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THE GREAT MASTER OF
DAO-LU JU

by Kerby Kuek

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Preface



Heavenly Stems endorsed the Year of Snake (2013), and the blossoming of the yellow chrysanthemum in autumn (fall) signifies celebration of the sages' teachings. Many generations have come and gone, yet Dao, being eternal, has remained. One can recollect that Laozi left West Valley, leaving behind 5,000 words that are still as alive as they were in the ancient times. Daoism texts, books and scriptures discuss a wide range of significant and insignificant topics, some of them barely. The content and context of these manuscripts have rarely been translated into other languages to

benefit both Chinese and non-Chinese speaking people. It is heartening to know that one of my disciples Kerby Kuek, who is well-versed in the Chinese metaphysics and is relentlessly pursuing Dao, has authored this meaningful book after exhaustive research. This book will be released in the Year of Horse (2014) to benefit all mankind.

Revered Master Lu Ju

*Planchette Writing (Fu Ji)-The Mystic Connection with the God
2013 Mid-autumn at Tsz Nam Koon, Sheung Wan Hong Kong*

呂祖仙師降



天序癸巳，菊蕊秋黃，是歡聖教之顯，昭隆萬世，道氣長存，邇自老聖西出函谷而遺言五千迺至今世者，道書道籍廣義包涵幾無微不至者也，包羅萬有，洋洋大觀而能從文演義萬教揚神儀奧理，並以多種語文而普及華洋者實罕且稀是也。今教之彥士，本仙之賢徒郭氏翹峰力著義書以倡道版本行世殊多，賢徒精宏地理廣涉玄風，嶺南鑪峯之異士也，其揚道宏理之心昭昭，其書說教演義發微且能流通於俗，是書成於仲秋而發版於甲午，必能一新讀者之耳目矣，本仙嘉勉並筆走一小序哉！

天運癸巳仲秋上浣吉日於紫堦觀序



Preface



Chapter One of Laozi's *Dao De Ching* scripture says, “Dao that can be told is not an eternal Dao...” along with extensive explanations, having vast variations, from people belonging to different walks of lives. By going through this introduction, readers could get first hand explanation from the Great Lu Ju. This first chapter elaborates that Dao that can be explained from the Cosmic or Heavenly path is very much different from the Humanly path. In short, the essence of Dao explained by humans greatly varies from God's explanation. Such variations of Dao could be detrimental as

well as disheartening, as nowadays we witness many people getting enormous wealth due to China becoming a strong and powerful nation, but there is also a marked increase in the number of empty souls. Many treat this unrelenting quest to acquire money merely as a means to gain short-term happiness through promoting the Dao culture with its variations.

To further elaborate, one should understand that there are three

paths namely; Heavenly Path, God's Path and Humanly Path .The original objective of Dao is to spread the teachings of God that educate people in the art to live, to handle situations, and to cultivate goodwill and behavior which is also generally endorsed by Heaven since the beginning of universe. The Humanly path should also follow and imitate certain rules and adhere to protocol laid out by the Heavenly path. Ancient sages could communicate with Deities or God through God's path that works around the human circumference. God's path too needs to work around or follow the command from the Heavenly path; thus everything should move in a cycle. However, unfortunately today there is a marked deviation from the original objective of Dao, and this gap is increasingly widening due to different interpretation by the humans, resulting in extreme difficulty in promoting the original Dao.

This book further elaborates the need to cultivate and medicate through a proper channel to achieve the original objective of Dao, and the incorporation of metaphysics namely Feng Shui that forms an integral part of Dao.

Kerby Kuek



Planchette Writing (Fu Ji) The Mystic Connection with the Above



The practice of divination using ‘Planchette Writing’ is quite common in places such as Hong Kong and Taiwan. ‘Planchette Writing’ is performed at many local Daoism temples, known as Koon or Guan (觀). So, what exactly is ‘Planchette Writing’? The demonstrations are performed by a medium called Ji Tong or Luan Sheng, a specially selected person, with gifted talent, who either works alone or in pair. This ritual dates back to 5,000 years, when Xi Wang Mu (Goddess of the West) used a mythical bird to communicate or transmit special information to selected person on earth. It was much later, when these birds became extinct, that it transformed to the current ‘Planchette Writing’.

A tray of fine sand is placed in front of the Ji Tong who holds a T-shaped writing tool, made of peach and willow wood, in his hand. Before performing ‘Planchette Writing’, deity(s) is invited to descend from heaven. In the past 5 years, I have had the opportunity to learn from as many as 35 deities and have written 6 Chinese books. For many, this might seem as a completely new experience, and few might even treat this as something evil or devil. I would like to make just one



request to the readers, that they should not judge this until they have seen it for themselves.

For the past 5 years during my many visits to the Koon, I have witnessed numerous non-Chinese speaking people, which include Americans, British, and even Filipinos, who are standing in queues and waiting for their turn to solicit an advice, and mind you Ji Tongs do not even know any foreign language. I have also seen many celebrities, local media reporters, well-known barristers, businessmen, etc. seeking advice. This points out to some mystical connections, as the Ji Tongs





are generally not very educated, and it is astonishing that they are suddenly able to write poems, not just in Chinese but also in foreign languages.

During the ‘Planchette Writing’, Ji Tongs or Luan Shengs are able to carry out their rituals with meticulous care. They are very respectful to the deities who descend on the Planchette. Several of these writings are in the form of ancient texts as opposed to modern texts. My encounters are mostly written in poems with brief contemporary explanation at the end of the poems. My aim is to learn many unanswered questions related to the Chinese metaphysics and gain Daoism knowledge. People are intrigued by the visible sincerity of the Ji Tongs. Many of the popular Daoist classics scriptures are written through ‘Planchette Writing’.

Occasionally, certain writings are meant for public, and most of them advocate good deeds, proper etiquette, and moral behavior. I remember one particular writing that advised people to be sincere, respectful towards elders, and let go of their egos. Several came to ask for the Chinese Medicinal form. Many writings serve to act as a bridge between humans and spirits, and the content usually advocates goodness and discourages evil doings. A lot of these teachings are from Confucius, Lao Zi, and the Buddha.

For your reference, I have mentioned the address of Koon that I visit.



Lǚ Dòngbīn (Revered Daoist Master)



Lu Ju (or Lǚ Dòngbīn) said, “Ancient deity and human heart is indifferent, but not today.”

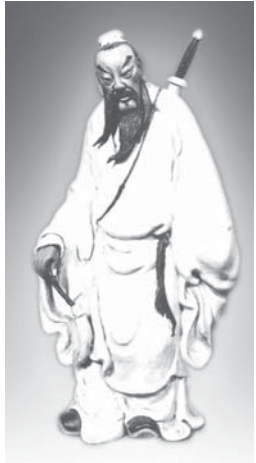
呂祖仙師曰：「古之所謂正法時期者，仙與人其聖凡之心無別也。」



Lǚ Dòngbīn (呂洞賓) is a historical figure and also a deity/Immortal revered by many in the Chinese cultural sphere, especially by Daoists. Lǚ Dòngbīn is one of the most widely known among the group of deities known as the Eight Immortals and considered by some to be the de facto leader (the formal leader more likely is said to be Zhongli Quan). Lǚ Dòngbīn is also mentioned in the official history book *History of Song*. He is widely considered to be one of the earliest masters

of the tradition of Neidan, or Internal Alchemy. He is depicted in art as being dressed as a scholar and often bears a sword on his back that drives out evil spirits.

According to the Li Shi-Zhen Dao Xian Comprehensive Text, Lu Ju or Lǚ Dòngbīn, or self-named as ‘The Return to Dao Person’, was born on the fourteen day of the fourth month in the twelfth year of Tang’s Zhen guan (638 AD). According to the legend, on the day



which suggested he would eventually get killed by the King. He left the palace and followed his Master Zhongli Quan to practice Dao and eventually became an Immortal. He is regarded as an icon in today's Daoism world, which I will elaborate later.

he was born under a tree, an abnormal 'scent' surrounded the trail path in close proximity to the tree. He was a bright and smart kid, who could easily memorize many difficult words and sentences. He stood at 8 feet 2 inches (however, not too sure about his actual height as per today's measurements), and had yellowish face with a stiff smile. It is believed that he failed his scholastic examinations thrice before he finally passed Jinshi (Tang era government examination). He then served the Tang's Kingdom for many years. One day he was awakened by the 'Huang Liang Dream' or Yellow Millet Dream,



Master Lǚ Dòngbīn



Master Lǚ Dòngbīn is one of the eight Immortals - the Ba Xian – in the Chinese mythology. As mentioned earlier, he was born in 638 AD in Northern China. His family members were civil servants. As a young man he traveled to Mount Lu in the south where he met a fire dragon who presented him with a magical sword that enabled him to conceal himself in the heaven.

On a journey to the capital, Lu met Zhongli Quan, one of the most ancient of the Eight Immortals. There he fell asleep and dreamt that he had been promoted to a high official post and possessed enormous wealth. All was well for fifty years until his family was banished and exterminated. Taking cue from his dream, Lu decided to forgo an official career and follow Zhong into the mountains. At the age of 100, he still had a youthful appearance and was capable of travelling 100 miles in a matter of few seconds.

Lǚ Dòngbīn considered compassion to be an essential means for attaining perfection. His sword was not a tool for killing enemies, but for overcoming ignorance, aggression and passion. Through his experiences, he had decisively influenced the development of Daoism, and is venerated by the school as a profound teacher and its founder.



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1

Watch what you do and say... you could be tested!



Straight Yang (Zhongli Quan) mentoring Pure Yang (Lǚ Dòngbīn)
There is a legend that when in Chang An, Lü was tested by Zhongli Quan ten times during a drinking session before Quan accepted him as his disciple. Lü subsequently went on to become an immortal. These ten trials are described below:

- Test 1:** One day Lu Ju came back from work and discovered that his family members were seriously ill and they subsequently passed away. Without expressing any sadness, he went about preparing dresses and coffins necessary for their burial. Later, however his family members returned to life and lived on. Lu Ju again expressed no joyous feeling at their revival. (The basic principle to become an Immortal is emotional management skill and the accompanying liberated ability)
- Test 2:** Lu Ju was selling stuff at a market when a buyer came to him and started bargaining with him. After agreeing on a price, Lu Ju handed him the agreed item, but the buyer refused to pay him in full and walked away with the item. Lu Ju did not argue with the buyer and let him take the item. (An important tenet to lead a trouble-free life is to practice relaxation and avoid unnecessary grievances, of course dictated by circumstances)
- Test 3:** On the first day of lunar calendar, Lu Ju met a beggar, Though Lu Ju gave him some alms, the beggar kept asking for more, and even uttered vulgar words. Lu Ju simply smiled and left the spot. (Patience is the key to becoming an



Immortal)

- Test 4:** Once when Lu Ju was a shepherd, he came across a hungry tiger who wanted to snatch the goats that were under his care. Realizing the danger, Lu Ju sent the goats down the hills and bravely stood in front of the tiger. The hungry tiger looked at Lu Ju with awe and left the place without hurting him. (Inner value of selflessness is vital for an Immortal)
- Test 5:** Lu Ju was mediating in a small hut on a mountain when a beautiful and gorgeous lady suddenly appeared and asked him to let her stay for the night since she was lost. That night, this lady kept flirting with Lu Ju and tried to lure him to have sex with her, but Lu kept away from these temptations. (Inner self control to avoid illegal sex is imperative for Immortals)
- Test 6:** One day when Lu Ju arrived home, he found the house burgled and all his belongings lost. Without showing any signs of anger or remorse, he started to work on his farm. Suddenly, as he dug further, he discovered countless gold underneath. Without displaying greed, he continued to excavate the earth and did not take a single piece of gold. (Inner value of containment is paramount for Immortals)
- Test 7:** Lu Ju bought some bronze utensils from the market, however when at home, he realized that all the utensils were made from gold. Lu Ju immediately returned the utensils to the seller. (Greed would hinder a person from being an Immortal)
- Test 8:** A crazy Daoist was selling medicine, by telling people that this magic potion will cause instant death and make them Immortals. No one dared try this medicine, however Lu Ju bought the potion and consumed it, but the medicine caused him no harm. (Testing the ability to overcome fear)
- Test 9:** A river was once in a state of flood as Lu Ju crossed it with other passengers on a boat. During the journey, as the weather started to get from bad to worse, all the passengers



except Lu Ju got nervous and worried. This was because Lu Ju took life in its stride and never worried about the transition from life to death. (Remaining steady in chaotic situations would enable one to wade through difficult times)

- Test 10:** Once when Lu Ju was alone at home, weird things suddenly started to happen; he saw ghosts and monsters killing each other and wanted to do the same to Lu Ju. Lu felt no fear and without paying any attention, he kept doing his chores. Another devil, drenched in blood, tried to take Lu Ju's life, insisting that he owed his present life to him since in his previous life, Lu had killed him. Without any fear, Lu Ju asked the devil to go ahead and kill him now since it would be fair as he had taken devil's life in his earlier life. Suddenly the sky turned blue and all the ghosts and devils disappeared; instead appeared, looking straight at him, a smiling Straight Yang Zhongli Quan, who happened to be his master and mentor in Daoist teachings. (Daoists believe that things happen for reasons and our past lives influence the current life we live in)

These 10 tests proved that Lu Ju is a pure and dignified person with the right attributes. Master Zhong was therefore very satisfied and happy, and willingly took Lu Ju to Nan San Her Ling to pass his secrets of life and subsequently formed a 'Zhong Lu Golden Dan' sect of school. But Lu Ju was not too fond of the secrets passed on to him. He instead developed his own formula for inner peace to benefit more human beings. Many until today practice this path of the Immortals. This was Lu Ju's major contribution for the humanity as he helped many people to trudge on the right path and improve their health as well as living conditions.



