

CHAPTER FOUR

Oriental Thinking in Four Books

Chu Hsi (1130-1200, A.D.) coined the term, “Four Books” to refer to: *The Analects* of Confucius, *The Book of Mencius*, *The Doctrine of the Mean* and the *Great Learning*. Both, *The Doctrine of the Mean* and *Great Learning* became standard texts required for people who sought to work for the Chinese government and consequently who took the government civil service examination to qualify for Chinese government service from 1313 through 1905. Of course, Confucius’ *Analects* was the Chinese “bible” for all citizens, rich and poor, particularly in Northern China, but also across the Yangtze River in Southern China where the *Tao* of Lao-tzu was the major text to guide peasant and noble lives. (China divides into Northern and Southern along the lines of the Yangtze River, the south being verdant and agriculturally alive - some eighty percent of inland water transportation travels the Yangtze River.)

The Doctrine of the Mean

The Doctrine of the Mean is sometimes confused with *The Book of Mencius* because Chinese tradition described it as having been transmitted through Mencius by Tzu-ssu, its author, since “This work represents the central way” in which Confucius’ *Analects* and the teachings of the Confucian schools were communicated to Chinese society. *The Doctrine of the Mean* provides statements attributed to Confucius, adding “comments” whose speakers are unspecified or “remarks” by Chu Hsi; in addition, quotations are interspersed from what is called *The Book of Odes*. This book, *The Doctrine of the Mean* has two underlying principles: **chung** and **yung**. **Chung** is a principle which the Chinese consider to be central to all things in the world and has the characteristic of what is not one-sided so it also is translated as the mean, neither to one or the other side, but down the middle, or central - hence the title, *The Doctrine of the Mean*. **Yung**, on the other hand is the principle which designates what is ordinary within the world and is characterized by what is unchangeable in the world.

T’ien, or mother nature (also, *Heaven*) gives mankind human nature, so to follow human nature is the *Tao*, or Way if humans want to be virtuous and, therefore healthy. Now, prior to humans interacting through feelings, such as, pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy, human nature is in a state of **chung**, translated as equilibrium, or centered. If humans are to keep to the Way, they must re-align themselves as feeling pleasure, anger, sorrow or joy, reacting according to the mean and if they do this, they will achieve harmony with nature, be at peace with themselves and peace will reign in families and the various states. Thus, the texts state that the superior man (the virtuous person) “...exemplifies the Mean (the **chung-yung**) whereas the inferior person acts contrary to the Mean. (Paragraphs 1-12)

The text (paragraphs 13-19) goes on to apply this way of life and notes that the superior person will achieve the Mean in respect to four groups of persons: son to father, citizen to ruler, a child to his/her elder siblings, a person to his/her friends.

In practicing the ordinary virtues and in the exercise of care in ordinary conversation, when there is deficiency, the superior man never fails to make further effort, and when there is excess, never dares to go to the limit. His words correspond to his actions and his actions correspond to his words. (Paragraph 13)

Ch'eng emphasizes the relationship between words and actions, but, in so doing, he plays with the Chinese pictograph *hsin* which means *mind*. The Buddhists take this term and change it to *hsin-fa* which means to communicate *mind to mind without words* (emphasizing the principle of enlightenment through meditation). So, the meaning is that the superior person acts in concert with nature, centering him or herself so that words and actions coincide. Thus, within Lao-tzu's *Tao*, Lao-tzu emphasizes that the virtuous person does not orient him or herself with the eye but within the belly where feeling originates. Humans, therefore, become virtuous non-verbally, through feeling their actions to be in concert with nature. [This is why all the various Chinese (and other Oriental martial arts, Korean, Japanese, Indian, and so forth) begin and end their instruction with breathing. Through breathing we center ourselves because breath is the link to life itself, so through centered breathing, we can contact the source of life itself. Thus, Oriental peoples "naturally" meditate and reluctantly speak!] Orientally speaking, therefore, the test of virtue is how we use our speech, our verbal communication in our inter-actions with family (including deceased ancestors), peers and superiors! Yet, as Lao-tzu observes, humans should use words sparingly, "knowing when to stop".

Indeed, Ch'eng quotes Confucius in relation to the virtuousness or non-virtuousness of a ruler in respect to the "...nine standards by which to administer the empire, its states and the families". This quotation reiterates the basis of Confucian and, now Buddhist philosophy, that is, the primacy of self-knowledge:

They are: cultivating the personal life...If the ruler cultivates his personal life, the Way will be established...To fast, to purify and to be correct in dress (at the time of solemn sacrifice) and not to make any movement contrary to the rules of propriety - this is the way to cultivate the personal life... There is a way to be sincere with oneself: If one does not understand what is good, he will not be sincere with himself. Sincerity is the Way of Heaven. To think how to be sincere is the way of man. He who is sincere is one who hits upon what is right without effort and apprehends without thinking. He is naturally and easily in harmony with the Way. Such a man is a sage. He who tries to be sincere is one who chooses the good and hold fast to it. (Paragraph 20, pp. 105-07)

The remainder of *The Doctrine of the Mean* elaborates on the meaning of "sincerity" and describes how the "sage" is a person of self-knowledge and a follower of the *Tao*, that is, The Way.

The Book of Mencius

Tradition lists Mencius' birth date about 420 B.C. and his date of death to be about 350 B.C., however, Wing-Tsit Chan places his birth and death at 371 B.C. and 289 B.C. respectively, making him possibly a contemporary of the Athenian Plato, student of Socrates. Both Mencius

and Confucius shared some common characteristics: both being born in what is now the Shantung province, both being teachers working in a time of political struggle, societal chaos and intellectual conflict. We know nothing more about Mencius personally than that he was a student of Confucius' grandson Tzu-ssu's pupil.

One difference, however, is dramatic. Although Mencius rooted his thought in Confucius' *Analects* wherein Confucius implied that human nature is good, Mencius declared specifically that human nature is good in its origin. Mencius' entire view of life originates from this central conviction. Of course, a number of conclusions follow from this premise: that humans possess an innate knowledge of good and a consequent tendency to do good; that, if humans perfect their minds, they will serve Heaven and fulfill their destiny; that evil is not natural but introduced into the world by human failures and inability to avoid external influences in performing ethical actions because people are persuaded to do an action less good than one could perform (this Chinese view parallels that of the 4th Century A.D. Catholic Christian Aurelius Augustine, namely, that aberrant humans literally introduce "evil" into the world because acts which they perform are performed in a manner less good than the individual is capable. So, "evil" is the difference between the good act which could have been performed and the less good act; evil, then is the absence of the good which could have been posited - that lack or absence of a due-good is what is evil); that humans (born into and influenced by external society) must make personal and serious efforts to recover and live according to original human nature rather than so-called "civilized" nature; that the end of learning is none other than to "search for the lost mind"; given the fact that human nature is good, love (*jen*), therefore, is an inborn quality and begins in the family, so the power to be "ethical" is inherent in every human's nature and therefore each human is "complete in himself" and can become a sage, or wise person.

Understanding the Chinese pictograph *jen*, as Confucius and Mencius, following him use it, is essential to understand 2,500 years of Chinese philosophy. *Jen* is translated by many "English" words: *goodness*, *benevolence*, *perfect virtue*, *love*, even *humanity*. Most native Chinese translators use *humanity* as their English translation of the word - this is what is meant by many writers who call Confucius and Mencius *humanists* (such a meaning, however, would not apply to what are called "secular humanists" in the Occidental, modern and contemporary world for such means people who allow no value to be *absolute*, such as *Truth*, *Beauty*, *Goodness* but claim all values are humanly produced and are, therefore, *relative* to the person or people producing them.).

Confucius states *jen's* essential meaning in the *Analects*, Book XII, number 22:

Fan Ch'ih asked about the Good (ruler). The Master said, He loves (*jen*) men. He asked about the wise (ruler). The Master said, He knows men. Fan Ch'ih did not quite understand the second statement. The Master said, By raising the straight and putting them on top of the crooked, he can make the crooked straight. Fan Ch'ih withdrew...

Jen is essentially a natural relationship between two humans, call it a *humane* relationship. Such a relationship is one of goodness, so of good will, therefore, this is a

relationship of love - it is natural to love what is *similar and good*. This is why both Confucius and Mencius state that *jen* is the *perfect virtue* productive of the sage, or wise person, the *naturally perfect human*. Such human love is the “straight” which, when placed over the “crooked” makes the “crooked” “straight”. In other words, not even the “crooked”, the vicious can resist love, since such love treats even the vicious as human beings and this *humane* treatment will “straighten” out the “crooked”. (As you can understand, such could and does not exist within the California criminal justice system because federal and state law amended the Criminal Code to require only *punishment* as the purpose of incarceration in 1972 - having stricken the second purpose, *rehabilitation*.) So, as far as Confucius and Mencius are concerned such *humane* treatment toward the “crooked” will resonate with that humanness within the “crooked” and lead them to be “straight”. So, being human is irresistible and elicits an “in-kind” response.

