

CHAPTER FOUR

Lao-tzu, Tao and Religion

Scholars currently say that Lao-tzu, reputed to have lived in K'uh-sien 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.

The **Tao** which can be talked about and given a name is not the eternal **Tao**.

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)

The dominating theme in Chinese thought has been political reform through ethical action.

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, however, **Tao**, and the principles found within the **Tao**, attributed to Lao-tzu have been within Chinese thought since at least 500 B.C. and some scholars contend up to 2000 B.C.

The dominating theme of Chinese philosophy has been political reform and the Confucian model for that reform was 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.

"The principal theme in Lao-tzu is humility".

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*:

...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 philosopher of religion considered and considers 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? 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, that is, being true to one's word, that is, honest.

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 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.

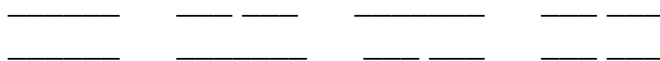
This simple observation of nature's daily cycle of night to day and day to night contains a profound insight. Oriental cultures view the sun as an originating principle of life so each dawn is a re-birth and the light, or ***yang*** becomes a source of life. Notwithstanding the ***yang*** is conceived as an originating principle of life, the shadow, or darkness, the ***yin*** becomes the incubating principle which cooperates in the birth of new life. So, male and female are the co-principles required to bring forth all new life - here, we see a comparison between the ***Tao*** and the *Old Testament, Genesis*: just as ***Yhwh*** creates the male and female principles of new life, namely, Adam and Eve, so *Tao* is the ultimate source of ***yin*** and ***yang***, the two principles of new life within nature.

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 bi-phasic cycle of peasant farm life gave birth to the ***yin*** and ***yang*** conception of the world. So, the *male*, as ***yang*** reflected the heavenly

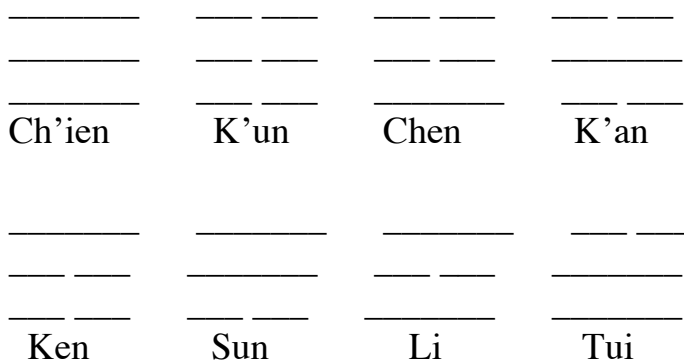
spring and summer sunlight, bright, dry, warm, active principle, represented by the solid line (—); while the *female*, as *yin* reflected the earthy late fall and winter, dark, moist, cold, receptive principle, represented by the broken line (— —).

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

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:



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.



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 paralleling the seasons within nature:

Jen and ***Yin*** are related as love and being receptive are related: both result in unity within diversity.

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.

But, to understand this relationship of love to family, we must understand the relationship of ***li*** and ***jen*** to Confucius. ***Li*** translates variously as “good manners”, “politeness”, rituals”, “ceremonies” (as well as others) and the ***jen*** translates 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 consider 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:

Trigram	<u>English translation</u>	<u>Family relationship</u>	
	the creative	father	K'un
<u>Chinese name</u>	<u>Cosmological symbol</u>		chen
Ch'ien	heaven		k'an

ken	the receptive	earth	mother
sun	the arousing	thunder	first son
li	the abysmal	water	second son
tui	being still	a mountain	third son
	being gentle	wind, wood	first daughter
	clinging	fire	second daughter
	being joyful	a lake	third daughter

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:

Just as the *way* of child and parent requires mutual respect, so the *way* of other beings to *Tao* requires imitation.

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,

The “rectification principle” means to determine the relationship of thoughts to things and words to actions; then there will be nothing incorrect.

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 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 --

All streams and rivers empty into the sea.

"...speaking and acting the truth, giving heed to the nature of things." This principle carries with it Confucius' insistence 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. 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 here that the Oriental *Old Testament* story of Adam and Eve found them striving to acquire "knowledge of good and evil", something which Y-hw-h forbid them to do).

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.

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 sea. (# 32)

Tao means "way". Whether or not this *Tao* carries the meaning of God, as absolute and transcendent, it certainly has the meaning of present and immanent, that *from which nature comes* and *which sustains nature's changing*. The overall, analogous meaning of *Tao* is similar to the meaning of "way" in our speech. We say such things as: "That's a good way"; "There's a right way to do this"; "My way isn't your way"; "Our ways are different"; "Which way is the store?"; "Which way should I go?"; "That's not the way to think"; "That's the way to work"; "That's not

a good way to start". Thus, notwithstanding the diversity of these statements, the use of "way" has somewhat the same and somewhat a different meaning. Something about "way" is common in all these diverse statements and in this sense, the meaning of "way" transcends its use within these statements.

Let us take a concrete example: we want to take a trip from Sacramento to Los

To know the world and to see the Way of Heaven we only need to be with ourselves and thus, open to understand.

Angeles; what way do we go? The answer to that question is simple: the right way. But, the problems now begin. What is the right way? The answer to this question is also simple: if you arrive in Los Angeles from Sacramento, you have taken the right way. But, again the problems intrude. Someone says: take highway 5; someone else: take highway 80; someone else: take highway 99; someone else: take highway 1. Which 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, I still have many choices within the fact of having only one way.

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*.

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)

And again, 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.

Ultimate wisdom consists in not-knowing;
ultimate virtue consists in not-acting.

non-being of *Tao* allows beings to exist.

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 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 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 un-nameable 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)

Orientalists see any being in the context of **yin** and **yang** as both 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, 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 un-carved wood.
 When the un-carved 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 interior 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:

Lao-tzu's doctrine has a source, Mother nature; his deeds have a master, *Tao*.

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)

The "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! 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.