Master Zhongli Quan

Lu Ju said, "To save our souls eternally, it is essential to practice Dao, and to practice Dao is to live up to Dao's principles."

呂祖曰：『要拯救自己真靈不滅永生，必須修道，修道必須行道。』



9 Virtues/Tenets of Master Lu Ju

- 「忠」 Be Loyal in your duty by performing work assigned to you unconditionally.
- 「孝」 Respect your elders through right and proper attitude in order to let them feel comfortable.
- 「廉」 Cultivate the value of frugality by not hurting yourself and others and live a simple life.
- 「節」 Morally uphold yourself by not indulging in lust and vice activities.
- 「義」 Uphold justice and have no bias in any condition.
- 「信」 Create trust in order to develop workable relationships and communications, and never unilaterally change an agreement.
- 「仁」 Love not only human beings, but also the nature that gives us life.
- 「惠」 Create advantages for the community and party involved.
- 「禮」 Observe Etiquettes with the right set of manners that are accepted by the mind and demonstrated through attitude.

2

Conversation with The Great Lu Ju

(Seeking knowledge from Lu Ju)



- Q:** How many times did Confucius pay visits and seek Dao from Lao Zi?
- Lu Ju:** Confucius did not pay more than three visits. These meetings were marked by formal conversation which resulted in the creation of legendary teachings. The significant feature of these meetings was the mutual respect as neither of them demonstrated any inferiority or superiority.



Q: Please summarize the three teachings (Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism)?

Lu Ju: The three teachings were first combined into one during the Tang era. While Confucianism places importance on etiquettes, Daoism teaches us to have less desire and adopt 'Wu Wei', and Buddhism asks us to connect our deep inner self with our soul.

Q: What do you think of the gays and lesbians?

Lu Ju: One must study the karmic debts (or bad choices) incurred in their past lives. It is most likely that they have the worst karmic debt out of the 12 Yin Yuan, cumulated from their previous lives' karmic debts. Sole Yin and Single Yang individually can't stand alone; chances are that these individuals in their past lives were either nuns or monks who violated the adultery rule. People of such inclinations should be diverted to Dao.

Q: How can one practice Dao?

Lu Ju: Seek inner peace and look within rather than outside. Uphold the inner peace and quietness rule. Deeply understand the emptiness and live with it. Laozi's way of practicing Dao is to 'observe somethingness' rather than 'observe nothingness'. For instance one can collect lots of wealth and fame; however it is observed that after collecting enormous amount of wealth and fame, if later not much is left, one can experience lot of emptiness. Such situations bring one to a realistic state of mind like in the Buddhism teachings. Thus one should be contented with what we have. Anyhow the super-rich do not have much time to practice Dao, so be contented!

Q: How does one know that he or she has reached a state of quietness or emptiness?

Lu Ju: Dao's way to observe nothingness and enter into the



emptiness state is similar to Buddhism's way of seeking inner peace and nobility. Emptiness and quietness is a state that can be compared with the serenity of the universe.

Q: How can one feel heart and soul connecting to divinity?

Lu Ju: Connecting is the key word here. Common man does not have the ability to develop connectivity as this can be achieved only through enlightenment. In the Zen teachings, level two of meditation can achieve such a connection. Practitioners are often too rigid to follow texts and thus cannot achieve the desired outcome.

Q: How does one preach Dao?

Lu Ju: Majority amongst us 'talk the walk' rather than 'walk the talk'. There is an old Chinese saying, "It is the humans who preach Dao and not Dao that preaches the humans." It is also wise to equip ourselves with virtues so that one is able to lead by example. Daoists often indulge in simply promoting and preaching Dao rather than its techniques.

Q: "How does one experience Dao?"

Lu Ju: The feeling of getting Dao is experienced when one embarks on the other side of the shore. Dao is the only solid entity, since the shore is empty and void. The first stage to become a deity or getting Dao is the level of Human Deity; this stage is similar to level two of Zen meditation. The process does not end here; one should obey the rules, and perform more good deeds by displaying compassion at the highest level. One needs at least 200-300 years at this level in order to reach the Cosmic or Heaven Deity level.



3

Lu Ju on Dao 呂祖論道-續論



(The original texts of *Lu Ju on Dao* is much more complex than what I've translated due to my limited ability)

Chapter 1 - 陰陽造化

The Transformations and Creations because of Yin and Yang

All the creations and transformations on earth are because of Yin and Yang. All creations are dependent on Yin and Yang for their survival and evolution, similarly the lack of fusion of Yin and Yang leads to the destruction of all creations. Yin and Yang, by their very nature, cannot be static and these also cannot affect transformation, unless closely interconnected. The simple form of Yin and Yang can be observed through sun and moon, day and night; creation of all the things is through such a growth cycle. Cultivation and growth go together such as the agriculture produce. Farmers should work hard, but they also need adequate rest to perform at the optimum level. Mayfly has its own life cycle; it is born at dawn and dies at night. Life and growth cycle depends on Yin and Yang. A balance between Yin and Yang is essential to maintain a proper lifecycle, while its imbalance could lead to catastrophe. The human lifecycle is a suitable example, as sickness and illness occur due to the imbalance between Yin and Yang.

The foundations and fundamentals of metaphysics are also based on the Yin and Yang theory. The modern science terms such as matter and anti-matter, two dimensional views, cosmic and earth, and moon and sun are all based on the Yin and Yang concept.

Chapter 2 - 先後天和性命

Inborn/Influence of Nature Life/Body

Ancient wisdom would tell us to separate our body and soul. While soul is an inborn trait, body is the part that is being influenced from the day when we are born. The combined movement of celestial cosmic or Dao results in the creation of living beings; the inborn nature of a human is dependent on the maturity of Yin and Yuan or karmic calculations. The following metaphor should help us to understand the transformation better:

Inborn (initially)

Nothing
Formless
Soul

Influence (later)

Something
Form
Body

When the soul enters our body, the path of Dao is distant. In order to practice Dao, the deterioration of lifecycle is critical. Before such a process materializes, taking care of both soul and body is imperative since these are inter-related. Our soul is untainted, while our body, due to lust, desire and our 'want more attitude', is tainted and thus prone to karmic or unwarranted debts.

Proper and dedicated practice of Dao should end the karmic cycle of debts. This is also the path to become deity, Buddha and Immortal.

Long Men founder, Qiu Chuji placed great emphasis on the strength of Dao and pureness of De (virtues) in preaching and practicing Dao.

Chapter 3 - 入世出世

Aloofness and Worldliness

Human beings are born in between the echelons of cosmic and earth, through the fusion of Yin creation and Yang transformation. Everything moves in a cycle, such as cultivation in spring, growth in summer, harvest in autumn, and hibernation in winter. Human beings also cannot avoid this cycle of creation and destruction. Like all sages



and deities, we are also required to liberate our soul from the influence of our tainted body, for which the best path is Dao.

It could lead us from a busy and noisy world into the serene and quiet inner world; free from the lustful and ‘want more’ attitude to an innocent and pure soul. Buddha said, “We come from the east and go to the west. Today, we may not know where we came from, but we know for sure where we are heading to.” He further elaborates, “Terminate desire, leave lustful life, abandon the three poisons (greed, hatred and delusion), cultivate Yang energy, get enlightened, and return to the inborn nature. Once compassion entrenches in us, our soul shall not be destroyed.”

Today practitioners are unable to differentiate between ‘Aloofness and Worldliness’; they do not walk their talk. This has got to do with our ‘heart’, which is distancing and moving away from our original and ancient wisdom. From the Dao’s point of view, we need to return to the ‘Wu Ji’ state of ‘O’. In short, it is similar to breaking the chain of reincarnation, and practitioners should remember to walk their talk.

Chapter 4 - 處實之道

The Form of Dao

The foundation of Dao is emptiness and formlessness. Form is created through formless and formless is the culmination of form. Form is full, while modest is empty; full is draining, while empty is gaining. While these are regarded as the Confucius teachings of Dao, in reality these have always been the teachings of Dao even before Confucius.

Before I was born (in form), I was between the cosmic and the earth; even though I call myself ‘I’, I was formless. After I was born, a form of body was created and I became a reality. My present solid form is the outcome of my past lives’ karmic, lusty desires and ‘want more’ attitudes. Ordinary human beings should learn the concept of ‘emptiness’ and ‘solidness’ in a broader context, and at times this is not



easily comprehended by the limited human knowledge. ‘Emptiness’ is untainted with karmic, while ‘solidness’ to the contrary is tainted. All things are created from ‘emptiness’.

The term ‘knowledge’ is the result of pursuing material world, and thus creating unnecessary debts and unwarranted karma. ‘Emptiness’ is the state we want to go, free from desire, lust and karmic. Practicing Dao is the only way that can return us to the pure state from where we originated. Dao in higher self can lead us there by solidifying formless and emptiness of our soul; for this we must purify our heart. Buddha and deities can transform into countless manifestations due to their formless or emptiness states.

Buddhism is the right way to practice. In the era of Mo Fa (era of chaotic and third phase of cosmic life), the world was led by power and humans were tainted.

Both our mind and heart should be dedicated in practicing Dao. Live the life in a solid form, but from the viewpoint of formlessness and emptiness. How this is done will be explained later. Both Buddhism and Daoism place great emphasis on cleansing soul and body to achieve the desired objective.

Chapter 5 - 順逆之理

In line (clockwise) vs Reverse (anti-clockwise)

Ordinary people are allowed to live between the cosmic and earth, if their movement is in line with the Heavenly Dao, however if their movement is reversed, it would cause destruction. However through a deeper understanding of Dao from a different perspective one would realize that the reverse would be the ideal state to become sages and deities. Ordinary people would go in line, while sages would go in the reverse.

To understand this, we must realize that humans and all living beings are restricted by weather, Yin and Yang, and 5 elements. In order not to be restricted, one needs to get rid of such influences so that



the weather does not make you feel hot or cold, literally speaking, and the 5 elements do not hurt you, thus one could become an Immortal or sage, as longevity of life would be the natural outcome.

The theory and rationale of this belief that ordinary people move in line, while sages move in the reverse line is easy to comprehend but difficult to practice.

Chapter 6 - 善惡與因果

Cause and effect of good and bad deeds (karma)

It should be understood that both cosmic and earth consist of Dao, to know that Dao is in ‘emptiness’. Human beings have both good and bad deeds to their credit, just like a Taiji diagram, where both black and white spots are clearly defined. On the white side we also find black spots, similarly on the black portion we also find white spots.

Similar to all human beings, before we arrive in this world (presumably reincarnation) we are allotted both black and white spots. Therefore we see some good in a bad person, while we also see some bad in a good person. As such cause and effect is what dictates us and leads us to become who eventually we are. Free of lust, desire and ‘want more’ attitudes would lead us to emptiness. Such a state is free from both good and bad deeds. The essential element that would take us there is 100% commitment towards only good deeds.

Each one of us would like to cultivate good deeds during the course of our lives. Our mind is a powerful tool; the way we think would cause action and action is instrumental in leading us to good and bad deeds. Suppose by now you have witnessed the scientific part of religion, ‘to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction’, or the cause and effect. A thought can kill and a thought can save; this powerful belief should make us understand the domain of the religious world and the Dao world. Remember the old saying, ‘What you sow, so shall you reap’. Daoists, who do not follow proper guidelines,



will violate the heavenly law and get reprimanded. Please ensure its execution with the proper protocol and conducts.

Chapter 7 - 養性保命

Cultivate Soul and Protect Body

In a nutshell, the most critical thing for all Dao practitioners is to eliminate the source of our soul and body. As described earlier as well, while soul is an inborn trait, body is influenced after one is born. Both soul and body should be properly cultivated and protected in order to practice Dao. Any deviation would create imbalances that lead to poor and rich, class differences, etc. Body is the source of creation of all bad and good deeds, and the roots of the source are deep and profound. Good deeds lead to fame and fortune, while bad deeds lead to poverty and unknown.

In the quest of Dao, our soul should be cultivated through proper education or through the right channels; understanding oneself is like understanding the universe. The metaphor of Dao is emptiness, while people are solid; Dao is peaceful, while people tend to fight; Dao is pure while people are polluted. To be in sync with Dao, one must eliminate grievances, bad moods, competitiveness, lust, and desire from the system.