Jen, then becomes productive of *righteousness*, that is, *justice*, or *just* relationships between and among various groups within society and, thereby, the basis of society itself as the political family, one of the “Five Relations”:

The sage (Emperor Shun)...appointed Hsieh to be minister of education and teach people human relations, that between father and son, there should be affection; between ruler and minister, there should be righteousness; between husband and wife, there should be attention to their separate functions; between old and young, there should be a proper order; and between friends, there should be faithfulness. (p. 69-70. The notes provided students in this course only include the Book Six of *The Book of Mencius* both because of its length and the difficulty of obtaining an adequate and valid translation of the total seven books, each divided into two parts. Book Six, however, provides a summation and presents the essence of the other six books and is the one usually provided within “text-book” excerpts.)

Jen, therefore, enables the “superior man” to be different from other men: Mencius said, “The reason why the superior man is different from other men is due to what he preserves in his mind. He preserves humanity and propriety. The man of humanity loves others. The man of propriety respects others. He who loves others is always loved by others and he who respects others is always respected by others. (Pp. 76-77)

Of course, what Mencius leaves unstated, but presupposed is that the sage, or wise person has a relationship of love to self as being good. Thus, here also Philosophy, literally, the *love (Philos)* of *wisdom (sophia)* begins and generates out of the love of self and is productive of self-knowledge, as is clear within the *Apology* of Plato. So, an unstated but required “sixth” and “first” relationship is the love of self arising out of self-knowledge - such self-love is an up-hill battle for any Protestant Christian, originating from the Theology of Martin Luther and John Calvin (whose central point is that human nature is corrupt and, thus, only faith in Jesus Christ is productive of salvation). Of course this is a problem which the Chinese escaped, at least until Protestant Christian missionaries appeared on the Chinese landscape.

The Great Learning

This “book” originally was Chapter 42 of *Li chi*, translated as *The Book of Rites*, attributed to Confucius’s grandson, Tzu-ssu (505-c.436 B.C.) in which the author traces the stages of history from what he calls the Age of Chaos to the Age of Small Peace, finally reaching the Age of Great Unity. A Chinese philosopher, Ssu-ma Kuang (1019-1086) wrote a commentary on this Chapter 42 and, for the first time, it became a separate work within Chinese literature and philosophy then Chu Hsi (1130-1200) reorganized the work into one “text”, ten “chapters of commentary” and added a supplement. The title of this Chapter 42 is *Ta-hsüeh*, literally, *means-education for the adult*. Education for the Chinese adult differed from education for Chinese youth; youthful education consisted of good manners and daily behavior whereas education for the adult is moral (actually, ethical, as the notes on the *Analects* explain) and learning about social order. This view of education originates in the *Analects* of Confucius and seeks to realize the good man or the gentleman as found within the sage, or wise person.

The Great Learning could be called a “short course” in Chinese culture, specifically Confucian philosophy. This small work reduces the massive *Analects* to three simple objectives and eight steps to achieve these three simple objectives. The three objectives are: first, the clear character of a human being, secondly, how to love people and, thirdly, how to live within the highest good. The eight steps whereby a person might achieve these three objectives are: the investigation of the world, the extension of knowledge, sincerity of will, rectification of the mind, cultivation of one’s personal, or ethical life, the regulation of the family, national order and world peace. *The Great Learning* is a practical guide to applying *jen*, or *love* to one’s daily living.

Right from the beginning of *The Great Learning* the *Tao*, or *the Way* is central to all human action:

Only after knowing what to abide in can one be calm. Only after having been calm can one be tranquil. Only after having achieved tranquility can one have peaceful repose. Only after having peaceful repose can one begin to deliberate. Only after deliberation can the end be attained. Things have their roots and branches. Affairs have their beginnings and their ends. To know what is first and what is last will lead one near the *Way*. (p. 86)

This lead statement provides a clear difference between oriental and occidental “life-styles”. The former centers on what is internal to life whereas the latter focuses on what is external to living. “Things have their roots and branches” is the simple analogy available to anyone who looks at vegetative life, be it lawn, flowers or trees and vegetative life was and is essential to human life. So, humans must orient themselves to the origin of life, that is, the root of life, or what is *not visible to the eyes* even when we look at lawn, flowers and trees in order to live in the human world. True to the *Tao* of Lao-tzu, *what is not-seen* is that on which life and living depends. The leaves, attractive as they might be, the branches, visible as they are, the trunk, large and imposing as it is, all these visible things are dependent upon the roots which we can not see. Life begins underground, as the seed thrusts down its root, then sends up a sprout. So the origin of vegetative life, as the origin of human life is unseen, yet, its effect becomes clear to us if we investigate. Then, *Tao* becomes the center of the human’s living because *Tao* is both

the beginning and end of all life - this centrality of *Tao* to the wise person becomes abundantly clear in the *Tao* of Lao-tzu.

So, what is the next step in this process of investigation of the adult's education? Well, both chapters 7 and 8 focus on the "...cultivation of the personal life". This "cultivation" depends upon the "...rectification of the mind". (Again, the notes on the *Analects* explain *rectification*) Both Confucius and Socrates would characterize such "rectification" as self-knowledge which can be effective only through "self-reflection". So, "this is what is meant by saying that if the personal life is not cultivated, one cannot regulate his family". (Chapter 8, p. 90) So, be virtuous and root out of oneself any thing which is not-righteous, then respect and brotherly love will result and peace can be achieved - so much for the acclaimed "total truth" therapy so appealing to people who are insecure in themselves and whose lives feed off the anger of what "bugs" them about the world in which and others with whom they live!

The occidental presumption is that the objective and the subjective views of reality are separate; the reality is they are not.

Confucius and Lao-tzu *Oriental Ethics and Morals*

Ethics and morals exist in a different relationship within oriental, or eastern cultures than they do within our current occidental, or western societies. The narrow, yet, over-arching scientific attitude in which morals and ethics coexist within current occidental societies occasion them to be opposed, even to conflict. Bertrand Russell (*Why I Am Not A Christian*) gives the principal reason for this conflict, namely, the attitudinal preference for scientific explanations:

The spread of the scientific outlook as opposed to the theological, has indisputably made, hitherto, for happiness. (p. 244)

The implication is that any and all "theological" outlooks make indisputably for "unhappiness". However, the broad, ever-present religious attitude in which morals and ethics exist within the oriental, eastern cultures make them complementary, though distinctive. Russell follows along the thought-path of Francis Bacon in preparing human thinking for suicide as a thought before it is an act. Bacon initiated such thinking by separation and conquest. Bacon's purpose became the effort to overcome what he termed the "deficiencies" of nature, to conquer nature by using applied knowledge "objectively speaking" and to limit theory to a realm of immediate, experimental activity - as if so-called scientific knowledge was not based upon subjectivity and theory - Bohr's picture theory of atomic structure is a classic example!

So, Bacon's world is the divided world Russell and we inherit, a world in which theory and practice, spirit and matter, God and nature are separate; the latter being "objective", subject to human control through applied knowledge; the former being "subjective", subject to discussion alone, but of no practical interest. Yet, this divided world is fraught with unhappiness. The

spiritual and “subjective” is just as much a part of human happiness as is any material and so-called “objective” one, if, indeed, the human world is subject to such thoughtful dissection.

Our current occidental attitude judges ethics and morals against reason as science defines it and as technology practices it, so frequently the reasonable act becomes synonymous with the scientific act and, therefore, the scientific act is the moral act. Wearing a condom, for instance, is moral and preferred behavior; whereas exercising self-restraint and being virtuous is ignored or relegated to second place. Modern and contemporary science has constricted reasonable explanations of and actions in the world to be scientific and technocratic, as the handmade of science gives acceptability to the acts which reason decides to be moral. Western ethics and morality, therefore, are determined by the head and decided by reason. Such an attitude views ethics as antiquated, outmoded, irrelevant, unreasonable, even illegal. The oriental attitude, however, judges ethics and morals against nature and tradition, so the right act is to act according to nature as traditional wisdom has taught. If the act strays from imitation of nature, it may be moral, but it cannot be ethical. Eastern morals is ethics and is determined by the belly to be decided by feeling not by thinking.

H.C. Creel, Confucian scholar comments:

Confucius...was a man who found the world about him full of misery and wanted to exchange it for happiness...He believed that the crying ills of this world centered in the related fields of ethics and government, and it was toward these subjects that he focused both his teaching and his study. (*Confucius and the Chinese Way*, 1938, p. 107)

To be ethical is to act according to nature; human nature, however, is not limited to being rational.

The Confucian oriental culture is a counterpart to the Socratic occidental because it has a similar focus and attitude concerning human knowledge. Whereas occidental cultures now focus on knowledge as the condition for understanding and fix on the necessity that words convey that knowledge, oriental culture focuses on right action(s) as proof of understanding and observation (of nature, self and others) as that which provides example for imitation (or non-imitation). *Book IV, No. 17* quotes the Master:

In the presence of a good man, think all the time how you may equal him. In the presence of a bad man, turn your gaze within!

Just as a shadow is inseparable from the sun light, so the shadow is inseparable from the tree blocking the sun's light.

Again, *Book VII, No. 21* states:

Even when walking in a party of no more than three, I can always be certain of learning from those I am with. There will be good qualities that I can select for imitation and bad ones that will teach me what requires correction in myself.

