmation. While the Greeks worshipped strength and beauty of form, Taoism considers the grotesque and deformed and weak somehow to belong more to the process of change, thus they are closer to the Mother. Like an obedient child the Taoist willingly submits himself to the process of change, he lets Mother Earth take himself back to Her womb to be refashioned like clay into other forms of life. "It happens we are pleased to be moulded into human shape. If the human shape can take ten thousand transformations without end, what incalculable joy this would be! Therefore the sage roams where things cannot get lost but are all preserved. Thus to die young is good, to grow old is good, coming to be is good, ceasing to be is also good" (6:6).

In Taoism, rest is a mere preparation for activity, and death is but one stage in the transformation of Life. Indeed, 10,000 transformations await us beyond this life! While the Indians abhor such endless transformations and invented ways of release from the cycle of rebirth, the *Chuang Tzu* says: "What incalculable joy this is!" The Taoist so identifies himself with the transformative aspect of Nature that, notwithstanding the pains and sufferings, he regards life as joy, freedom, and spontaneity. In the celebration of the transformative life of the Mother, death exists no more, it is swallowed up by Life (3:4).

All man's love for the unchanging has to be sublimated in the dynamism of Life. Every human form of love—love of wife, mother, and friend[24]—has to be seen in this light. Upon his wife's death, Chuang Tzu was found squatting on the ground and singing, "beating on an earthen bowl" (18:2). Men-sun Ts'ai,

[24] The *Chuang Tzu*, while challenging the Confucian teaching that love for parents is prior to all other forms of love (6:3), celebrates the love among friends (6:9, 10:11). In general, Confucian love centers on blood relationship, but Taoist poets, artists, and philosophers are famous for their friendship in common communion with Tao and nature. In the sixteenth century, friendship, long neglected by orthodox Confucians, was brought out as an essential form of love by the left (Taoist) wing of the Wang Yang Ming school.

upon the death of his mother, did not show proper mourning (6:12). Tzu-li, keeping vigil on his fast-dying friend Tzu-lai, broke into a hymn of praise to the Creator (*Tsao hua*,[ai] 6:10). Being true Taoists, these men were able to integrate and sublimate their personal love for wife, mother, and friend in the transpersonal love for life, Nature, and All Transformations. If death is merely one stage of Life's endless transformations, our loved ones have not been lost to us. Only now, their forms having returned to the formless, they have become hidden to us. But in the bosom of Tao, nothing is ever lost (6:6). So now they have assumed Universal Life of the Mother. In the mountains and valleys, the clouds and rivers, in everything that holds life and is life, our loved ones live on.

CONCLUSION

My paper must stop here. I have tried to show, through the study of a few classical thinkers, that because of the Chinese love for the Earth and what She stands for, as Nature, Mother, Body, and Life, Chinese philosophy, as distinguished from other philosophical traditions, is a long celebration of life. And even after the establishment of male domination in Confucianism, the influence of motherly love has lingered on to inform and shape the Chinese mind. Perhaps it is unique that in Confucianism, alone among male-dominated systems, there is no repudiation of the body as evil. Instead, what we have is the *Classic of Filial Piety*.

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CHINESE GLOSSARY

a 杜而未，中國古代宗教研究，中國古代宗教系統

b 呂思勉

c 男

d 女

e 牝

f 牡

g 古史辨

h 郭沫若
青銅時代

i 明

j 無

k 有

l 雌

m 慈

n 易

o 陰

p 陽

q 太極

r 周敦頤
太極圖說
通書

s 坤乾

t 禮運篇

u 愛

v 仁

w 親

x 儉

y 不忍

z 弒

aa 袁珂，中國古代神話

ab 張守節，史記正義

ac 德

ad 形

ae 無情

af 天

ag 造物者

ah 大塊

ai 造化