The most important thing is to be grateful for having a body, because it is only through a body that one can practice Dao. However one should practice Dao in a timely manner before our lives end and it is too late to achieve the higher self which is to go back to the original state of emptiness, or become an Immortal, deity or Buddha.

While in a mother’s womb, soul is in a chaotic state. The creation of the body and soul is the result of the fusion of kidney and heart. This once again can be explained by the Tai Ji diagram that is formed from Wu ji; two legs, two hands and two eyes are formed, thus creating soul (Yuan Shin) and body (Yuan Jing). Upon severing of the umbilical cord at the time of our birth, our soul rises to the heart while our body, that



also includes kidney, is formed. Thus Qi is formed to keep us alive. Understanding this would take us back to our origin, and the road then is none other than Dao (it is all about the Inner Alchemy).

Chapter 8 - 了性歸源

Ending the soul and returning to the origin of Dao

Cosmic and earth are evolving Dao. Dao is like the rotation of sun and moon. The Dao practitioners should understand the concept of the Dao cycle in order to further understand creation of the soul. Through the observation of our inner self, we would know that it is our lust, desire, greed, etc. that lead us to hell rather than heaven. Lust is as huge as sea; it can never be satisfied completely, and chasing it contributes to three poisonous bad deeds, i.e. tension, confusion and indulgence. No one asks where we want to go and what steps we should take in order to save our soul from getting tainted. The origin of Dao is similar to where water and mountain originated. For a person, origin of Dao is just like from mother's womb, beyond that is 'emptiness' and 'quietness'. That is why 'emptiness' and 'quietness' is so critical in the Dao practice. It is important to set our soul pure and free and let 'quietness' take charge. Search and seek our origins, end our soul and return to origin. It is vital that we take the right steps to cultivate our soul and heart through our body while we still have our body. I have written at great length about the origin of Dao in my book *Dao De Ching Explained*. Most Neidan books (Inner Alchemy) treat this 0 as the origin of soul and the wisdom of body. Ending soul and returning to the origin of Dao is returning to Wu Ji. Practicing Dao is that simple.

Chapter 9 - 生與滅

Creation and Destruction

Nothing on earth is permanent and all creations are dependent on the lifecycle of growth, maturity and decomposition. What goes up will



eventually come down and whoever is born will die one day. To break this lifecycle, one has to attain a state of higher self; all human beings who turned into sages and deities are good examples of this unique achievement.

The reincarnation process can be avoided by achieving the higher self or becoming an Immortal. Inner state with the right action leads to ethical sphere that in turn leads to this metaphysical transition. Dao is present in the spirited souls of all living beings; it can be cultivated through goodness with all greed, desire, wealth, power, etc. transformed into an 'emptiness' state. All things embrace Dao and if we observe such a state we would discover that the world of formation is derived from formless, and we should know by now that formless is actually Dao. When we reflect, we discover that creation and destruction are part of Dao.

Both black hole theory and big bang theory are excellent examples of what Laozi is trying to tell us in his ancient scripture *Dao De Ching* from 'nothingness to somethingness' and revert from 'form to formless'.

Chapter 10 - 奧妙之道

The Mystic and Subtle of Dao

If we cannot trace the origin or source of a material it is said to be abstruse or esoteric, while if we see materials in forms but do not know where it came from it is said to be subtle. The esoteric materials comprises of 5 elements and thus the creation of Yin and Yang. Subtle material also denotes both Taiji and embraces Yin and Yang. Dao breeds all things, and all things embrace both esoteric and subtle materials. Thus Dao includes both esoteric and subtle materials.

When asked, why humans are born, many would answer that parents give birth to humans. However, no one could give the correct answer when asked why to give birth when eventually one has to die. Similarly when predicting weather, modern technologies can only



estimate but cannot predict accurately; this is esoteric law. While the presence of gods, deities and sages, and the occurrence of many miracles have proven their existence, we cannot see them with our naked eyes; this is the subtle law. In order to understand Dao, one must look for esoteric in subtle and similarly one may look for subtle in esoteric. Both esoteric and subtle are part and parcel of Dao.

Both esoteric and subtle materials are not confined within their respective borders in the universe. Many scriptures of Laozi, which talk about Dao, are without passion, and appear empty and void. Hence humans should reproduce such a law that is desire and lust free. Throughout their lives, humans are chasing after a net of illusions. The practice of Dao would lead to a deeper understanding of cause and effect which in turn would result in bad and good deeds.

Chapter 11 - 覺悟 Awareness and Enlightenment

Awareness is regarded as deep understanding, while enlightenment deemed as lifting the mind blockage. The origin of our soul embraces both awareness and enlightenment abilities; however these abilities are tainted soon after we are born due to our pursuance of wealth and desire. However we can reclaim these inborn abilities through practicing Dao.

While perfecting and taming our mind and soul; when one sees, it is just a view (a choice-less observation), when one hears, it is a mere sound, when one smells, tastes and feels, it is only cognition, and when one senses, it is simply sensing. Mindfulness brings about mental tranquility. Each one of us must transform to experience love, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity, so necessary to maintain a proper life balance.

Awareness of the surrounding is the process of staying away from evaluation and labeling because these are neither real nor long-lasting, while enlightenment is the process of segregating our soul or real self

from the experiences of our body.

Many Dao practitioners are not able to reclaim the awareness and enlightenment abilities even after practicing for many years. The inner forces and qualities can only be developed once these abilities are reclaimed.

Sixth Zen master is a good example of practicing Zen through both self-awareness and self-enlightenment. Determination in practicing and cultivating Dao is essential to achieve the desired outcome. The steps for cultivation are first to cleanse our mind and soul, then divert our thinking mode to quietness, and finally to purify our body. By following this process, our mind and body would react and become 'aware' and 'enlightened'. All things are realized from quietness and emptiness; through proper wisdom and channelization, the body can now be refined. By training our soul we also provide longevity to our life; this is the path of the real Dao, just like my story of 'Yellow Millet Dream' that awakened me. This is a very good example of self-awakening to the truth.

According to Buddhism, each individual is solely responsible for his own liberation and all things are temporary.

In reaching the state of mind that sees things truly as formless, bodiless, wisdom-less and empty; we call this true awareness. Zen beyond level two and the Neidan testimonial state would enable us to connect with the higher levels.

Chapter 12 - 孽與障 Bad Deeds and Blockage

Small and petty sins, if left unattended, could become bigger sins and bigger sins cumulate to become bad deeds. Unless we exhibit remorse and try to rectify our erroneous acts, such bad deeds would cause blockage.

Sins can be accumulated from our previous lives; however blockages are creations of our present life. Our life experiences are





not only the consequence of our own acts, but are also due to what we have inherited from our ancestors. This is the reason why many Dao practitioners experience bad effects even when they are determined in practicing Dao and some bad people are able to enjoy both fame and fortune in their lives. It is critical to understand this point while practicing Dao, otherwise one could get dejected and give up easily.

It is important to have firm conviction and determination in what we pursue in our life. One should repent and remorse in order to lift the blockage and also to reduce the karmic debts or bad deeds.

Chapter 13 - 彌篤堅定

Sustained Perseverance and Determination

Sustained perseverance ensures consistency and trustworthiness, while determination ensures stability and uncanny ability for those who want to practice Dao. This path we have adopted for practicing Dao is filled with concerns for our action as one wrong action can be detrimental, even if it was taken with the right frame of mind. Balance is extremely important in the quest of Dao. We have the option to take different paths, but the eventual outcome is the same i.e. cultivating love and kindness.

Many Dao practitioners give up midway due to their lack of perseverance and determination. Like many other things in life, things are initially not easy and only presence of the above attributes can ensure success. We also encounter many senior practitioners who are unable to enter the awareness and enlightenment stages, and thus end up nowhere. Our lives are short and therefore we must utilize whatever time we have and commit ourselves wholeheartedly in the quest of Dao.

The old saying goes, “If we do not have the knowledge where we are from, at least we should know where we are headed. If we do not have the knowledge about both, then we are simply lost. Soul and mind must work in unison to follow the path of Dao.”



Goodness is the pinnacle of ethical practices. Value in the ethical practices is determined by practical exercise in the right frame of mind. Only through perseverance and determination one can achieve the desired outcome.

Chapter 14 - 了明了性

Deep Realization

The purification process comprises of refinement and cultivation, and purifying our mind and soul would result in deep realization or enlightenment of where we have come from, and also about formless and emptiness. We arrive at one such realization when we discover from where we have come. When we arrived in this world we were pure and untainted. However as we grew in years, we equipped ourselves with the knowledge that took us in the wrong direction as it encouraged us to pursue wealth and fame, or worldly happiness. Once we realize deep enough that our direction was wrong and the methods which we used were taking us nowhere, our soul and mind would start to work in the right direction.

Realization of the truth is so essential to gain pure happiness because wisdom alone is capable of disconnecting the defilements at the root, and it is wisdom that realizes the truth.

The muddy water looks clear and can act like a mirror as long as we do not stir it. This is a perfect allegory for us because if we want to be in our most clear self, we must not stir. In order to see the reflections of our heart, mind and body, we must enter the state of quietness. This can only be achieved by applying the cultivation and refinement process.

As we can only see the clear side of muddy water, if we do not stir it, similarly we can only see our clear inner self, if we are constantly in the quietness mode. Deep realization of our soul and body is essential to bring us back to the state of Dao.



Chapter 15 - 循環之道

The Cycle of Dao

Dao is gyrating between cosmic and earth; this is the cycle of Dao. This growth cycle wounds close to the regression cycle since nothing is always the same. Each day we see day and night alternating in a cycle, similar to the moon cycle when each month we see a new moon, a waxing moon, and finally a waning moon, and the season cycle when each year we see the four seasons regularly repeating. Humans are also no exception as we have our own unique cycle. We cannot be rich forever neither can we be poor forever. Things on earth are never permanent. This cycle is dictated by Yin and Yang, and 5 elements, and it also applies to all living and as well as non-living things. Understanding this cycle will help practitioners in their quest of Dao.

The book of change *I-Ching* talked in great length about change, since the only constant thing is change. We have to live and adopt this theory. The theory of change of 64 Guas explains how things change from one state to the other.

The critical point here is that during our cycle, we must repent for all our wrongdoings and wrong thoughts, and take steps to correct them. This will ensure that all our good deeds remain intact.

Chapter 16 - 忠恕之道

Loyalty and Empathy

Loyalty means practicing wholeheartedly with no other thoughts in the mind, while empathy is the ability to look inwards to understand oneself completely. It is important to know the process from the beginning till the end. Beyond that to treat people with loyalty and empathy are the right kind of virtues that practitioners should cultivate and refine. In this Mo Fa era or era of Chaos, lack of these attributes has contributed greatly in the shifting of basic human values.

Loyalty and empathy should be the goal of all practitioners, if



they want to see improvements in Dao life. One must also understand that disloyalty means disrespect and lack of empathy means failure in our pursuit.

One must reveal one's inner self, understand the importance of loyalty, show loyalty to the Dao teachings, and express loyalty and empathy towards the people. One should begin by practicing to forgive oneself and then others. This process is initiated through our soul, heart and mind.

These two attributes are an essential part of the teachings of Confucianism; one must practice compassion and love in order to master these attributes. Daoism and Confucianism teachings place great emphasis on loyalty and empathy. DO NOT underestimate this achievement because such De or virtues that one acquires could make or break oneself in practicing Dao.

Chapter 17 - 智慧雙修

The Cultivation of Wit and Intelligence (Wisdom)

After-birth nature, which is hardly comprehended, is termed as Wit, while pre-birth or inborn nature is termed as Inner Intelligence. Both exists in our soul and humans are the most sensitive and responsive creatures on earth that carry soul. That's way humans are able to practice Dao through the cultivation and refining process. Cultivation and refining process enables us to gain in Wit and Intelligence in the quest of higher self-discovery. Wit is rooted in humans, while Intelligence also forms the foundation of the entire human kind. Both root and foundation are mutually co-related and serve as enrichment in the quest to reach the higher self. Soul or spirit serves as the catalyst to unite both Wit and Intelligence. This unification is critical because if it fails then the root is destroyed and the foundation also cannot find it ways back to the origin; such an outcome is detrimental in pursuing Dao.

The barrage of myriad attributes and qualities are merely to weed



out the desire, obsessive craving, greed, etc., and to advocate morals or ethics of oneself. Please do not let yourself off guard in this matter. Confucius said, craving, greed, etc. Wit will not be deluded; such a person has maneuvered knowledge. be deluded; sure can break or kill a person's will, if not used wisely.

Chapter 18 - 養與煉 Cultivation and Refining

While practicing Dao, it is hard to achieve the desired outcome without Cultivation. The Refining process is also extremely important. We are often hindered by our quest and pursuit to become rich and famous without realizing it. However, Dao practitioners are aware of these distractions and should abandon such pursuits. The only way for Dao practitioners is to cleanse and clear away the tainted soul and body.

Learn to suppress greed, obsessive desire, and negative energy, in order to remain associated with Dao. Such a process requires us to refine our energy, spirit, and Qi, resulting in the suppression of all Yin energies and continuation of the pure Yang energies.