The irony of Creel's observation is that it stands as the antithesis of the current, occidental attitude and solution. A contemporary, western "ethician" would laugh at these statements and ignore Confucius as relevant to our contemporary time. The typical, contemporary self-styled "ethician" believes that the "crying ills of this world" center in the related fields of science and government and the solution lies in government using science to solve those ills. Contemporary "medicine" prescribes "reason" and applied knowledge as solutions in life's struggle to conquer death - so vitamin pills replace nutritious foods; having "safe sex" replaces the virtue of chastity. Some of the "reasonable" and technically feasible options are: formal education, economic development, market competition, abortion, artificial birth control methods and "safe sex through condoms" and euthanasia - these are some of the most popular and immediate.

The oriental wise, therefore, provide for

An historical note concerning the dominance of Confucius as well as the "Four Books" will provide a context to compare occidental and

Oriental right action takes precedence over occidental right knowledge.

the oriental worlds, particularly in respect to the technological superiority of Chinese and Indian societies before 1424 sixty-eight years prior to Columbus's 1492 "discovery". Two principal sources occasion this note: first, Louise Levathe's *When China Ruled the Seas* (1994) and Nicholas D. Kristof's "1492: The Prequel" (*The New York Times Magazine*, 6 June 1999. Zhu-Di, friend of Zheng-He became China's Yongle Emperor and one of this Emperor's first acts was to give Zheng-He command of the Chinese fleet of ships comprising some 28,000 sailors on 300 ships, the longest of which were 400 feet and 160 feet wide! Zheng-He sailed about the Pacific into the Atlantic, reaching East Africa during this dynasty when eunuchs administered the court, particularly interested in promoting commerce, thereby being very outward-looking and progressive.

However, after the Yongle Emperor died in 1424, China entered a period of power struggles and the scholars emerged triumphant over the eunuchs. These "classical" scholars persuaded the emperor to halt construction of new ships and imposed curbs on private shipping. By 1500 the Emperor made it a capital offense to build a boat with more than two masts and in 1525 ordered

Honesty is the oriental virtue; the belly is the origin of that virtue

the destruction of all oceangoing ships - a navy which had 3,500 ships was destroyed and China set a course which emphasized

internal self-reflection which some label a "culture of complacency". Yet, Confucius himself remained the root cause and the scholars emphasized his characterization of anyone who sought profit as a "little man" and his claim that the man who make distant voyages while his parents were alive was wrong and disrespectful. But, as China and India withdrew into themselves, Portugal and Spain craved discovery for the sake of making their respective kings and queens rich. As Kristof states it: "In contrast to Asia, Europe was consumed with greed".

As a matter of fact, an historical event occurring in 1498 typifies first, the occidental presumption of the "backwardness" of oriental people and, secondly, the superior attitude of the occidental peoples. The Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama finally reached India in the port of Calicut, having braved the African coast and the Indian Ocean "to discover" the European sought

after trade route to the Indies and he was eager to bring its heralded gold and spices back to the King and Queen of Spain. Da Gama had brought what he thought

The spiritual is the seed bed for ethics whereas

were appropriate “gifts” for the ruler of Calicut, “glass beads, feathered hats and jars of honey”. Calicut’s ruler was appalled at these tawdry trinkets and the local merchants refused to barter Indies’ riches for such shoddy Portuguese merchandise, so da Gama returned to Portugal with only a “handful of peppercorns and cloves”.

Occidental actions designed to conquer nature take the place of actions performed according to nature. The occidental attitude to control nature replaces the oriental attitude to imitate nature. The artificial takes precedence over the natural, so the occidental preoccupation with controlling human life now seeks to control human death. Suicide is the issue, whether the suicide of ethnic people, religious groups, even the human race through the legalizing of abortion, or individual suicide of the sick, the old, the genetically deficient or ethnic cleansing.

The oriental difference is illustrated by the emphasis upon the relationship of the “belly” to life and the virtue of honesty to human living. Both Confucius and Lao-tzu make the virtue of honesty to be the center of oriental living, the foundation for the acquisition of any other virtue:

The Master said, Man’s very life is honesty, in that without it he will be lucky indeed if he escapes with his life. (*Book VI, no. 17*)

Who knows that he does not know is the highest;

Who (pretends to) know what he does not know is sick-minded.

And who recognizes sick-mindedness as sick-mindedness is not sick-minded.

The wise man is not sick-minded

Because he recognizes sick-mindedness as sick mindedness,

Therefore, he is not sick-minded. (# 71)

Confucius was born in the province of Lu, a small and weak state, about 551 B.C. and died about 479 B.C., about ten years before the birth of the occidental Socrates in Athens about 469 B.C. Lao-tzu was born in K’uhsien province about 571 B.C. Confucius had one desire: to obtain a position as the education advisor for a “Lord” of one of the feudal provinces. His one conviction was that the nobility (and consequently, the government) or **shih** should be educated formally in the “reasons” for and of right actions according to nature; thus, the nobility would not only be examples of virtue for the peasants, but could instruct the peasants in **how** and **why** to perform virtuous actions. Confucius sought the solution to the ills of China through the method of formal education of government as to the how and why of virtuous actions.

Yet, notwithstanding their common Chinese ethnicity, Lao-tzu is the antithesis of Confucius. Lao-tzu opposed all formal educational, contending that formal knowledge could be used to lead citizens away from nature and, thus, from the virtuous way to reach the happiness of **Tao**. Such formal knowledge could become a tool of the state and be used for the purposes of the state - something which occurred and currently continues to occur in China under the communist form of government, but something which any government does more or less through all formal public school systems - as in the United States. Lao-tzu voiced his disapproval through his tone poems

wherein he calls the public to guide human actions by the "belly, not the eye". He also calls the government to imitate the peasants' reliance on the belly, not the head, and to study nature not pass laws as the means to achieve virtue.

Confucius is the oriental counterpart to Socrates, the occidental Athenian

To be in harmony with nature is to be empowered beyond mere rational!

whereas Lao-tzu is comparable to Tolstoy and might have written for Confucian, government people a story similar to Ivan Ilych.

The Confucian oriental culture, however, is a counterpart to the Socratic occidental because it has a similar focus and attitude concerning human knowledge. To think that we know is sick, even suicidal; to know that we do not know is healthy. Yet, whereas our occidental cultures focus on knowledge as the condition for understanding and fix on words as the necessary means to convey that knowledge, oriental culture focuses on right action(s) as proof of understanding and observation (of nature, self and others) as those things which provide example for imitation (or non-imitation). *Book IV, No. 17* quotes the Master:

In the presence of a good man, think all the time how you may equal him. In the presence of a bad man, turn your gaze within!

Again, *Book VII, No. 21* states:

Even when walking in a party of no more than three, I can always be certain of learning from those I am with. There will be good qualities that I can select for imitation and bad ones that will teach me what requires correction in myself.

Although Confucius calls attention to the actions of a good man, he still, like the occidental Socrates, emphasizes self-reflection and imitative self-action, ethics, rather than morals. He and Socrates focus on practicing ethical actions and on the formulation of ethical habits rather than on speculative observation and criticism; they both limit praise of the others' actions, whether ethical or unethical, moral or immoral and concentrate on being virtuous. The oriental seeks to step on the path of virtue and, thus, to walk on the **Way** to happiness and life with **Tao**.

This oriental focus on right action and on the method of observation is the principal reason the Japanese, for example, led the twentieth century world in economic growth and power; the world of electronic technology has seen and felt the effects of such a focus coupled with the emphasis upon imitation. Another indicator of this effect is found in the oriental lack of "originality"; such originality is the principal reason for the Nobel Prize awards, however, to date, only two Japanese are recipients of Nobel Prizes and both were educated in American universities - so this oriental kind of "imitation" does not have occidental respect and thus is not "deserving" of a Nobel Prize recipient.

Yet, such a "lack" is offset by the fact that this emphasis on imitation shows itself to be very creative in martial arts wherein the oriental observes and imitates those animals, reptiles and insects which have survived for millions of years. The oriental excels in such imitation because oriental people recover those instinctive actions and reactions which so enhance and empower the martial artist beyond imagination. The success of the oriental martial artist, such as Bruce

Lee, in increasing human power by imitating peculiar skills of animals, such as the cobra, the bear, the eagle and others is testimony to the value of oriental virtue of imitating nature.

**To be in harmony with nature
is to have life more abundantly
~~that reason can give~~**

If human beings imitate nature, not just the rational aspect of our nature, they achieve two things: first, they achieve internal harmony between the rational and animal - the Gilgamesh myth provides a parallel example, as Enkidu, half animal and half human becomes friends with Gilgamesh, two-thirds god and one-third human and together they "become human"; secondly, this harmony enables the human to focus and concentrate the threefold power of the life force, **Ke** (or **Kai**), the vegetative, sensitive and rational so that each person becomes empowered beyond imagination. However, **the** important aspect of this focus is its inward thrust for self-development, not the outward thrust for economic, technological or physical power. But this inward achievement has this outward effect. So, this inward purpose of self-knowledge and the generation of power which it spawns is the center of Confucian philosophy. *Book I, No. 4* quotes the Master:

Everyday I examined myself on these three points: in acting on behalf of others, have I always been loyal to their interests? In intercourse with my friends, have I always been true to my word? Have I failed to repeat the precepts that have been handed down to me?

The purpose, however of this self-knowledge is nobler than mere "knowledge," and personal empowerment. The purpose is to live more fully, not just to know more completely.

Man's life is honesty, in that without it, he will be lucky indeed if he escapes with his life. (*Book VI, No. 17*)

Although the Confucian "gentleman" is the initial path to honesty, the journey continues through the discovery of **what is right** to the purpose of a human being's actions, namely, **to be good**.

A gentleman, in his plans, says the Master, thinks of the **Way**; he does not think how he is going to make a living. Even farming sometimes entails times of shortage, and even learning may incidentally lead to high pay. But, a gentleman's anxieties concern the progress of the **Way**; he has no anxiety concerning poverty. (*Book XV, No. 31*)

Again, like Socrates, Confucius shows no interest in wealth, honor or reputation, the morally acceptable goals of human progress, rather, he emphasizes the improvement of the soul and provides clarification of this radical, or root statement in *Book IV, No. 5*:

Wealth and rank are what every man desires; but if they can only be retained to the detriment of the Way he professes, he must relinquish them. Poverty and obscurity are what every man detests; but if they can only be avoided to the detriment of the Way he professes, he must accept them. The gentleman who parts company with Goodness does not fulfill his name. Never for a moment does

the gentleman quit the way of Goodness. He is never so harried but that he cleaves to this; never so tottering but that

Knowledge for the Oriental is more than power over nature; oriental

he cleaves to this. Even in his dealings with others, 'The gentleman calls attention to the good points in others; he does not call attention to their defects. The small man does just the reverse of this.' (*Book XII, No. 16*)

We shall find Socrates echo this statement when he admonishes the Athenians during his trial for treason:

Knowing what is right is more important than knowing what will

All I do is to go about and try to persuade you, both young and old, not to care for your bodies or your monies first, and to care more exceedingly for the soul, to make it as good as possible; and I tell you that virtue comes not from money, but from virtue comes both money and all other good things for mankind, both in private and in public. (*Apology* 30 a-b)

The reason for this is simple. Confucius observes: "It is possible to be a true gentleman and yet lack Goodness. But there has never yet existed a Good man who was not a gentleman." (*Book XIV, No. 7*) We might paraphrase this in this context as: a gentleman may be socially acceptable and deemed moral, however, as acceptable as the gentleman might be socially, he may not be a good, or ethical man. As good as a gentleman is in his dedication to the Way, both because the gentleman thinks about and is anxious about his progress toward the Way, yet, this does not mean that the gentleman **is** good. That is why one's attitude toward and willingness to learn is critical. The key to the Confucian sage, as to Socrates' wise man is his willingness to learn:

The Master said, I for my part am not one of those who have innate knowledge. I am simply one who loves the past and who is diligent in investigating it." (*Bk. VII, No. 19; see Bk. IX, No. 7*)

Indeed, Oriental tradition recounted the "Six Sayings about the Six Degenerations": Love of Goodness without love of learning degenerates into silliness. Love of wisdom without love of learning degenerates into utter lack of principle. Love of keeping promises without love of learning degenerates into villainy. Love of uprightness without love of learning degenerates into harshness. Love of courage without love of learning degenerates into turbulence. Love of courage without love of learning degenerates into mere recklessness. (*Book XVII, No. 8*)

The hub of the wheel of virtue is love of learning; without love of learning all virtues become vices! Yet, Confucius offers a caution which might seem to parallel our Occidental emphasis on "thinking": "He who learns but does not think, is lost. He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger." (*Bk. II, 15*) Nothing could be further from the truth. Rather, here, as with the occidental Socrates, we learn a lesson that provides **the** difference between ethics and morals, namely, our attitude toward the type of knowledge we think is human.

The ethical person's attitude toward knowledge is an internal one motivated by the love of learning; the moral person's attitude toward knowledge is an external one of completion and achievement:

The Master said, Yhu, shall I teach you what knowledge is? When you know a thing, to recognize that you know it, and when you do not know a thing, to recognize that you do not know it. That is knowledge. (*Bk. II, No. 17*)

Thus, the reality of knowledge has the two components of knowing and not-knowing, just as the reality of the glass with water has the two

Knowing, acting and feeling cooperate to bring the oriental on the way to eternal life.

components of "half full" and "half empty." Furthermore, a hierarchy exists in this pursuit of this kind of knowledge; this knowledge is practical, not theoretical. So, this is not right knowledge, but right action, something we seek for the sake of practicing it as a preference, yet, not as a passive preference, rather, as a delight-filled act:

The Master said, A gentleman takes as much trouble to discover what is right as lesser men take to discover what will pay. (*Bk. IV, No. 16*)

The Master said, To prefer (the **Way**) is better than to know it. To delight in it is better than merely to prefer it. (*Bk. IV, No. 18*)

There may well be those who can do without knowledge; but I for my part am certainly not one of them. To hear much, pick out what is good and follow it, to see much and take due note of it, is the lower of the two kinds of knowledge. (*Bk. VII, No. 27*)

However, this purpose of virtuous knowing, learning and living is twofold: first, right action, secondly, action according to the **Tao**.

Tzu-kung asked about the true gentleman: The Master said, He does not preach what he practices till he has practiced what he preaches. (*Bk. I, No. 13*)

The Master said, A gentleman covets the reputation of being slow in word but prompt in deed. (*Book IV, No. 24*)

Of Tzu-ch'an the Master said that in him were to be found four of the virtues that belong to the **Way** of the true gentleman. In his private conduct he was courteous, in serving his master he was punctilious, in providing for the needs of the people he gave them even more than their due; in exacting service from the people, he was just. (*Bk. V, No. 15*)

The fact that Confucius seeks knowledge so that he might perform right actions and be ethical, however, is the lower of the two kinds of knowledge since the higher kind is the delight experienced in knowing that these right actions are leading him toward the **Way**. This delight is found in four kinds of right actions: being courteous, keeping his word (being punctilious), being generous and being just. Each of these kinds of virtuous acts provide him the delight of knowing he is approaching the **Way**.

As a result of this personal delight, or self- awareness that he is "on the **Way**" to **Tao**, The **Way**, the Confucian gentleman "is distressed by his own lack of capacity; he is never distressed at the failure of others to recognize his merits" (*Bk. XV, No. 18*); and "The demands that a gentleman makes are upon himself; those that a small man makes are upon others." (*Bk. XV, No. 20*)

As a result, any gentleman has but nine cares, all of which relate to his actions toward others:

Master K'ung said, The gentleman has nine cares: In seeing, he is careful to hear distinctly; in his looks, he is careful to be kindly; in his manner to be respectful, in his words loyal, in his work to be diligent. When in doubt, he is careful to ask for information; when angry he has a care for the consequences, and when he sees a chance of gain, he thinks carefully whether the pursuit of it would be consonant with the Right. (*Bk. XVI, No.10*)

Consequently, the occidental "head-centered" emphasis on the human intellect and the conformity to morals, therefore, is not usurped by the oriental emphasis on "feeling." Socrates, as well as Confucius recognize that the human being is what we call perfect in its imperfection; thus, Socrates and Confucius accept the perfection of human nature to be imperfect. So, neither the occidental Socrates, nor the oriental Confucius presume human knowledge to be anything but imperfect. Therefore, human wisdom consists in accepting the fact that human beings know that they do not know. However, Bacon's occidental emphasis upon science brought with it an attitude that human knowledge can be perfect and scientific knowledge has that essential characteristic of objectivity which makes it perfect. Such a view of knowledge raises a scientific society's view of its morals and conformity thereto to be perfection and to be the norm.

Yet, human learning, or discipline (from the Latin *discipulus*, and *discere*, to learn) complements the oriental view of **balance** feeling (perhaps the Occidental *intueor*, intuition) and thinking. So Confucius holds that neither feeling nor thinking singularly becomes an

obstacle to
introspection or

The Way of self-knowledge is the Way

"inside" knowledge, namely, self-knowledge. Rather, all "outside" knowledge, positive or *yang* becomes united with "inside" knowledge, negative or *yin* as a continuum propelling Confucius to *Tao*, as the *Way*. This same *Way* Lao-tzu calls the Ocean to which all rivers flow and from which all streams come. Thus, contends Confucius, as we return to ourselves within, and achieve and grow in self-knowledge, we also return to our source, *Tao*.

Although Lao-tzu opposes the Confucian emphasis upon formal education as the method to help and stimulate the *shih* toward virtue toward *Tao* and ethical action, he does not contradict the Confucian analysis of the dominance of nature and the importance of Tao in relation to human living:

My doctrines are very easy to understand and very
easy to practice,

But none in the world can understand or practice them.

My doctrines have a source, Nature; my deeds have a master, *Tao*.

It is because people do not understand this that they do not understand me.

Few people know me, and therefore, I am highly valued.

Therefore, the sage wears a coarse cloth on top and carries jade within his bosom. (#

Nor does Lao-tzu's and Confucius' views differ as to the human being's relationship to nature and the necessity for ethical action:

He who knows others is wise,

He who knows himself is enlightened.

He who conquers others has physical strength

He who conquers himself is strong.