The following metaphor would help us to better understand the difference between Cultivation and Refining. To build a boat is to Cultivate, while to drive a boat is to Refine; all of us know what comes first.

Chapter 19 - 棄假留真 Abandon the Falsehood and Embrace the Truth

All creations on earth embrace the real (True) and abandon the fake (False). The Truth originates from the emptiness and purity, while the Falsehoods are the forms and bodies. After birth, we are deluded with the so-called modern and advanced thinking that leads us to where we are today. Along the way, we are imparted education in order to become rich, powerful and famous. While pursuing happiness, we use



flawed knowledge that results in the devastation of our soul and body.

The primary intent is to inculcate improvement in all living beings rather than any personal gains. The righteous are in the middle path compared to the tainted who tilt on one side or the other. The way we think, act and react is imperative in pursuing Dao. The old saying goes, "At the end of each day, we must regain our composure by assessing what we did wrong during the day, feel remorse and repent for our mistakes."

Since our soul and body are integral to each, so we cannot have one without the other. Our soul is regarded as True, while our body is regarded as False. If we want to revert to Dao, we need a medium to practice it, and the medium to practice Dao is the body. Our soul needs to be in pure and empty state in order to revert to Dao. We can also conclude that all forms, intentions, and things are False; only formless, emptiness and desire-free or natural flow of instincts are regarded as True. One should always remember this metaphor.

Chapter 20 - 培浩然之 Foster Great Force (Awe-inspiring Energy)

The righteous energy of cosmic and earth is called the Great Force (Awe-inspiring Energy). Such energy is solid and unyielding as well as acute and vigorous, which is a natural phenomenon. If instilled in a person's heart, such force would separate the good and the bad, the angel and the evil. Our conscience is supported by such energy. Due to its quest for happiness using the wrong knowledge and direction, our body diverts this energy in craving for perverse wants and needs, lust and power that leads to three poisons i.e., greed, hatred and indulgence; thus polluting both body and soul.

Now we know that the Great Force is the right energy that connects us with our origin. The path that we take is the middle one; we were tilted towards one side because of our lack of determination and courage. The just and fair conduct is the outcome of this energy.



Illustrious sages like Han Guan Di, Song Yue E Wu, Prime Minister Wen Tianxiang, etc., all possessed this Great Force (Awe-inspiring Energy). We are thus advised to channelize this energy in the right direction.

In order to harness this energy, we must transform our behavior to distinguish the right from the wrong. The existence of the Great Force results in the emergence of the right virtues to connect with the cosmic heart.

This term is popularized by Confucius and is compulsory in Confucianism teachings. In Daoism Long Men School, Qiu Chujie places emphasis on 'Firm Dao' and 'Pure De' in practicing Dao; it has the same connotation.

Chapter 21 - 道心與人心 Dao Heart and Normal Heart

While circulating the universe, Dao is formless and bodiless. All things are embedded with their own rationale and reasons for their existence. Dao will sense anything that contains a spirit and acts accordingly. This is the truth and only truth can produce harmony. Dao heart is also a cosmic heart, therefore once our normal heart purifies and enlightens, the connection is a great one. Our heart is tainted because of its inclination to search for power, fame and fortune. As such returning to Dao is the only way we can cleanse our heart and return it to the original where it rightly belongs. Let us all break free of pervasive craving for lust and delusion, and get enlightened.

The segregation and differentiation of a Dao Heart and Normal Heart is an obvious one. Dao Heart turns a man into sage, while a Normal Heart keep searching for wants and needs. If Normal Heart dominates then Dao would not exist.

Whether a person wants to be a sage or a normal being depends on the kind of heart one intends to choose. This view is clearly mentioned in almost all Neidan books (books of Inner Alchemy).



Buddhism also has the same concepts written in the form of principles. Having knowledge of all methodologies and tools, Dao practitioners are advised to use the right and proper tools, and not fall into a trap in this Mo Fa era.

4 Lu Ju Heart Mantra 呂祖心經



純陽呂祖仙師 覺世經
武陵溪裏隱，八士洞中遊。我是唐中第，名已記千秋。南無然，南無道，天無然，地無然，天地鍾靈誕儒佛，我亦得分天地靈，寄跡蓬萊得仙名。蓬萊法術千年在，法術施行救世人，世人祇識儒兼佛，惟有吾經未舉行。世間若有善男女，日誦三遍禍不侵，我日行空來聽過，若然誦得晨上聞。桃花源內殿，太上老君宮，日居此處傳天令。天君令我鑒生民，善是人間作，吾從天上分。為官剝削者，上奏玉皇知，為民頭顱者，不奏降災來。爾等當修省，無為陷惡途。我是唐朝君，為官未剝民，民皆欲頌我，上帝且知聞。故得為神聖，我治身不過思孝廉節，仁義禮信，孜孜求善道焉故此真心持當修煉，而得上界為仙。人能修九美以治身，豈有過而日增。人能安本分，守靈聽天行，丁財與貴壽，不必神前佛面求而得。人能如我為九美，萬福來臨百禍消。嗚呼，行善實無道，忠孝即善階，人能盡忠孝，何愁願不諧，經無他辭巧，一善括其全。但願看經者，退當作善緣，吾自昔看射鹿年，善機之發因勃然，至今善心原有靈，爾等行善處無吝。

Lu Ju says: 呂祖曰。

“Human beings are the ones who rule the earth. They are ultimately contended by their soul. The heart dictates a person's life. The best outcome can only be obtained through the concerted efforts of the whole community. (天生萬物惟人最靈。匪人能靈實心是靈。心為主宰一身之君。役使百骸區處群情。)

“Things appear as forms, but in reality things are without forms, since they have a lifespan and will eventually become extinct. The sense of what's right and what's wrong is part of one's inner belief, or is an inborn trait. One's pureness is lost through the urge to fulfill one's



desires and wants. The inclination of the heart will corrupt a person's morality and integrity. (物無其物形無其形。稟受於天良知良能。氣拘欲蔽日失其真。此心既失此身亦傾。)

“To improve one's trueness and character, one must work on the heart's intentions and desires. Think yourself as an aged person and treat the elders like you want others to treat you when you get old. Think about how you want your peers (siblings) to treat you and also how you want to treat them. (欲善其身先治其心。治心如何即心治心。以老老心治不孝心。以長長心治不悌心。)

“Use devotion to counteract falseness. Use sincerity to counteract immorality. Use reverence to counteract irrational behavior. Counteract injustice by adhering to the rule of law. (以委致心治不忠。以誠恪心治不信。以恭敬心治無理。以循理心治無義。)

“Adopt justice and fairness to rectify corruptible attitude. Embrace compassion to rectify shameless intentions. Espouse good deeds to rectify sinful acts. Take up camaraderie to cure deceitful intent. (以清介心治無廉。以自愛心治無恥。以積德心治爲惡。以利濟心治殘賊。)

“Have a considerate mind to rectify corruptible mindset. Have passion to rectify merciless heart. Have modesty to rectify arrogance. This will help one to understand that no one is perfect and one should learn to live with the imperfections in life. (以匡扶心治傾陷。以仁慈心治暴戾。以謙遜心治傲慢。以損抑心治盈滿。)

“One should be frugal in order to avoid overspending and arrogance, be diligent in order to avoid mediocrity, and be generous in order to avoid miserliness. (以儉約心治驕奢。以勤慎心治怠忽。以坦夷心治危險。以忠厚心治刻薄。)



“Use peace to cure outrage and hatred. Use forgiveness to overcome impasse. Foresee hurt in order to avoid getting drunk. Think of wife and children in order to avoid adultery or rape. (以和平心治忿患。以寬洪心治褊窄。以傷身心治沈湎。以妻女心治姦淫。)

“Think of the karmic debt to cure vindictiveness. Think of the cause and effect when you have doubts. Differentiate the extremes of fanaticism by pure teachings of righteousness. Use faith to clear suspicions. (以果報心治謀奪。以禍患心治門狠。以正教心治異端。以至信心治大疑。)

“Use perseverance to cure inconsistency. Begin with the end in mind. Act natural rather than through coercion. (以悠久心治無恒。以始終心治反覆。以施與心治慳吝。以自然心治勉強。)

“Use calmness to cure distraction. Use cohesiveness to cure doubts. Use honesty to cure unhappiness. Use tranquility to cure chaos. (以安分心治非望。以順受心治怨尤。以推誠心治猜忌。以鎮定心治搖惑。)

“Use your equilibrium state to clear biasness or discrimination. Act as a whole to protect the minority. It is sad to mention that when the heart is impure it needs to be purified in order to function properly, like smooth silk that needs to be handled with care. (以中正心治偏袒。以大體心治細務。嗟乎人心不治不純。如彼亂絲不理不清。)

“Like the ancient mirror that should be grained in order to give sharp reflections. Like the wild horse that should be trained in order to tame. I would like to inform you once again that the heart should be straightened in order to guide one towards proper and good behaviors and attitudes. (如彼古鏡不磨不明。如彼劣馬不勒不馴。我故說經欲治人心。人心得治天地清寧。)



“偈曰As such: Generally speaking the danger lies in where your heart and the accompanying desires are. To perform well one must not act with wrongfulness or false intents. The most dangerous heart is the one that’s not in accordance with the heart of heaven (natural). This natural law must not be violated. (一切惟心心最危。範天圍地發光輝。天心即在人心見。人合天心天弗違。)”

心經終 *End of Heart Mantra*

5

The Origin of Dao

By Elizabeth Reninger



The first recorded history of China dates back to nearly 5,000 years, when tribal people settled along the bank of the Yellow River -- it originates in the Tibetan plateau and falls in the Yellow Sea. These people took up hunting and farming, while some evidence suggests that pottery making and music were also among their favorite pastimes. Millet was perhaps the first grain they cultivated followed by rice, corn and wheat. They also produced the world’s first wine.

The Wu – Shamans of Ancient China

Their relationship with the cosmos was a shamanic one. Some among them were able to communicate directly with plants, minerals and animals; journeyed deep into the earth, and also visited distant galaxies. They were able to invoke, through dances and rituals, elementary and supernatural powers, and form a strong liaison with them. People who became proficient at using these techniques became known as the Wu – Shamans of Ancient China.



The Three Sovereigns & Five Emperors (三黃五帝)

The leaders of this pre-dynastic era were the legendary Three Sovereigns, or ‘The Grand Ones’, and the Five Emperors – morally perfected sage-kings who used their magical powers to protect their people and to create conditions for peaceful and harmonious living. The wisdom, compassion and enlightened power of these human beings were beyond mortal comprehension, and the benefit they bestowed upon those they governed was immeasurable. The Heavenly Sovereign, Fuxi, is said to have discovered the eight trigrams – the bagua – which is the foundation of the Yijing (*I-Ching*), Daoism’s most well-known system of divination. The Human Sovereign, Shennong, is credited with the invention of farming and the introduction of herbs for medicinal purposes. The Yellow Emperor, Huangdi, is known as the father of Chinese Medicine.

Yu The Great

It was under the reign of Emperor Shun that the legendary “Yu The Great” was challenged to subdue the flooding of the Yellow River, a task which – through combination of magical and technological prowess – he accomplished with great success. He subsequently designed a system of dikes and canals, which proved to be of great and lasting benefit to his people. The “Pace of Yu” – the dance-steps which transported him mystically to the stars, where he received guidance from the deities – is practiced even today in certain Daoist traditions.

Shamanism: The Roots of Daoist Practice

There is plenty from this early period of China’s history, in particular its shamanic world -views and practices, which is reflected in the subsequent emergence of Daoism. Spirit-travel to planets, stars and galaxies is a practice found within the Shangqing sect of Daoism. Daoist magicians use talismans to invoke the powers and protection of supernatural beings. Components of many Daoist rituals and



ceremonies, as well as certain forms of qigong, are oriented toward communication with the plant and animal kingdoms. The practices of Inner Alchemy are designed to produce, from the very bodies of its practitioners, the mystic wine of strong spiritual union. *End*

6

What is Dao?



Dao is the Way, Path, Truth, Reason, Symbol or the Moral Order. However, according to Laozi (老子), the Dao that can be named is not the eternal Dao. He also elaborated that a name that can be named is not the ultimate name. It is easy to understand, if we stand on one side of the road to see things on the other side of the road. Try this for size; once we assign a name for example to a cup, then everything that is not a cup, CANNOT be described as a cup.

We are required to see things through our 'heart' and not merely from our eyes. The teachings of Dao will eventually encourage us to love and follow the nature while doing different things. Dong Zhong Shu elaborated the term "The unification of Tian (Heaven) and Ren (Human) (天人合一)" to manifest that natural movements of the celestial objects and formation of the earth are meant to provide humans with the means to live with harmony. For example the sun regularly rises at the same time to wake us up and provide living beings with the sunlight necessary for their existence, while the moon makes its appearance at the prescribed time to provide us the reason to rest at night. The sun will never rise from the west and set in the east, similarly moon will never do against its natural movement. The nature ordains that they will never be late or early from their set time.