He who is contented is rich.

He who acts with vigor has will.

He who does not lose his place (with *Tao*) will endure.

He who dies but does not really perish enjoys long life.

(# 33)

As a matter of fact, typical of the oriental, to be one with nature is to be self-sufficient as well as to be eternal. Thus, the Ivan Ilych

dichotomy between being proprietary or moral and human and being ethical and spiritual is impossible to the oriental.

Ivan Ilych used the human nature of his peers as his standard according to which he acted "rightly," and the oriental considers the human nature within the context of and subject to nature itself, so no such dual standard exists. Consequently, the current occidental emphasis that the human being is dependent upon parents, peers or fellow citizens as the way to virtue finds no such emphasis in oriental culture -- such an emphasis focuses the human being upon the external standard of how others act, think and react, but the oriental focus remains on the internal standard of *Tao*.

One may know the world without going out of doors.
One may see the **Way** of Heaven without looking through the
The further one goes, the less one knows.
Therefore, the sage knows without going about;
Understands without seeing. (# 47)

windows.

Lao-tzu recognizes that "the world" is within each human being; thus, any human being has access to nature and the presence of *Tao*. The means of access is self-reflection and the method to achieve virtue is imitation of nature as the source and nurturer of life. Thus, self-reflection and imitation are the dual means to continue life and to enhance living, so any person can be ethical, independent of social contacts or external direction.

Our present occidental emphasis upon social dependence and the individual's need for the state and so-called civilized society is dated. Actually, this particular emphasis dates to the social contract theories of Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Mill and Bentham, namely, that the organized state is essential to civilize citizens and civilization is necessary to conserve and enhance their living and keep them from killing, stealing from and raping each other. The current occidental state or nation owes more to the Lutheran and Calvinistic theological view that the human being is corrupted by the devil than any of the views of society or the state prior to them. These protestant Christian social engineers begot the contemporary "law and order" theme which echoes throughout contemporary American in the face of that protestant theological view. Quite contrary to a popular saying that "law cannot dictate morality," these social engineers generated human positive law for the purpose of creating morality. Such law, however, has no direct effect upon an ethical action. As Lao-tzu observes:

In ancient times, those who practiced *Tao* well

Did not seek to enlighten the people, but to make them ignorant.
 People are difficult to govern because they have too much knowledge.
 Therefore, he who rules the state through knowledge is a robber
 of the state.

He who rules a state not through knowledge is a blessing to the
 state.

One who knows these two things also (knows) the standard.
 Always to know the standard is called profound and secret virtue.
 Virtue becomes deep and far-reaching.
 And with it all things return to their original state.
 Then complete harmony will be reached. (#65)

The irony of Lao-tzu's view results in the following advice for
 peasant, *shih* and ruler alike:

Tao is eternal and has no name.

Though its simplicity seems insignificant, no one in the world can master it.
 If kings and barons would hold on to it, all things would submit to them spontaneously.
 Heaven and earth unite to drip sweet dew.

Without the command of
 men, it drips evenly over
 all.

Life is a gift we can not lose, but

As soon as there were regulations and institutions, there were
 names.

As soon as there are names, know that it is time to stop:
 It is by knowing when to stop that one can be free from danger.
 Analogically, *Tao* in the world may be compared to rivers and streams running into

The silence of the oriental self-reflection echoes throughout the
 noise of the occidental verbal barrage. e e cummings, a recent
 American poet offers similar advice to occidental scientists,
 philosophers and theologians:

O sweet spontaneous
 earth how often have
 the dotting
 fingers of
 prurient philosophers pinched
 and
 poked
 thee
 , has the naughty thumb
 of science prodded
 thy
 beauty . how

often have religions taken
 thee upon their scraggy knees
 squeezing and
 buffeting thee that thou mightest conceive
 gods

(but
 true
 to the incomparable
 couch of death thy

rhythmic
 lover
 thou answerest

Words express reality, so

them only with

spring) (# 5)

The power of life is most felt in the silence of spring, not the thunder of winter. That power is both organized and prolific, but the reality of nature's control is the opposite of the appearance of what human beings think control to be. Cummings and Lao-tzu are similar. Words, knowledge and laws are all external. They distract human beings from self-knowledge and distance them from feeling nature. These distractions and distance mean that people focus upon the external for purpose and sustenance in living their lives so they encounter starvation, even death. But, Lao-tzu counters:

True words are not beautiful;
 Beautiful words are not true.
 A good man does not argue;
 He who argues is not a good man.
 A wise man has no extensive knowledge;
 He who has extensive knowledge is not a wise man.

The sage does not accumulate for himself.
 The more he uses for others, the more he has
 The more he gives to others, the more he possesses of his
 own.
 The **Way** of Heaven is to benefit others and not to
 The **Way** of the sage is to act but not to compete.
 (#81)

himself.

injure.

The best man is like water.
 Water is good; it benefits all things and does not
 It dwells in lowly places that all disdain.

compete with them.

This is why it is so near to *Tao*.

The best man in his dwelling loves the earth.

In his
heart, he loves
what is profound.

Spiritual power empowers physical effort,

In his associations, he loves humanity.

In his words, he loves faithfulness.

In government, he loves order.

In handling affairs, he loves competence.

In his activities, he loves timeliness.

It is because he does not compete that he is without

reproach. (# 8)

Thus, Lao-tzu contends that the real solution to society's ills is to stimulate self-reflection, right action. To be ethical lies not in formal education or the state, regulation or law. On the contrary, ethical actions lie in discarding these appearances and returning to reality:

Abandon sageliness and discard wisdom.

Then the people will benefit a hundredfold.

Abandon humanity and discard righteousness;

Then the people will return to filial piety and deep love.

Abandon skill and discard profit;

Then there will be no thieves or robbers.

However, these three things are ornaments and are not

adequate.

Therefore, let people hold on top these:

Manifest plainness,

Embrace simplicity,

Reduce selfishness,

Have few desires. (# 19)

The oriental Lao-tzu observes, perhaps prophetically, that reliance on formal education, the state, law and regulation, the external controls typical of morals, will not only not generate ethical actions, but, on the contrary, generate the opposite, vicious actions, disorder and war:

The man of superior virtue is not conscious of his virtue,

And in this way he really possesses virtue.

The man of inferior virtue never loses sight of his virtue.

And in this way he loses his virtue.

The man of superior virtue takes no action, but has no

ulterior motive to do so.

The man of inferior virtue takes action, and has an ulterior motive

to do so.

The man of superior humanity takes action, but has no

ulterior motive to do so.

The man of superior righteousness takes action, and has an

ulterior motive top do so.

The man of superior propriety takes action,
 And when people do not respond to it, he will stretch his arms and
 Therefore, when *Tao* is lost, only then does the doctrine of virtue
 When virtue is lost, only then does the doctrine of humanity arise.
 For this reason, the great man dwells in the thick, and does not rest
 When humanity is lost, only then does the doctrine of righteousness
 arise.

force it upon them.
 arise.

When righteousness is lost, only then does the doctrine of
 propriety arise.

Now, propriety
 is a superficial
 expression of
 loyalty and
 faithfulness and

**Spring manifests the inner reality of life
 within nature, in the face of the efforts of
 science, philosophy and religion.**

the beginning of disorder.

Those who are the first to know have the flowers of Tao but are the
 beginning of ignorance.

For this reason, the great man dwells in the thick and does not rest
 with the thin.

He dwells in the fruit and does not rest with the flower.
 Therefore, he rejects the one and accepts the other. (#38)

Twenty-five hundred years before Tolstoy, Lao-tzu sealed the fate
 of Ivan Ilych with the observation that propriety arises when both
 righteousness and humanity are lost so they become popular when
 virtue is lost as a result of *Tao* being lost. When we humans lose
 contact with ourselves, we lose contact with the source of that self,
 so we lose contact with our power source and feel weak. We then
 reach outside ourselves to grasp that proverbial straw, wealth,
 honor, reputation, even guns, but the apparent nourishment or
 strength we derive from these material things merely drains our
 remaining strength out of us and we die.

Quite the contrary of Confucius' advice to government about the
 necessity for formal education of the *shih* to guarantee order, Lao-
 tzu's advice is simple, but true:

Govern the state with correctness.
 Operate the army with surprise tactics.
 Administer the empire by engaging in no activity.
 How do I know that this should be so?

Through this:

The more taboos and prohibitions there are in the world,
 The poorer the people will be.
 The more sharp weapons the people have,

The more troubled the state will be.
 The more cunning and skill man possesses,
 The more vicious things will appear.
 The more laws and orders are made
 prominent,
 The more thieves and robbers there will be.

"The principal theme in

Therefore, the sage says:
 I take no action and the people of themselves are transformed.
 I love tranquility and the people of themselves become correct.
 I engage in no activity and the people of themselves become prosperous.
 I have no desire and the people of themselves become simple. (#
 57)

Actually, all of Lao-tzu's tone poems and the importance of ethics over morals is found within one poem. This one poem redirects us to nature and reflects his understanding of nature's message, as well as typifies the importance the oriental places on the imitation of nature as the condition of human virtue and as the only way to tap the natural life force which is eternal:

When a man is born, he is tender and weak.
 At death, he is stiff and hard.
 All things, the grass as well as trees, are tender and supple while alive.
 When dead, they are withered and dried.

Therefore, the stiff and the hard are companions of death.
 The tender and the weak are companions of life.
 Therefore, if the army is strong, it will not win.
 If a tree is stiff, it will break.
 The strong and the great are inferior, while the tender and the weak are superior. (# 78)

The oriental, both Confucius and Lao-tzu, emphasizes the necessity for human beings to tap into the power of nature, at once our physical and eternal life source. This view obviates any compulsion to control, to conquer, even to know and to act, except, of course, to imitate and thus to step on the road, or **Way** which is **Tao**. The wise have no need to step outside the door or look outside the windows of the first home, our own body. We merely look within and tap into that life source in which we participate, **Ke** in order to live, grow, become strong physically, ethically and, therefore, eternally.

Lao-tzu, Tao and Ethics

Scholars currently say that Lao-tzu, reputed to have lived in K'uehsien about 571 B.C., a contemporary of Confucius, was not the author of the Way; as a matter of fact, some contend that he was not one man, but, rather, a group of Taoists. Whatever the truth of the matter, the significant fact is that the Tao will be as fresh in the twenty-first century as it has been since the sixth century B.C.

Lin Yutang, translator of The Wisdom of Lao-tse, states in his 1948 "Introduction":

First, the principal teaching of Laotse is humility...The **Tao** of the Taoist is the divine intelligence of the universe, the source of things, the life-giving principle; it informs and transforms all things; it is impersonal, impartial, and has little regard for individuals. It is immanent, formless, invisible, eternal. Best of all, the Taoist does not presume to tell us about God; he insists to the point of repetitiousness that **Tao** cannot be named and the **Tao** which is named is not **Tao**. Above all, the one important message of Taoism is the oneness and spirituality of the material universe. (Wisdom of Laotse, Modern Library, Random House, Toronto, Can., 1948, pp. 10-15)

Taoism, as a religion is represented by only a small "fringe" group of people who currently in China resemble what were termed "hippies" in the U.S. during the 1960s, but, as an personal, or ethical way of living, **Tao**, and the principles found within the **Tao**, attributed to Lao-tzu have been within Chinese thought since 500 B.C.

The dominating theme of Chinese philosophy has been political reform and the Confucian model for that reform has been the *shih* or *noble warrior*. All Chinese philosophy studies how men can best learn to live together politically, in good harmony, humanly (*jen*) without going to war. A specific case in point here is the two thousand year old The Art of Strategy, attributed to a Sun-tzu. Notwithstanding its title, the purpose of this treatise is that the combatants wage war in such a manner that they have won before they reach the battlefield; thus, actual war is avoided. Yet, I see this "wage war" model to be nothing more than an application of Lao-tzu's "live life" view. In other words, the basic model is to live life in a manner such that virtue and peace are achieved in the midst of whatever occurs within the course of our lives.

This Art of Strategy is the model for Japanese business men as they apply its principles in their economic war for world technical superiority and is just now being studied by some American business managers. So, even *The Art of Strategy* seeks to find the way of victory, or peace prior to any field battle, or way of war. This is why this author disagrees with Joseph Campbell's sharp distinction between oriental and occidental religions, as described within his *Occidental Mythology: The Masks of God*:

The Tao that can be talked about and given a name is

...whereas, throughout the entire history of Occidental ethical religiosity (prevails) - in contrast to the metaphysical religiosity of the Orient -...(p. 190)

The orientation of such an order of thought was metaphysical; not ethical or rational, but trans-ethical, trans-rational. And in the Far East, as well as in India, whether in the mythic fields of Shinto, Taoism, and Confucianism, or in the Mahayana, the world was not to be reformed, but only known, revered, and its laws obeyed. Personal and social disorder stemmed from departure from those cosmic laws, and reform could be achieved only by a return to the unchanging root.

In Zoroaster's new mythic view, on the other hand, the world, as it was, was corrupt - not by nature but by accident - and to be reformed by human action. Wisdom, virtue, and truth lay, therefore, in engagement, not in disengagement. And the crucial line of decision between ultimate being and non-being was ethical. (p. 191)

Whether or not the oriental philosophers consider the world of nature "corrupt...by accident" remains to be seen. Lao-tzu certainly localizes the cause of leading men away from the "belly" and living according to nature to a proliferation of language, an abuse of "naming" and thus to what could be termed an improper use of reason. He clearly thinks this to be a fault of men, specifically, the politicians - have times really changed? In addition, Lao-tzu rejects formal education to be a solution. But, the fact remains and this fact contradicts Campbell's so-called "clear" distinction, namely, both Confucius and Lao-tzu seek to change

human society by getting men to change their attitudes and, thus, their actions, or, to use Campbell's term through "ethical action".

But, such action is possible only because of Lao-tzu's metaphysical view of nature; this is true and Campbell is

correct in this matter. Yet, clearly this metaphysical view calls for implementation through the wise person's ethical action.

Jen and *Yin* are related as love and being receptive are related: both result

The ***Tao*** (the *Way*) ***Te*** (*power*, usually internal, human virtue as a result of acting according to nature or ***Tao***) ***Ching*** (*book*), or *Book of the Way as Power* (or, the *Way*) is the source for this chapter, however, germane to the *Way* is the so-called ***I Ching***, or, originally ***I***, meaning *change*. The ***I*** analyses *change* into the two basic principles of ***yin*** and ***yang*** and formulates a system of symbols (*hsiang*) so that readers can tell how to find and act the right way so he or she may be virtuous amid the complexity of changes within the universe.

Yin, originally is the earthy, dark, moist, cold, receptive principle, represented by the broken line (— — —); ***yang***, the heavenly, bright, dry, warm, active principle, represented by the solid line (— — —). Thus, these two principles seem to be a thoughtful way to incorporate the relationship between the sky and the earth as co-operators in the origin and development of life. As a matter of fact,

The dominating theme in Chinese thought has been

the common sense awareness of these two principles occurs because the clouds come between the sun so that we humans notice a difference

between light and shadow so the practical Chinese see one side of a mountain bathed in sunlight, the other side wrapped in the darkness of shadow.

This ***yin*** and ***yang*** actually reflects the geography and climate of Southern China where both the Yellow and Yangtze rivers moved from west to east nourishing an agricultural paradise. The lives of the peasants reflected the incessant rhythm of the seasons from winter to spring, summer to fall century after century. The spring, summer and part of the fall required the males to work the earth, till the fields and harvest the crops; the latter part of the fall and the winter found the women storing up food, weaving blankets, preparing clothes and other "indoor" activities - this biphasic cycle of peasant farm life gave birth to the ***yin*** and ***yang*** conception of the world. So, the male, as ***yang*** reflected the heavenly spring and summer sunlight, bright, dry, warm, active principle, represented by the solid line (— — —); while the female, as ***yin*** reflected the

earthy late fall and winter, dark, moist, cold, receptive principle, represented by the broken line (— — — —).

Thus, the peasants conceived of the *yin* and *yang* as seasonal principles and the opposition and interaction between these two as complementary forces, like the males and husband as well as the females and wife in the home so the villages mirrored the actions within the universe itself. So, just as the good of the universe results in the contrasting, yet, complementary relationship of the *yin* and *yang*, the good of the family results in the contrasting, yet, complementary relationship of the husband and wife. Therefore, the good within the universe and the art of good living within the family results in the ordering of each one's life in harmony with the cosmological movements of the *yin* and the *yang*. Here is the origin of the *I Ching*. The simple interaction of the *yin* and *yang* is represented by pairs of divided and/or undivided lines, themselves representing the twofold principle reflected by the sun and its light and the earth with its darkness, both as inherent to the seasons and Mother nature herself. So, the basic four *yin/yang* sets found in nature are:

***Tao Te Ching means literally,
The Way of Power Book, or***

— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —
— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —

The next higher *yin/yang* series consists of the eight trigrams of three lines each which, according to tradition were formulated by Emperor Fu Hsi in 2852 B.C. calculated pursuant to Chinese time:

— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —
— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —
— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —
Ch'ien K'un Chen K'an

— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —
— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —
— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —
Ken Sun Li Tui

Doubling these three lines into six, results in sixty-four possible combinations and represent sixty-four human situations which may occur in his or her life replicating the seasons within nature. So, an individual Chinese person may, as an example, "cast" three coins, heads indicating male, tails, female to determine what nature might have in store for that individual this new day and/or in relation to some contemplated action within this season.

This *yin* and *yang* “principle” needs explanation in relation to the *I Ching* and, thus, *The Tao* of Lao-tzu. Just as the center of Chinese knowledge living is the belly, so the center of Chinese social living is the family - both being the source and guide for living within the changing world. Furthermore, just as *yin* and *yang* are complimentary for the generation, or birth of the world, so male and female are complimentary for the generation, or birth of the family. Chinese literature abounds in descriptions of romantic love, particularly between spouses, yet always as directed to the creation of a family - not, as in the occident between two individuals as self-serving.