The ancient Chinese coined this as 'trust' and called this 'The Dao of Heaven' (天道). Similarly humans and other living objects must not act against this Law of Heaven by destructing our environment (人道). The Dao of Human requires us to naturally replicate the heavenly law of Dao by 'trust'.

Confucians teachings require Dao to reflect five virtues of benevolence, justice, uprightness, knowledge and trustworthiness (仁, 義, 禮, 智, 信) in human beings. In short, in order to embark on this virtuous path, we must pursue the spirit of righteousness (行善) and filial (行孝).

Chinese metaphysics is based on these principles and parameters in order to function properly as well as morally. The responsibility for this lies in the hands of practitioners because the ancient arts can only be as much successful as they allow it.

Dao Sages -

Laozi (老子) and Zhuang Zi (莊子) or Lao Zhuang (老莊)

Laozi is revered as a deity in most religious forms of Daoism. His scripture, *Dao De Ching* (道德經), also referred as the Lao Ze, was created in the late Spring and Autumn Periods (770 - 478 BC). This covers every aspect of nature, society and human life. It was translated into more than 3,000 versions of 30 languages. The spirit expressed in *Dao De Ching* can help people relax and instill serenity in their soul and minds in today's unstable environment.

According to the Chinese tradition, Laozi lived in the 6th century BC. Various historians believe that Laozi is a synthesis of multiple historical figures, that he is a mythical figure, or that he actually lived in the 4th century BC, which is concurrent with the Hundred Schools of Thought and Warring States Period.

Laozi is a central figure in the Chinese culture, and people, both belonging to the nobility and common masses, claim him in their lineage. Throughout history, Laozi's work has been embraced by



various anti-authoritarian movements.

While Laozi is described as a 'cool' sage, Zhuang Zi is regarded as a 'happy go lucky' sage, who placed more emphasis on freedom. Laozi's *Dao De Ching*, with approximately 5,000 words, is simple but not really easy to understand and comprehend, while Zhuang Zi's work includes anecdotes and is relatively easy to comprehend. However, the crux of both the works is the same, i.e. to seek the right 'Dao' in life.

Zhuang Zi, in his work, talks about a skull he sees lying at the roadside. He expresses sorrow that the skull is now dead. The skull however, retorts, "How do you know it's bad to be dead?"

It was the butterfly dream that made Zhuang Zi famous. Once Zhuang Zi dreamt he was a butterfly, flitting and fluttering around, happy with himself and doing as he pleased. He didn't know he was Zhuang Zi. Suddenly he woke up and there he was, a solid and unmistakable Zhuang Zi. But he couldn't figure out whether he was Zhuang Zi who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was Zhuang Zi. There has to be some distinction between Zhuang Zi and a butterfly!

The crux of Dao teachings is to live in harmony with the environment, while keeping in perspective cosmic (heaven), humans and earth (天人感應). Daoism was the first to place emphasis on Tien Ren He Yi (天人合一), the Oneness interaction between humans and heaven. It was much later that Confucianism placed emphasis on Tien Ren He De (天人合德), the Virtuous interaction between humans and heaven.



7 What is Dao?

By Derek Lin



Dao means "the path" or "the way." It is a universal principle that underlines everything from the creation of galaxies to the interaction between humans. The workings of Dao are vast and often beyond human logic. In order to understand Dao, reasoning alone will not suffice; one must also apply intuition.

In our study of Dao, our source material is *Dao De Ching* written by the ancient sage Laozi (or Lao-tzu).

Some of Lao-Zi's most significant teachings are as follows:

Non-contention. Lao-Zi noted that violence and conflict, no matter how tightly controlled, can never be beneficial, instead it can cause negative side effects. Dao teaches us to solve problems through peaceful means.

Non-action. The foolish utilizes a great deal of energy and time trying to do everything and end up doing nothing. At the other end of the spectrum, the truly wise don't seem to do much at all and yet achieve whatever they want. This magic is possible, indeed unavoidable, when one is in line with the Dao and acts without any constraints.

Non-intention. We often perform virtuous deeds hoping to receive praise or recognition. This is not a virtue by any means. The real virtue is a state where such actions happen naturally, without any conscious efforts or thought.

Simplicity. The basis for our reality and existence is elementary and uncomplicated. Humans create a lot of problems for themselves by making everything more complex than is needed. If we learn to



simplify our lives, we can experience a profound satisfaction that is infinitely more meaningful than the rewards of the material world.

Wisdom. Logic has its place in human affairs but isn't everything. There is a limit to what we can understand through rationality and logic. In order to transcend that limit, we need to fully engage our intuitions. This is the key to insights as opposed to knowledge, and the difference between living the Dao and merely reading all about it.

Humility. The more you learn, the more you realize that there's still so much more to learn. This tends to make you humble. Arrogance and egotism come from ignorance - knowing just a little and assuming you know a lot.

Duality. Lao-Zi pointed out that all qualities in the world possess their meaning just because of the existence of their opposites. Something can only be big, if there is something small by comparison. "Good" exists in the world as long as there is "Evil". Both are indispensable.

Translation Issues

There have been many English renditions of *Dao De Ching*. Unfortunately most contain imperfect translations or outright mistakes. For instance, the Chinese expression for "everything" or "myriad things" is often translated literally into "ten thousand things". Even worse, some translators have incorporated their own ideas or favorite concepts into this work. The list of offenders actually includes some books that are supposed to be scholarly works written by people with impressive-sounding titles.

To be fair, much of this discrepancy arises from the difficulty in understanding the ancient Chinese, which is quite different from the modern Chinese as there are certain esoteric passages that are difficult to understand even by the native speakers. Here we have a great opportunity to set things right.

Surprisingly, the best translation that I have found so far is a



cartoon rendition of the classic *The Dao Speaks* by Tsai Chih Chung; a translated work that some would dismiss as "for kids", however nothing can be further from the truth. This translation done by Brian Bruya contains remarkably accurate interpretations of *Dao De Ching* as it demonstrates clearly the translator's deep understanding of Laozi's original content. We are using this comic book and the paperback *Backward Down the Path* by Jerry Dalton in our classes as text books.

End

8

Is Daoism a Religion?



Daoism certainly has a religious aspect. However here we delve into its philosophical aspect, which can be compatible with any other religion. Many Christians, for instance, freely explore the concepts of Daoism and add whatever they think supplements their own beliefs. The idea is to explore and learn the correct way or the better way to live and conduct our personal affairs by understanding some of the principles that govern our lives.

Delving Deeper into Yin and Yang

A few basic concepts which define the nature of Yin and Yang are:

Q1: Neither Yin nor Yang is absolute.

A: Nothing is completely Yin or completely Yang. Each of them contains the beginning point for the other. For example: day is the precursor for night and night is the origin of the day, etc.

Yin and Yang are interdependent upon each other, thus the



definition of one requires the definition for the other to be complete.

Q2: Yin and Yang are not static.

A: Both Yin and Yang are fluid and change with time. A simple example is again that of the day that gradually descends into the night. However, the length of day and night are constantly changing. As the earth ages, its spin is gradually getting slow causing the length of day and night to get longer. Therefore we can claim with certainty that day and night are not static entities. Sometimes the changes in Yin and Yang are dramatic when one of them suddenly transforms into the other. For example some female species of fish quickly transform into males when the male population is not enough.

Q3: The addition of Yin and Yang forms a whole.

A: As one of either Yin or Yang increases, the other decreases to maintain balance of the whole.

Q4: The balance of Yin and Yang can be affected because of the outside influences.

A: Following are the four possible imbalances that exist:

- Deficient Yang
- Deficient Yin
- Excessive Yang
- Excessive Yin

These imbalances can be paired, thus an excess of Yin would stimulate Yang deficiency and vice versa. This concept is especially important in the Chinese healing practices. An excess of Yang results in fever, while an excess of Yin could mean accumulation of fluids in the body. Chinese healing observes a person's health in eight principles: Internal and External Stimuli, Deficiencies and Excesses, Cold and Heat, and Yin and Yang.

Q5: Yin and Yang can be subdivided into additional Yin and Yang forces.



A: A perfect example of this is Yang heat that can be further subdivided into Yin warm or Yang blaze.

Additional principles defining the Yin and Yang qualities exist. The concepts listed here are merely the starting point to illustrate the nature of Yin and Yang. Usually as a practice, Daoism does a good job of not codifying life, which is ironic since many Dao practitioners can easily categorize what is Yin and what is Yang. Typically Dao texts will list a few examples of Yin and Yang, and then meander off to the next topic, which makes sense because according to Dao it is for the readers to determine from their own perspectives. As an example you may revert to the passage quoted above from the Dao De Ching. There you will figure out a few additional aspects of Yin and Yang, but the passage does not offer a complete definition. The author of this passage requires the readers to explore the ideas on their own.

Daoism's Ten Principles

which the individuals are expected to pursue:

1. Do not kill and always be considerate of the host of living beings.
2. Do not have lascivious or immoral thoughts.
3. Do not steal or receive unrighteous wealth.
4. Do not cheat or confuse good and evil.
5. Do not get intoxicated and always think about pure conduct.
6. Always maintain harmony with ancestors and family and never disregard kin.
7. When see someone do a good deed, always support him with joy and delight.
8. When see someone unfortunate, always support him with dignity to let the person recover good fortune.
9. When someone comes to do harm, never harbor thoughts of revenge.
10. As long as all beings have not attained the Dao, do not expect to



do so yourself.

(Kohn, 2004, p. 184)

9

Confucianism versus Daoism



Confucianism was popularised by Confucius in the era of Spring and Autumn, dated back to 551 - 479 BC. It was recorded in the history as a proper set of Ideology Thinking or Philosophy. Confucius had established that education cannot be confined exclusively for the elite few and government officials of that time. His biggest contribution was to let all humans have education as long as they have this burning desire to learn. (有教無類)

The fundamental teachings of Confucian are about building the inner as well as the external values of a person, and to interact harmoniously with people. He focuses on following a proper protocol in relationship between the ruler and the ruled, husband and wife, and father and son. Thus in his preaching, he emphasizes to inculcate the human values of filial piety, benevolence, justice, etiquettes, wisdom, camaraderie and trustworthiness. (仁義禮智信)

Confucianism differs from the religions and Daoism in various aspects related to the universe, science, Mother Nature and society. Confucianism merely places emphasis on eternal subjects, such as human and social interactions.

Daoism was popularised by Laozi in the late Spring and Autumn era. At the beginning of the Han era, Daoism was termed as Dao De Jia (道德家). Beside Daoism, five other schools of thoughts had emerged at that time, which included Confucianism, Mo Jia (墨), Ming Jia (名), Fa Jia (法), and Yin Yang Jia (陰陽). The teachings of Daoism are a



blend of these five teachings and philosophies. The famous icons in the Daoism School are Laozi, Chuangtse, and Huang Lao sect. The primary aim was to build a stronger and healthier body and mind in order to achieve longevity (治身) in order to rule a county (治國).

Daoism places great emphasis on building a healthy body with less materialistic connections (輕物重身), while Confucianism focuses on building a better soul. Daoism does not directly believe that heaven (天) is with 'intention' but to go with the flow of Mother Nature - the Way of Dao (道). Dao preaches Mother Nature more than any other school of thought. Lao zi has further elaborated that Dao is the source of creation of the universe, and therefore is the main regulator of the universe and its activities. Daoism is the pioneer in studying the concepts of universe and material beings, which is also the biggest contribution of Daoism to mankind. We can summarize by pointing out some of the teachings of Lao zi such as important is to uphold 'nothingness' (人要無爲), weakness is to avoid competing (柔弱就能謙下不爭), and stupidity is to promote materialism (愚魯就能棄華取實).

Daoism stresses the importance of life over material, and that fame and fortune should not be the ultimate goal of human beings. Both fame and fortune are meaningless, if one is living without the spirit of Dao.

Western Han Historian Ser Ma Tan has acknowledged that Dao teachings are a blend of the unique teachings of different schools of thought, and thus became a perfect school of thought at that point of time.

The Heavenly Scripture & Earthly Justice and five Elements

It is important to emphasize that literal translation of Chinese into English would result in the loss of its core essence. I will try to translate the Chinese text as close as possible to its real meaning, however please accept my apologies in case there is any inadvertent blemish. The following text was written long time back by Dong



Chong Shu, a scholar in Western Han era with regards to the 5 elements and the word filial. The creation of 5 elements is in a cycle, when water breeds wood, wood creates fire, fire produces earth, earth rears metal, and metal nurtures water. This cycle constantly repeats itself, and manifests in the unique relationship between father and son, whereby son shows respect and loyalty towards his father, and there is this mutual obligation to teach and learn respectively. The end result would therefore breed filial towards parents.

The Three H's in the Ancient Chinese World

(Heaven, Human, and Harmony)

Western Han Scholar Dong Ching Shu, in his mega publication Chun Qiu Fan Lu (春秋繁露) has written in great length about the heaven and human interactions (天人感應). Such a rationale evaded the harmonization of this interaction and any deviation of such would violate cohesiveness.