“Jen” “love” in China, however, limits itself to family as Chinese, but certainly

But, to understand this relationship of love to family, we must understand the relationship of *li* to *jen* to Confucius; the former translated variously as “good manners”, “politeness”, rituals”, “ceremonies” (as well as others) and the latter translated as “love”, “love of human being”, “love of parents”, “love of neighbors”, but excludes “love of enemies” - Mencius defines *jen* as “the human heart”.(VI-A,11). Fan Ch’ih asks Confucius what a Good ruler is? Confucius replies:

...The Master said, He loves men. He asked about the wise ruler. The Master said, He knows men. Fan Ch’ih did not quite understand. The Master said, By raising the straight and putting them on top of the crooked he can make the crooked straight. Fan Ch’ih withdrew, and meeting Tzu-hsia said to him, Just now I was with the Master and asked him about the wise ruler. He said, By raising the straight and putting them on top of the crooked he can make the crooked straight. What did he mean?

Tzu-hsia said, Oh, what a wealth of instruction is in those words! When Shun had all that is under Heaven, choosing from among the multitude he raised up Kao Tao, and straightway Wickedness disappeared. What T’ang had all that is under Heaven, choosing from among the multitude he raised up I Yin and straight way Wickedness disappeared. (*Analects*, XII, 22)

Simply speaking, Confucius sees the good ruler as the good father, one who loves human beings, so the ruler gains his power by generating the internal force of love, both within himself and within his subject-citizens. The Chinese view love to be such a

powerful force that it can straighten the crooked, that is, motivate the vicious to become virtuous, namely, be polite, have good manners, be social rather than anti-social. Such love is also the strength and purpose of *yin*, the female principle within the world of nature. Again, Confucius comments:

Tzu-kung said, If a ruler not only conferred wide benefits upon the common people, but also compassed the salvation of the whole State, what would you say of him? Surely, you would call him Good? The Master said, It would no longer be a matter of 'good'. He would without doubt be a Divine Sage (those who rule by *wu-wen*, non-activity)...As for Goodness - you yourself desire rank and standing; then help others to get rank and standing. You want to turn your own merits to account; then help others to turn theirs to account - in fact, the ability to take one's own feelings as a guide - that is the sort of thing that lies in the direction of Goodness. (*Analects* VI, 28)

Tao works through *Mother Nature* and *Mother Nature* works through *yin* as the receptive principle or *wu-wen*, non-action and accomplices harmony, peace within change and the universe - without any effort, except a natural one.

Thus, the *I Ching* grows out of this oriental view of *li* and *jen*, and develops the multiple relationships between the *yin* and *yang* within the world of change as reflected within the oriental family, father and mother, sons and daughters, and so forth. This is why Wang Po, a poet about 656 B.C. Could write:

The existence of a single bosom friend on earth
Turns the wide, wide world into a cordial neighborhood.

So, the basic eight trigrams and their translated meanings are:

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Although the oriental thinker recognizes *yin* and *yang* to be the *Tao* of change within the world, that same thinker recognizes that *Tao* exists independently within nature. The classic example of this awareness is found in Lao-tzu's tone poem # 1:

The *Tao* that can be told of is not the eternal *Tao*.
 The name that can be named is not the eternal name;
 The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth;
 The Named is the mother of all things.
 Therefore, let there always be non-being, so we may see
 their subtlety.
 And let there always be being, so we may see their
 outcome.
 The two are the same.
 But, after they are produced, they differ in name.
 They both may be called deep and profound.
 Deeper and more profound.
 The door of all subtleties!

Tone poems # 54 and 42 pick up this same theme and specify four principles, the originating, unnamed *Tao*, the originating, named *mother*, or earth, and the two others, her “children”, as it were, *yin* and *yang*.

This analysis of change and the resolution of it into *Tao*, *mother*, *yin* and *yang* (term these by Campbell's “metaphysical” term, if one wants) results in a second, so-called rectification principle, namely, determining the relationship of thoughts to things and words to actions (call these by Campbell's “ethical” term).

The Master said, 'what is needed is to rectify names...If names are not correct, language is not in accordance with the truth of things, affairs cannot be carried on to success. When affairs cannot be carried on to success, rites and music will not flourish. When rites and music do not flourish, punishments will not be properly awarded. When punishments are not properly awarded, the people do not know how to move hand or foot. Therefore, a gentleman considers it necessary that the names he uses may be spoken appropriately. What the gentleman requires is just that in his words

there may be nothing incorrect.' (Confucius,
Analects XIII, 3)

So, human beings must learn to live in harmony with nature and, then, they will live in harmony with each other. Such living, however, must occur by paying attention to how humans use words:

Nature says few
words.
For the same reason

**Just as the way of child and parent
requires mutual respect, so the way of**

a whirlwind does not last a whole morning:
Nor does a rainstorm last a whole day:
What causes them?

It is Heaven and Earth (Nature).

If even Heaven and Earth cannot make them last long, how
much less can man?

Therefore, he who follows Tao is identified with Tao

He who follows virtue is identified with virtue.

He who abandons Tao is identified with the abandonment
of Tao.

He who is identified with tao - Tao is also happy to have
him.

And he who is identified with abandonment, abandonment
is also happy to abandon him.

It is only when one does not have enough faith in others
that others will have no faith in him. (# 23)

This reminds us of Heraclitus' *Fragment 10* and the central
virtue for Heraclitus' human being, namely, temperance --
"...speaking and acting the truth, giving heed to the nature
of things." This principle carries with it Confucius'

**The "rectification principle" means to determine
the relationship of thoughts to things and words**

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nance that the "way" or a child to discover the relationship to
parent, and vice versa is that the child be a child and a
parent be a parent. No "role" reversals can produce ethical
actions so no Ivan Ilych is possible to Lao-tzu. This means
that every name contains certain elements which constitute
the essence of that relationship and thus, the name should
agree with these elements. This principle of rectification of
names, or the meaning of words has such a prominent place
in the *Tao* because humans must conform to nature,
learning from it as from a mother. Humans must not strive
to re-make nature in its own rational order (we might recall

way is the right one? None, yet all. Perhaps, the way is via air, rather than land; perhaps, the way is via water, rather than air or land. The possibilities multiple, and so do the problems. The fact of the matter is only the way which gets us from Sacramento to Los Angeles is the right way, so, there is only one way. Yet, one still has many choices within the fact of having only one way.

To know the world and to see the Way of Heaven we only need to be with ourselves

Applying this example to *Tao*, we can say that *Tao* is the one, and our job is to set our feet on that "way" in our journey through life. Yet, the important thing we must do is to determine our name and act according to that name. If our name is human being, child, parent, father, mother, male, female, whatever other "named", then we must learn this meaning, or meanings and act accordingly. Tone poem # 33 illustrates this:

He who knows others is wise;
 He who knows himself is enlightened.
 He who conquers others has physical strength.
 He who conquers himself is strong.
 He who is contented is rich.
 He who acts with vigor has will;
 He who does not lose his place (with *Tao*) will endure.
 He who dies but does not really perish enjoys long life.

"Wise", "enlightened", and so forth are all "names"; Lao-tzu is defining the meanings of these names, not, however, as many people might define them. A case in point is "rich". Lao-tzu defines "rich" very differently than the average American would define it, yet, the issue within this tone poem is simply stated: "He who does not lose his place (with *Tao*) will endure". The Chinese, as exemplified by Lao-tzu within *Tao* see the human being's relationship continuously to *Tao*; in this sense, the initial search for "the way" permeates every moment and choice of their lives, even if the immediate relationship is that between child and parent. Implied in the search for the meaning of "child" and "parent", and thus, the "way" of that relationship, is a pervasive presence of *Tao*, so the relationship of child to parent and vice versa includes the relationship of each to *Tao*. As such, *Tao* represents the center of the wheel, the absolute around which the various spokes as relatives, be

they child, mother, father and so forth turn. *Tao*, therefore, is the stability of those relationships.

The fact remains, however, that the thrust of Lao-tzu's effort to bring humans to follow the *Way*, is to bring them "within" to find the *Way* because there they will not be distracted or diverted by "words":

He who knows, does not speak.
He who speaks does not know.
Close the mouth.
Shut the doors.
Blunt the sharpness.
Unite the tangles.
Soften the light.
Become one with the dusty world.
This is called profound identification.

Therefore, it is impossible either to be intimate and close to him or to be distant and indifferent to him.

It is impossible either to benefit him or to harm him.

It is impossible either to honor him or to disgrace him.

For this reason he is honored by the world. (# 56)

This being "within" is the means of contacting *Tao*, the source of the person's life and becomes the condition of being ethical. So, Lao-tzu calls the wise person within, there to find *Tao*:

One may know the world without going out of doors.
One may see the Way of Heaven without looking through the windows.
The further one goes, the less one knows.
Therefore the sage knows without going about;
Understands without seeing.
And accomplishes without any action. (# 47)

Lao-tzu reiterates the need to "Shut the doors (of cunning and desire)" within # 52, while, at the same time, reminding the wise person that "to use the light, revert to enlightenment" namely, *Tao* within, the source of life.

Thus, although the characteristic of Chinese thinking is to determine the relationship of citizens to leaders, and thus, political, as Joseph Campbell comments, nevertheless, implied is the fact that whoever these leaders are they

themselves, as leaders must act as "leaders" in a society,

Just as the non-being of the soup spoon allows the

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t as nature does in relation to *Tao*. This explains why Confucius sought to educate the *shih*, or the noble warrior about *Tao*.