Only humans and heaven (cosmic) can interact because of the human intelligence. Humans have 366 minor bones that match the 366 days in a year, while 12 major bones relate to the 12 months in a year. Our flesh matches the earth's surface, while our blood stream matches the rivers, oceans and mountains. Human's mood of happiness associates with summer days, anger relates to cloudy or autumn days, joy correlates with spring, while grief links up with winter. Our inner body with Wu Zhang (5 major organ systems) would relate to Wu Xin (5 elements), while our 4 limbs would match the 4 seasons. This is a rather systematic approach of our ancient wisdom, and in future when anyone condemns that Chinese culture is superficial and superstitious; you can look at the person and say quietly that 'ignorance is not bliss'. The concept of Yin and Yang is also embedded in our lives, such as we wake up in the morning as the sun comes out (Yang), and we go to bed at night when it gets dark (Yin). Woman is Yin, while man is Yang, and the sky is Yang, while the earth is Yin!



Ancient Chinese would come out with all sorts of predictive tools due to the fear of the unknowns, and often the results are either auspicious or inauspicious. In a more substantive way, the generated unkind energy is often a violation of the cosmic or natural law, while the inherited kind energy is the result of the natural flow of energy. We can simply state that auspicious would have the new definition of natural flow of energy, while inauspicious is the violation of the natural law, or the violation of the human and heaven interactions. This is why Chinese put great emphasis on the word filial. Filial is not just restricted to respect for parents or the elderly; in a wider context it means to respect the Mother Nature and learn to care for the environment that gives us life and energy.

10

The Three Pureness Pioneer Patriarch 三清



"The Three Pureness" is the highest form of Deities in Daoism. It transcends the entire hierarchy of Daoist deities. In the picture shown, the Primordial Divine Pioneer Patriarch, the ultimate deity of Daoism is in the middle, the Spiritual Treasure Heavenly Patriarch is on the right, while the Supreme Way Heavenly Patriarch is on the left.

"The Three Pureness Pioneer Patriarch" is the avatar of Daoism. Avatar is a word that is commonly used but not properly understood by the majority. In English, the word stands for "an embodiment, a bodily manifestation of the Divine." The void or great emptiness at the beginning is called "Wu Chi", or primordial chaos. In this state, Dao is in a scattered form or "Chi", but when reunited it is transformed into a divine being. This divine being is the Tai Shang Lao Zun or the



Supreme Patriarch Laozi.

Dao then transforms the "One" which is a Primordial Divine Pioneer Patriarch (Reverend Yuan Shi of Yu Qing). He holds a flaming divine pearl, which represents the creation of the universe. However, at this point the universe is in a chaotic stage.

He later forms another divine being, Spiritual Treasure Heavenly



Patriarch (Reverend Ling Bao of Shang Qing). At this point of time there are two forces called the "Yin" and "Yang" represented as "Tai Chi". Myriad things can be formed by these forces. Therefore Spiritual Treasure Heavenly Patriarch or Reverend Ling Bao of Shang Qing holds a "Ru Yi"(如意), which is a wish fulfilling ornament.

Finally when everything is created, Tai Shang Lao Zun descends and sits on the left. He holds a mystical fan, symbolizing the completion of the universe. The way of Dao can now be spread, and living beings can seek salvation.

11

The Jade Emperor 玉皇大帝, Yu Huang Da Di



According to the Chinese folklore, the Jade Emperor is the supreme ruler of heavens, the hades, and the protector of mankind, besides being the highest ranking deity of the Daoist pantheon.

From the 9th century onwards, the Jade Emperor is the patron deity of the Chinese imperial family. He presides over heaven and earth just as the earthly emperors once ruled over China.

Based on one account, the Jade Emperor was originally the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Majestic Heavenly Lights and Ornaments. At birth, he emitted a bright light that filled the entire kingdom. When young, he was benevolent, intelligent and wise. He devoted his entire childhood to help the needy (poor and suffering, deserted and single, hungry and disabled). Furthermore, he showed respect and benevolence to both humans and other living creatures. After his father died, he ascended the throne. He made sure that everyone in his kingdom found peace and contentment; subsequently



he told his ministers that he wished to cultivate Dao in a mountain cave. After 1,750 trials, each trial lasting for 120,976 years, he attained Immortality. After another hundred million years of cultivation, he finally became the Jade Emperor.

The Jade Emperor is usually depicted seated on a throne in an imperial robe, his flat-topped crown embedded with strings of pearls that dangle at the front. He holds a short, flat tablet clasped in both the hands in front of his chest. In his flowing

beard, he looks extremely majestic.

His birthday is celebrated on the 9th day of the Lunar New Year commonly known as “Tian Gong Dan” (天公誕 Festival of the Heavenly God). It is an important festival for the Daoists and the Chinese community. All Daoist temples throughout the world hold gatherings and congregational prayers simultaneously in order to worship him, and to request him to grant peace, prosperity, protection from calamities, favorable weather, and abundant harvest for the entire year.

Most people are not aware that the Jade Emperor is the protector of the Buddha dharma in Buddhism. He’s called Lord Sakra or Indra; in the Shurangama Mantra (楞嚴咒) his name is recited as “Namo Yin Two La Ye” (南無因陀羅耶).

According to the Buddhist text, he resides at the “Trayastrimsa Heaven”, as in the Sanskrit language which means “Heaven of the Thirty-three”. The Lord of the Heaven of the Thirty-three resides above our heads. There are eight heavens each in the east, in the west, in the north, and in the south, which adds to thirty-two; the thirty-third

heaven is located at the center of the other heavens and is at the peak of Mount Sumeru.

“Trayastrimsa Heaven” (Heaven of the Thirty-three) is not the thirty-third in a vertical arrangement of heavens. Vertically it occupies second position among the eighteen heavens. It has got this name because it lies at the centre among a group of heavens located on the same plane, with eight heavens on each of its four sides. The “Heaven of the Thirty-three” is 80,000 yojanas high, and its city, the City of Good View, is made from the 7 precious materials and is 60,000 yojanas high. In the center of this city is Sakra's Palace, which comprises of the most exquisite and valuable gems.

Sakra, at the time of Kashyapa Buddha, was a very ordinary and a poor woman who saw a temple in ruins and vowed to restore it. Soliciting friends and relatives, she gradually gathered a group of thirty-two women. She herself was the thirty-third. Each of the thirty-three gave as much support as she could muster and with their collective effort they repaired the ruined temple. Upon their death, they one by one ascended to the heavens and became the ruler of their own heaven. The heaven in which Sakra, the former leader of the women, lives is called the “Trayastrimsa Heaven”.

12

The Eight Immortals 八仙



The Chinese character 仙, which signifies immortality, comprises of 人 man and 山 a mountain. It denotes the superior level of human spirits, who, having been deified, dwell in remote mountains which are devoid of human inhabitants. They are imbued with the power to





become visible and invisible as they wish, to raise the dead, to turn stones into gold, and to effect various other wonderful transmutations. The Eight Immortals or Ba Xian (八仙), are legendary beings of the Daoist sect. They are believed to have lived at various times in history and attained immortality through their cultivation of Dao or nature's secret.

These Eight Immortals, including one female (He Xian Gu, 何仙姑), have attained their eminent position, which is higher than reached by others, through cultivation.



Zhongli Quan, 鐘離權 (Chief of the Eight Immortals)

In Daoism, he is known as Zheng Yang Ju Shi, 正陽祖師, which means, the First True Yang Master. He is the Chief of the



Eight Immortals. He was known to possess the secrets of the elixir of life, and had the power of transmutation. He is also known as Zhongli of Han (漢鐘離) because he is believed to have lived in the Han Dynasty. He is usually depicted as a fat man exposing his bare belly, and always holding a fan, his emblem which had the magical ability of reviving the dead.

Zhang GuoLao, 張果老



Elder Zhang Guo lived during the 7th and 8th century AD and was known as a hermit who had spiritual powers to render himself invisible. He was always accompanied by a white mule, which had the ability to carry him to huge distances. When it was not required, the mule could be transformed into a paper mule which he could fold and put away in a pouch. Whenever he wished to travel, he sprinkled water on the paper mule to revive it. He generally rode his mule backwards. His emblem was the “Yugu” (魚鼓), a kind of musical instrument in the shape of bamboo tube or drum with two rods to beat it.

Lu Dong Bin (Lu Ju), 呂洞賓



He is the most widely known among the group of deities known as the Eight Immortals, and hence considered by some to be the de facto leader. He was born during the Tang Dynasty (750 AD). He is also described as a scholar and ascetic who learnt the secrets of Daoism from Zhongli Quan, the Chief of the Eight Immortals, and attained immortality at the age 50. He is the patron



saint of barbers and is also worshipped by the sick. He is generally depicted dressed as a scholar, holding a Daoist fly whisk in his right hand, and a sword, his emblem, slung across his back. He is known for slaying and getting rid of various forms of evil on earth for more than 400 years.

Cao Guo Jiu, 曹國舅



He was born during the Song Dynasty (930 - 999 AD). His father was a military commander named Cao Bin 曹彬, who happened to be the brother of Empress Cao Hou 曹后. He is shown dressed in an official robe, a court headdress, and holding a pair of castanets, his emblem. The castanets are believed to have stemmed from the court tablets, which authorized him free access to the Imperial Palace, a privilege he was entitled because of his lineage.

Li Tieguai, 鐵拐李



He was born during the Western Zhou period, and was originally named Li Yüan. He studied with Lao Zi (founder of Daoism) and Goddess Hsi Wang Mu. He is said to have devoted 40 years to the practice of meditation and cultivation of the Daoist esoteric practice.

Before becoming an Immortal, he had a pleasant disposition. However, on one occasion his spirit traveled to the celestial. Before departing, he instructed his disciple to wait seven days for his spirit to return. But after six days, the student, who had to return home to attend to his ailing mother, cremated Li's body, assuming that he has expired. Thus when Li returned, he had no other option but to enter the only body available at that time; the corpse of a homeless beggar who had died of starvation.



The beggar unfortunately had "a long and pointed head, blackened face, woolly and disheveled beard and hair, huge eyes, and an impaired leg." His emblem is the pilgrim's gourd, which identified him as one of the Eight Immortals, and his iron crutch.

Han Xiangzi, 韓湘子



He is the nephew of Han Yu 韓愈, a famous scholar and statesman who lived during the Tang Dynasty (820 AD). He is the disciple of Lu Dongbin, and became an Immortal when he fell from a supernatural peach tree and his mortal body died. He had the ability to make the flowers grow and blossom instantaneously. His emblem is the flute, and he is regarded as the patron of musicians.

He wandered around, playing his flute, and enticing birds and prowling beasts by the sweet melodious sound of his flute.

Lan Caihe, 藍采和



He is from the Tang Dynasty. His behavior was out of norm and bordered on the bizarre. He wore shorts and thin shirts in winter, and thick jacket and long pants in summer. He walked wearing shoe in one foot with the other bare.

His distinctive emblem is a flower-basket, which was often slung with a hoe over his shoulder. The basket contained various flora associated with the concept of longevity.

He Xian Gu, 何仙姑

She lived during the 7th century AD and is from the Tang Dynasty. She is the daughter of a shopkeeper of Lingling 零陵, a city in the Hunan province. According to one account, she often went to



the mountains, when she was barely 13 years old, to collect medicinal herbs. One day, during one of her visits, she encountered the Immortal Lu Dongbin. He gave her a peach and told her, “You shall become an Immortal if you eat this. She did exactly as he told her, and miraculously she, never again felt hungry or thirsty, and could float and jump from one cliff to another gathering medicinal herbs to help the sick. In addition, she could predict people’s fortune. Her emblem is the lotus, which she carried in her hand. Sometimes she is also depicted holding a fly whisk in the other hand.

13

Daoist School of Quan Zhen 全真



Master Zhongli Quan and Master Lu Ju had significant influence in promoting Dao, in particular Neidan (Inner Alchemy). These knowledge and skills were later passed on to Wang Zhongyang, who formed the Quan Zhen Daoist School. The core teachings of Quan Zhen, with guidance from Master Zhong and Lu, were the combination of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism. In the year 1167, Quan Zhen Daoist School was formed by Master Wang Zhongyang.

The five Pioneers of Northern Daoism masters, also known as the Quan Zhen Five Patriarch, (全真道遵奉的北宗五位祖師，又稱全真五祖) are as follows:

1. Eastern Zi Fu Master Wang Xuanwang Fu also known as Shao Yang [東華紫府輔元立極大道君-王玄甫（少陽）]



2. Zheng Yang Master Zhong Liquan [正陽開悟傳道垂教帝君-鍾離權（正陽）]
3. Chun Yang or Pure Yang Master Lu Ju [純陽演正警化孚佑帝君-呂洞賓（純陽）]
4. Master Liu Haichan or Guang Yang [海蟾明悟弘道純佑帝君-劉海蟾（廣陽）]
5. Master Wang Zhongyang (founder of Quan Zhen School) [陽全真開化輔極帝君-王重陽（重陽）]

Seven Truthful Disciples

After Master Wang Zhongyang, Quan Zhen Daoist School became renowned under the famous Seven Truthful Daoist Masters, also known as the Seven Truthful Disciples. Among them, Master Qiu Chuji, the most famous of the Daoist masters, also served under Genghis Khan during the Yuan era. Master Qiu advised Genghis Khan to avoid mass killings, love his people, and respect God. Genghis respected him so much that he declared the official religion of Yuan as Dao.

The Seven Truthful Disciples 七真按排名次序分別為以下七人 **are:**

1. Ma Yu or Dan Yangzi (formed Yu Xian Pai School) 馬鈺——丹陽子(遇仙派)
2. Tan Chuduan or Zhang Zhenzi (formed Namu Pai School) 譚處端——長真子(南無派)
3. Li Chuxuan or Chang Shengzi (formed Sui Shan Pai School) 劉處玄——長生子(隨山派)
4. Qui Chuji or Zhang Chunzi (formed Long Men Pai School) 丘處機——長春子(龍門派)
5. Wang Chuyi or Yu Yangzi (formed Yu Shan Pai School) 王處——玉陽子(崑山派)
6. Hao Datong or Gunag Ningzi (formed Hua Shan Pai School) 郝大通——廣寧子(華山派)



7. Sun Buer or Qingjing Sanren (formed Qinjong Pai School) 孫不二——清靜散人 (清靜派) 《*Sun Buer was the wife of Ma Yu.*》

The Passing of Torch

Many people especially Feng Shui masters should know that both Feng Shui and metaphysics originated from Dao teachings. Master Lu Ju and Master Liu Hai Chan passed Dao knowledge especially Taiji Diagram (Yin and Yang symbols) to Chen Purr or Chen Xi Err 「希夷」, who then passed on these essential skills to Zhong Fang 「種放」. Later Zhong transferred this knowledge to Li Zhi Cai 「李之才」 who delegated it to Shao Yong 「邵雍」.

Unalterable Principle 天經地義之大事

禮

To perform the ritual worship according to the four seasons is the natural law and an unalterable principle of the ancient Chinese. Filial son and wife would follow this custom rigidly by offering different agricultural produces particularly to worship the ancestors. Different seasons will have different names for such rituals; in spring such ritual is termed as “Ci”, in summer it is named as “Yue”, in autumn it is called “Chang”, and in winter the ritual is identified as “Zheng”. If these rituals are neglected, the purpose of life as a human are violated.

Traditional Chinese would have three levels of worships, first is to the ‘Heaven’ (Cosmic Power), second is to the ‘Ancestors’, and third and last is to both ‘Gods & Devils’. This is the end result of yielding to the supernatural powers.

Dong Chun Shu said, “The emperor would receive commands from the heaven, the ministers in the government should follow the commands from the emperor, son follows orders from father, and wife follows orders from husband, and so on.” Such relations are absolute. But according to ‘The Book of Rites’ such relationships are ‘relative’,



meaning that if the emperor violates orders from the heaven, fellow ministers would violate the emperor’s orders. Which one is applicable in today’s world is a personal matter.

Lu Ju said, “Dao practitioners should cleanse the tainted heart. There is no scope for materialistic desires, self-interest, or emotions. Cultivating good deeds and virtues are the right way.”

The Dao of Chinese Metaphysics - The Way



The Ancient Chinese 5-metaphysics refers to the study of mountaineering, medicinal, forecast, astrology and face-reading. Here one needs to be cautioned that it is difficult to name them because once you give a name, let’s say a ‘cup’ then everything is not a cup. If water is in a bottle, then it becomes a bottle, and when water is in a bowl, then it becomes a bowl. This is the Dao.

In Chinese, though the term Feng Shui simply means wind and water, this is not so simple in the ancient texts and applications. The ancient scripture describes the broader meaning of Kan Yu. The term Kan Yu refers to anything above (sky and cosmic) and rooted in the ground, therefore the term Feng Shui not only refers to wind and water, but also to the formation of the universe in a nutshell. Dao was formed from darkness, then Yin and Yang emerged that formed the heaven (cosmic and sky) and the earth, followed by the male and the female, and then the rest. Thus we can ascertain that Dao is not much concerned with religion, rather it has more philosophical and theoretical connotation, and oriented towards explaining the universe, and so do Kan Yu and Feng Shui. Many people, especially those with strong religious beliefs, are of the opinion that Kan Yu or Feng Shui are superstitious and would rather not talk about it. I know many including



a professor and a government minister who simply refuse to talk about this. I do not blame them because once I was also skeptic about this knowledge.

When I was teaching martial arts mostly to professionals, including doctors, lawyers and accountants in the United States about 20 years ago, I was amazed by their enthusiasm and passion for the oriental arts. One of the students approached me and commented that Feng Shui is too embryonic and he is skeptical about trusting it. I tried to change the subject by merely stating that it is superstitious. I could see frustration and anger grow in his eyes. He retorted, “How can you indict your 5,000 years old Chinese heritage?” I was amazed and at the same time shocked by his remarks. He then elaborated that Feng Shui is nothing but an environmental study, and the environment that we live in includes me and him, whether I like it or not. So he implored me not to disregard Feng Shui, and simply go along with the flow.

Did you know that the first month of Chinese Calendar Year is Tiger?

Did you know that the first month of the Chinese Calendar Year is the month of Tiger (建寅)? The month of tiger normally begins around 3rd to 5th February every year. The subsequent 11 months are: second month (Rabbit), third month (Dragon), fourth month (Snake), fifth month (Horse), sixth month (Goat), seventh month (Monkey), eighth month (Rooster), ninth month (Dog), tenth month (Boar), eleventh month (Rat), and twelfth month (Ox).

The history of naming each month goes back to the Spring and Autumn Warrior States. Different eras or kingdoms had different first month of the year based on their beliefs and culture. After the unification of Qin Dynasty, King Qin adopted his own calendar (顓頊曆) which had the winter month of Boar (建亥) as its first month of the year; Xia (夏) Dynasty had Tiger as the first month; Yan (殷) Dynasty had Ox as the first month; Zhou (周) Dynasty had Rat as the



first month; and Han (漢) Dynasty had Tiger as the first month of its calendar. According to the book of Chun Qiu Fan Lu (春秋繁露) written by Dong Zhong Shu in the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC – 9 AD), this was done to reinforce the power of the kingdom in force, and it was also believed that such an arrangement would give additional energetic power to the kingdom.

What is Dao?



People often associate Dao with religious beliefs but this is a false impression. The Dao religion primarily teaches Dao theory and philosophy. For major part of human history, it has been considered as a branch of metaphysics and religion.

The cosmological principle is by and large in accordance with the big bang theory. This implies that all celestial bodies, including earth and other stars obey identical physical laws. Dao encompasses the whole universe.

From Laozi's “nothingness” or void emerged “somethingness” or Tai Ji (無極而太極), which resulted in the creation of Yin and Yang (太極動而生陽，靜而生陰，靜極復動，一動一靜，互為其根，分陰分陽，兩儀立焉。) Laozi said, “One created two, two created three, and three created the universe (一生二，二生三，三生萬物。).”

Dao is not a religion; it deals with the formation of the universe and the interaction among planets and stars.



Stories from Ancient Chinese Wisdom



The Goat and Turtle Race

Once a goat challenged a turtle for a race; the turtle accepted the challenge and the race was set for the next day. Before commencement of the race, the over-confident goat looked down upon the turtle and said to him, "You are never going to beat me as I am much faster than you." The turtle replied, "Say no more and let the race begin." Just after the race had started, the goat shouted, "Where are you turtle, you are nowhere to be found." He then heard a voice in front of him and realized it was the turtle. "You better catch-up, I am in front of you," the turtle said. The goat ran faster and after a while, again looked around and exclaimed, "Where are you turtle, you are nowhere to be found." The turtle replied from the woods in front, "You better catch-up; I am in front of you." The goat started to falter in its rhythm. It was apparent that the goat was losing its confidence. It ran as fast as it could, however when the goat reached the finishing line, it found the turtle already there. The goat was utterly distraught and its confidence was completely battered at this shocking loss. (Before the race had begun, the turtle had lined up his family members from the starting point till the finishing line.)

Moral of the story: Intelligence is better than speed.

The Smart Kid and the Old Wise Man

One day, a smart kid tried to challenge an old wise man and asked him, "You are a wise man with answers to all questions of life. I am holding a bird in my hand, do you know if the little bird is dead or alive?" The old wise man was a little confused. He knew that if he



answered that the bird was alive, the smart kid would kill the bird, and if he replied that the bird was dead, he would set the bird free. The old wise man was stuck between the devil and the deep blue sea. Guess what did he reply. He simply answered, "The fate of the bird lies in your hand," and walked away.

Moral of the story: You are in control of your own life.

80-storeys

Once there was a couple, which was trying to reach its apartment on the 80th floor. They were carrying several bags with them. Till the 20th storey, they were energetic and had lots of fun. Joy was visible on their faces and their heart was filled with happiness. After the 20th storey, upon realized they were carrying too much baggage, they decided to leave their bags on the 25th storey. As they approached the 40th storey, they criticized each other at every step and were grumpy about not bringing the water they had left behind in their bag. They however kept moving up and by the time they had gone past the 60th storey, they did not have much to say and simply looked at each other's face. The journey from the 60th to 80th floor was monotonous and rather dull. Upon reaching their destination on the 80th storey, they realized that they have left their apartment's keys in the bag on the 25th storey!

Moral of the story: Most of the important decisions in life are taken in the early 20s. The actions and activities of that age shape our identity and create the path for the life's journey. That's why it is imperative that we should always listen and obey our instincts or inner heart to get the right answers to live a contented life.

The Mouse

There was once a little mouse which was envious of the sky, It said, "Sky, sky, I admire you very much because you are the best; you cover the whole world and you are invincible." Sky replied, "No, no,



I am not invincible, I am afraid of the clouds because they block my view as and when they want." The little mouse then went to the clouds and said, "Dear clouds, I envy you all very much. You are the best and invincible." The clouds answered, "No, no, we are not, we are afraid of the wind because the wind blows us away whenever it wants." The mouse then went to see the wind and said, "Dear wind, I envy and admire you the most because you are invincible." The wind responded, "No, no I am not invincible, I am afraid of walls because walls block and knock me down badly." The mouse then went to visit the walls and said, "Dear walls, I envy you the most because you are so strong and invincible." The walls looked at the mouse and said, "I do not think so because you create holes in me whenever you want. I think you are the one who is invincible.

Moral of the story: We are all invincible in our own right.

A Farmer's Daoist Story

Once upon a time there was a farmer; one day his horse ran away. Hearing this bad news, his neighbor came over to commiserate with him. The neighbor said, "I heard that you have lost your horse. This is an unfortunate news and bad luck." "Well, who knows?" replied the farmer, "Maybe it is and maybe it isn't."

The next day the farmer's horse returned to his stable, and it brought along with him a drove of wild horses it had befriended and who made this place as their new home. The neighbor was pleased with this positive development and came over to congratulate his friend. He said, "This is so good." "Well, who knows," replied the farmer, "Maybe it is and maybe it isn't."

The next day, farmer's son decided to ride one of the new wild horses in order to tame it. As luck would have it, the son was instead thrown from the horse and had his leg broken. Upon hearing this unfortunate news, the neighbor came over again to console the farmer. "This is such a sad thing," he said, "Your son has broken his leg." "Well,



who knows," replied the farmer, "Maybe it is and maybe it isn't."

As the neighbor continued to offer more good wishes and commiseration, the farmer conveyed this Daoist wisdom, "Who knows what is good and bad?" The following day soldiers came over to seize young boys from the surrounding farms for inducting in the army. However, since farmer's son had a broken leg, he was spared. Well again, maybe it was good news and maybe it wasn't.

Moral of the story: There is no good or bad news; it's just a matter of one's own interpretation.

Going with the Flow

An old man was walking with friends by a gushing river when he stumbled and fell into the water. He was swept downstream by the surging water, dashing ferociously through the rocks. Then he plunged violently from the edge of a steep waterfall. His friends fearing for his life, rushed to the pool below the waterfall. To their amazement, the old man emerged from the pool, totally unharmed.

"Old man," they exclaimed with delight, "how did you manage to survive both the surging water and the waterfall?" "I do not know this myself," he answered, "I only know that I did not try to fight the water. I decided to go with the flow of the stream, and the stream carried me without harm."

Is that So?

Once upon a time, a beautiful unmarried girl living in a village got pregnant. Her parents were furious and demanded to know who fathered the child. The ashamed girl was initially reluctant to reveal, but finally pointed towards Hakuin, the Zen master whom everyone previously considered as a pious man living a pure life. When the outraged parents confronted Hakuin with their daughter's accusation, he simply replied, "Is that so?"

When the child was born, the parents brought it to the Hakuin,



who was now viewed as a pariah by the whole village. They demanded that he now take care of the child since it was his responsibility. Hakun said calmly, "Is that so?", and accepted the child.

For many months, he took good care of the child until the daughter could no longer live with the lie. She confessed that the real father was a young man living in the village whom she had tried to protect. The parents immediately went to Hakuin to apologize and requested him to return the baby. They explained what had transpired. "Is that so?" said the Hakuin, and handed over the child to them.