This also explains why Lao-tzu

**Ultimate wisdom consists in not-
knowing; ultimate virtue consists in not**

continues to apply the principle of nature's operations to the actions of civil (tone poems # 57, 61, 65, 67) and military (tone poems # 47, 61, 68, 73) leaders.

The *Tao*, the unnamed and unnameable has the same relation within the thought of Lao-tzu as the *Logos* had in the thought of Heraclitus. If we remember Thomas Aquinas' definitions of religion, we may understand religion within Lao-tzu's *Tao*. Lao-tzu presumes what Aquinas calls the natural virtue of religion to be operative within every earthly and human relationship. The *I*, or so-called *I Ching* presumes that same natural virtue of religion to be operative in all "change". *The Way* is present in every being who changes since all change occurs while the being is *on the way*. Thus, in this sense, the *Tao* seeks to provide the Chinese directions on re-reading, re-choosing and re-binding themselves back to *Tao* or God.

So, Lao-tzu uses names to remind humans that they find meaning precisely in so far as there is the unnamed and unnameable, or, as is found within tone poem # 11, utility:

Thirty spokes are united around the hub to make a wheel,
But, it is on its non-being that the utility of the carriage
depends.

Clay is molded to form a utensil.

But, it is on its non-being that the utility of the room
depends.

Therefore, turn being into advantage, and turn non-being
into utility. (# 11)

Oriental people see any being in the context of *yin* and *yang*, or non-being and being. The existence of any physical being is an advantage; however, this advantage, *yang* is possible only because the non-being (which we might call space) provides utility or allows it to occupy that

space. Take the eight ounce glass of water example: eight ounces of full are an advantage to a thirsty person, however, that "eight ounces of full" are possible only because of the *eight ounces of capacity*, or non-being allowing and sustaining the *eight ounces of full*. Thus, *yin*, darkness, capacity, emptiness, non-being is useful, or utility and *yang*, light, fullness, being is advantage. This oriental view is unique in its completeness and contrasts to the occidental emphasis upon being, the sensible, matter. The oriental view of reality combines the material perception with the spiritual

awareness. Thus,

Lao-tzu's doctrine has a source,

wherever a being is, there non-being is present; wherever *yin* and *yang* are, there mother nature is; wherever mother nature is, there *Tao* is present. The oriental never loses perspective of *Tao* whatever the sensible or intellectual perception.

As a matter of fact, and because of this perspective, any change in knowing and, indeed, any changing in nature itself depends upon "non-being", so the wise person "keeps to the female" for meaning and perfection in virtue:

He who knows the male and keeps to the female becomes
the ravine of the world.

Being the ravine of the world,
He will never depart from eternal virtue,
But returns to the state of infancy.

He who knows the white and keeps to the black becomes
the model for the world.

Being the model for the world,
He will never deviate from eternal virtue,
But returns to the state of the non-ultimate.

He who knows glory but keeps to humility becomes the
valley of the world.

He will be proficient in eternal virtue,
And returns to the state of uncarved wood.

When the uncarved wood is broken up, it is turned into
concrete things.

But, when the sage uses it, he becomes the learning official.

Therefore, the great ruler does not cut up. (# 28)

The irony of this view is that ultimate wisdom and human perfection consist in not-acting, not-naming, not-competing and perhaps this is Campbell's source of his "metaphysical" designation of oriental religion, however, this designation

is very much an over-simplification because Lao-tzu wrote these tone poems to teach and to bring his fellow citizens to follow *Tao*, clearly an ethical purpose. Indeed, the emptiness of the *yin* metaphysically speaking is the condition for the emptying out of self and the corresponding birth of virtue ethically speaking (something Campbell completely ignores - remember a woman must be “empty” in order to become pregnant, but such common sense even escapes the occidental Joseph Campbell!):

The man of superior virtue is not conscious of his virtue,
 And in this way he really possesses virtue.
 The man of inferior virtue never loses sight of his virtue,
 And in this way he loses his virtue.
 The man of superior virtue takes not action, but has no
 ulterior motive to do so.
 The man of inferior virtue takes action, and has an ulterior
 motive to do so.
 The man of superior humanity takes action, but has no
 ulterior motive to do so.
 The man of superior righteousness takes action, and has an
 ulterior motive to do so.
 The man of superior propriety takes action,
 And when people do not respond to it, he will stretch his
 arms and force it upon them.

Therefore, when *Tao* is lost, only then does the doctrine of
 virtue arise.
 When virtue is lost, only then does the doctrine of
 humanity arise.
 When humanity is lost, only then does the doctrine of
 righteousness arise.
 When righteousness is lost, only then does the doctrine of
 propriety arise.
 Now, propriety is a superficial expression of loyalty and
 faithfulness, and the beginning of disorder.

Those who are the first to know have the flowers of *Tao*
 but are the beginning of ignorance.

For this reason, the great man dwells in the thick, and does
 not rest with the thin.
 He dwells in the fruit, and does not rest with the flower.
 Therefore, he rejects the one, and accepts the other. (# 38)

Lao-tzu himself lays no claim to being wise; he merely says that he is the student of "the master, *Tao*". Thus, he summarizes his view of his tone poems in a manner must simpler than this chapter has:

My doctrines are very easy to understand and very easy to practice.

But none in the world can understand or practice them.

My doctrines have a source, Nature; my deeds have a master, *Tao*.

It is because people do not understand this that they do not understand me.

Few people know me, and therefore, I am highly valued.

Therefore, the sage wears a course cloth on top and carries jade within his bosom. (# 70)

Spring manifests the inner reality of life within nature, in

he "course cloth" marks the sage's humility, being "natural", not drawing attention to his virtuous "nobility" and the "jade" reflects the color of life, green leaves as well as its tendency to "pull us within" - contrary to "gold" which reflects brilliance external to itself! The ethical person, therefore, is one who lives and grows within whereas the moral person is the one who measures his or her life by what happens outside and performs a plethora of actions in the world as a result of these external happenings. So, the difference between the cultures of Asia and America may be found in the difference between the valuable "minerals" of each, gold for the occidental and jade for the oriental worlds. When humanity is lost, only then does the doctrine of righteousness arise.

When righteousness is lost, only then does the doctrine of propriety arise.

Now, propriety is a superficial expression of loyalty and

Those who are the first to know have the flowers of Tao but are the beginning of ignorance.

faithfulness, and the beg

For this reason, the great man dwells in the thick, and does not rest with the thin.

He dwells in the fruit, and does not rest with the flower.

Therefore, he rejects the one, and accepts the other. (# 38)

Twenty-five hundred years before Tolstoy, Lao-tzu sealed the fate of Ivan Ilych with the observation that propriety arises when both righteousness and humanity are lost so

they become popular when virtue is lost as a result of *Tao* being lost. When we humans lose contact with ourselves, we lose contact with the source of that self, so we lose contact with our power source and feel weak. We then reach outside ourselves to grasp that proverbial straw, wealth, honor, reputation, even guns, but the apparent nourishment or strength we derive from these material things merely drains our remaining strength out of us and we die.

Quite the contrary of Confucius' advise to government about the necessity for formal education of the *shih* to guarantee order, Lao-tzu's advise is simple, but true:

Govern the state with correctness.
 Operate the army with surprise tactics.
 Administer the empire by engaging in no activity.
 How do I know that this should be so?
 Through this:
 The more taboos and prohibitions there are in the world,
 The poorer the people will be.
 The more sharp weapons the people have,
 The more troubled the state will be.
 The more cunning and skill man possesses,
 The more vicious things will appear.
 The more laws and orders are made prominent,
 The more thieves and robbers there will be.
 Therefore, the sage says:
 I take no action and the people of themselves are
 transformed.
 I love tranquility and the people of themselves become correct.
 I engage in no activity and the people of themselves
 become prosperous.
 I have no desire and the people of themselves become
 simple.(# 57)

Actually, all of Lao-tzu's tone poems and the importance of ethics over morals is found within one poem. This one poem redirects us to nature and reflects his understanding of nature's message, as well as typifies the importance the oriental places on the imitation of nature as the condition of human virtue and as the only way to tap the natural life force which is eternal:

When a man is born, he is tender and weak.
 At death, he is stiff and hard.

All things, the grass as well as trees, are tender and supple
 while alive.
 When dead, they are withered and dried.

Therefore, the stiff and the hard are companions of death.
 The tender and the weak are companions of life.
 Therefore, if the army is strong, it will not win.
 If a tree is stiff, it will break.
 The strong and the great are inferior, while the tender and
 the weak are superior. (# 78)

The oriental, both Confucius and Lao-tzu, emphasizes the necessity for human beings to tap into the power of nature, at once our physical and eternal life source. This view obviates any compulsion to control, to conquer, even to know and to act, except, of course, to imitate and thus to step on the road, or **Way** which is **Tao**. The wise have no need to step outside the door or look outside the windows of the first home, our own body. We merely look within and tap into that life source in which we participate, **Ke** in order to live, grow, become strong physically, ethically and, therefore, eternally.