The Gift of Insults

There once lived a great warrior. Though quite old, he was still able to overcome any challenger. His reputation extended all over and many students came over to study under his tutelage.

One day an infamous young warrior arrived at the village. He was determined to become the first man to defeat the great master. Along with his strength, he had this uncanny ability to spot and exploit any weakness in his opponent. He would wait for his opponent to make the first move, thus exposing a weakness in opponent's armory. He would then strike with merciless force and lightning speed. No one had ever lasted against him in a match beyond the first move.

Much against the advice of his concerned students, the old master gladly accepted the young warrior's challenge. As the two squared off, the young warrior began to hurl insults at the old master. He threw dirt and spit in his face. For hours he verbally assaulted him with every curse and insult known to mankind. But the old warrior merely stood there motionless and calm. Finally, the young warrior exhausted himself. Knowing he was defeated, he left feeling shamed.

The students, disappointed that the old master did not fight the insolent youth, questioned him, "How could you endure such an indignity? Why did you let him go away?" The master responded, "If someone visits you and offers you a gift, but you refuse to accept it,



then to whom does the gift belong?"

Egotism

The Prime Minister of the Tang Dynasty was considered a national hero because of his successes both as a statesman and a military leader. But despite his fame, power and wealth, he was an extremely humble and devout Buddhist. He often visited his favorite Zen master to study under him, and they seemed to get along very well. His position as a Prime Minister apparently had no effect on their relationship, which was one of a revered master and a respectful student.

One day, during one his of customary visits, the Prime Minister asked the master, "Respected master, what is egotism according to Buddhism?" The master's face at once turned red, and in a very condescending and insulting tone, he retorted, "What kind of a stupid question is that!?" This unexpected response got the Prime Minister very incensed and angry. With a smile on his face, the Zen master said, "This, Your Excellency, is egotism."

Self-Control

Once a strong earthquake shook the entire Zen temple and it partially collapsed. Majority of the monks got terrified. When the trembling stopped, their teacher said, "Now you had the opportunity to see how a Zen man behaves in a crisis situation. You may have noticed that I did not panic. I was quite aware of what was happening and what to do. I led you all to the kitchen, which is the strongest part of the temple. It was a good decision since all of you have survived and mercifully there are no injuries. However, I must confess that despite my self-control and composure, I did feel a bit tense. This you may have noticed as well since I drank lots of water, something I never do in normal circumstances." Upon hearing this, one of the monks grinned, but didn't say anything. "Why are you smiling?" asked the



teacher. "Master that wasn't water you drank," the monk replied, "It was a glass full of soy sauce."

Full Awareness

After ten years of apprenticeship, Tenno was awarded the rank of a Zen teacher. Once on a rainy day, he went to visit the famous master Nan-in. When he walked in, the master greeted him with a question, "Did you leave your wooden clogs and umbrella inside the porch?" "Yes," Tenno replied.

"Tell me," the master asked, "Did you place your umbrella to the left or the right of your shoes?" Tenno was lost for the right answer. He realized that he had not yet attained full awareness. So he became Nan-in's apprentice and studied under him for ten more years.

Perseverance precedes Immortality

Perseverance is the key to realize the ultimate goal of spirituality. A short Daoist story conveys the truth.

A man named Wang was inclined towards Daoism. He wanted to know the secret of immortality, so he approached a monastery to learn the truth from the head monk. Upon arriving at the monastery, Wang bowed low to the master and requested to guide him. The master said, "You will not be able to cope up with the fatigue."

However upon Wang's insistence, the master accepted him as one of his disciples. In the morning he was sent to cut firewood along with the other disciples. This assignment continued for a month, and Wang's legs and hands began to swell up. He secretly wished to retreat from his mission of seeking immortality. One evening, Wang found two strangers sitting with the master. One among them, an old priest cut out a paper in a rounded shape and pasted it on the wall. To Wang's surprise, the paper turned into a dazzling moon. The other disciples were also hugely astonished and gathered around the table.

The other stranger suggested, "We should enjoy this festive



occasion by treating ourselves with some wine." He then took out a kettle of wine which seemed too small to serve everyone. Worried that wine would exhaust before they got their share, the disciples rushed for the drink. However, to their amazement, the kettle remained full!

One of the strangers then said that it was boring to enjoy wine without entertainment, so he put forth the suggestion, "Why not ask Chang-ngo to join us?" He reached for a chopstick and threw it towards the moon. A beautiful girl, who was barely a foot tall, emerged from the beams of the moon and grew to become a full sized woman. She started to sing melodious numbers in her sweet voice. Having done with the songs, she jumped on the table and again converted into a chopstick.

One of the strangers then stated, "I do not have enough space to drink wine, so will you join me in the palace located on the moon to drink a parting glass of wine?" All of them then jumped on the table and walked into the moon, where the disciples along with the strangers drank to their heart's content. The moon then became obscure and the disciples brought a lighted candle into the room to just find their master sitting besides the table.

Wang was so excited to see the magic that he decided not to go home. However there was no more magic and Wang was again instructed to continue with his strenuous and monotonous work of cutting the firewood. He could not contain himself anymore as the master was not inclined to teach him any magic. He asked the master to teach him some magic, if not the way to immortality. The master initially declined and ordered him to return to wood-cutting. However on Wang's constant pestering to teach him, how to walk through a wall, the master finally agreed to impart the lesson.

Wang tested his newly acquired skill and excitedly made his way back home to show his wife the outcome of his long absence. Upon reaching his home, Wang at once rushed towards the wall in full speed with the hope to pass through it. However to his utter dismay, Wang



collided with the wall and fell on the floor with a huge bang; a big lump appearing on his forehead.

Moral of the story: Perseverance along with concentration is essential to gain immortality.

Chuang Zi's Dao Story on Performing and Winning

Does joy lies in enjoying one's performance or simply in winning? The one who enjoys his performance is relaxed and is using his skills to the best of his abilities, while the one who just focuses on winning postpones his celebration, may be even denies it. A short Dao story of Chuang Zi conveys the message.

Chuang Zi says that when an archer is shooting for fun or enjoyment, he is utilizing his optimum skills. However when he is required to shoot to fetch a brass buckle, nervousness is evident on his face, and when the objective is to get rewarded with a piece of gold, in all likelihood his sight is already blurred because he is out of focus and probably seeing two targets.

According to Chuang Zi, it must be noted that there is absolutely no change in his skills; it's just the lure of earning prize money which has resulted in distraction. The worry to lose has permeated his peace of mind, since now he is more concerned about winning than the actual shooting. The desire and anxiety to win drains all his power.

Governing the World

How can the world be governed? A Dao story reveals the truth.

T'ien Ken, during the course of his travel on the Mount Yin, came across River Liao. There he met an anonymous man to whom he put forth a question, "How would you carry on governing the world?"

"Go away," said the man, who happened to be a Dao saint, and then accused T'ien Ken, "You are rude. Why do you ask me a question for which I am not prepared?" The anonymous Dao saint further added, "I would just like to play the part of the 'Maker' of all things.



When I am tired, I climb over the bird called 'light' and fly beyond all directions and go about wandering in the land of nowhere. Now what method do you have for governing the world that you ask me?"

T'ien, however, would not let go of the saint. He continued to press the saint for an answer to his query. The Dao man finally replied, "Let your mind revel in pure simplicity, merge with the original space idly with indifference, go with the natural flow of things, and do not let any personal or selfish motive to intervene. Do this, and the world will be governed."

Beyond Rewards and Punishments

Goodness must prevail beyond rewards and punishments, for its enduring presence. A short Dao story supports this principle.

Po Ch'eng served as the governor during the rule of King Yao. He continued to serve as the governor when King Yao passed away and his son took over. However when the son died early and Yu, the grandson of Yao ascended the throne, Po Ch'eng resigned from his post to become a farmer. Yu, aware that Po Ch'eng was an efficient governor, went to meet him in order to bring him back to his court.

Yu bowed low to Po Ch'eng while he was engaged in his farm work. He asked Po Ch'eng, "Sir you were an able governor when my grandfather ruled. Why have you lowered yourself to toil in the farm, leaving behind a dignified life?" Po Ch'eng replied, "When you grandfather ruled, people were good impulsively and naturally, and they expected no rewards. They urged one another to be good, and also refrained from doing evil even though there was no fear of punishment. But now you have introduced the system of rewards and punishments, even then people do not behave properly. From now on, virtue will get degenerated and in future there will be disorders. May I now ask you, Your Majesty to leave as you are interrupting my work." Po Ch'eng then went back to plowing without glancing back.

Moral of the story: Rewards and punishments do not guarantee



goodness in the long run. Goodness, that is natural and impulsive, will always prevail and flourish. Such goodness is the result of a mind tuned inwards, which recognizes the true nature of oneness in diversity.

Explaining the Essence of Dao

Once there was a scholar and a gentleman by the name of Duke Huan. One day as he sat on his balcony reading a book, P'ien, one of his servants, carved out a wooden wheel downstairs, as in those days the wheels were handmade. The wheelwright put away his working tools and ascended the steps to talk to his master. Their conversation went like this:

P'ien: "Your honor may I know what you are reading?"

Duke: "I am reading the wise words of the sages."

P'ien: "Are they alive?"

Duke: "No they are dead."

P'ien: "So what you are now reading is just their cold leftovers."

Duke: "Why should you, a wheel-maker, have to say such a thing about the books that I read? It is better if you give me an explanation; otherwise you deserve to die."

P'ien: "Your honor, your servant (referring to himself) will explain from the viewpoint of his own work of art. When I am making a wheel, if I carve out gently, the process is effortless for me, but the end-product does not turn out to be good. If I work roughly, the process gets difficult for me and the finished product also turns out to be crude. However, if I adopt the middle course and work neither gently nor roughly, the end result is a fine piece of artwork. Now I cannot teach this to my son but he may adopt it from me, as there is a knack of doing what is beyond the process of training or teaching. I am 70 years old now and have always made wheels this way. The sages who you are reading have long gone, taking their flair with them. So what you are reading now is just their cold leftovers."



Moral of the story: Even great books cannot convey the essence of Dao, which is the mystery of life. Books are made up of a collection of words, which, though carries the truth, are the result of something else, and this something else is difficult to express in words. What we see are the names and forms, colors and sounds, etc., which is incapable of explaining the mysterious Dao, the secret of life. Books can only indicate the truth; however the truth is something else. The essence of Dao cannot be conveyed through forms.

Surprising the Master

Once in a monastery there was an elder monk. The students were in total awe him, not because he was strict, but because nothing ever seemed to upset or ruffle him. They thought of him as a bit weird and even frightening. One day they decided to test the monk. A bunch of them hid in a dark corner of one of the hallways, and waited for him to walk by. After waiting for few minutes, the old man appeared, carrying a cup of hot tea. Just as he passed by, all the students rushed towards him screaming as loud as they could. But the monk remained calm, displaying no reaction whatsoever. He peacefully made his way to a small table at the end of the hall, gently placed the cup down, and leaning against the wall, cried out with shock, "Ohhhhh!"

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What Does The Daoist Yin-Yang Symbol Look Like?



The most well-known of Daoist visual symbols is the Yin-Yang symbol, also known as the Taiji symbol. The image consists of a circle divided into two teardrop-shaped halves - one white and the other



black. Each half contains a smaller circle of the opposite color.

What is the meaning of the Taiji symbol?

In terms of Daoist cosmology, the circle represents Dao - the indistinguishable unity, which is the cause of this entire existence. The

black and white halves in the circle represent Yin-qi and Yang-qi - the primordial feminine and masculine energies whose interaction gives birth to the world that's visible i.e., the 5 Elements and countless other things.

Yin & Yang are Co-Emerging and Interdependent

The curves and circles of the Yin-Yang symbol imply a kaleidoscope-like movement. This implied movement represents the ways in which Yin and Yang are mutually-emerging, interdependent, and continuously transforming into each other. One does not exist without the other, for each contains the essence of the other. Night becomes day, and day becomes night. Birth materializes into death, and from death arises birth (think: compositing). Friends convert into enemies, and enemies turn into friends. Daoism teaches us that such is the nature of everything in this relative world.

What is Wu Wei?

One of Daoism's most important concepts is Wu Wei, which is sometimes translated as "Non-doing" or "Non-action." A better way to think of it, however, is as a paradoxical "Action through Non-action." Wu Wei refers to the cultivation of a state of being in which our actions are quite effortlessly in alignment with the ebb and flow of the elemental cycles of the natural world. It is the kind of "going with the flow" that is characterized by the effortless ease and awareness, whereby, without even trying, we're able to respond perfectly to whatever situations arise.



The Choice to Relate to or Withdraw from the Society

Historically, Wu Wei has been practiced both within and outside of the existing social and political structures. In *Dao De Ching*, Laozi introduces us to his idea of the "enlightened leader" who, by embodying the principles of Wu Wei, is able to rule in a way that creates happiness and prosperity for all the inhabitants of the country. Wu Wei has also found expression in the choice made by some Dao practitioners to withdraw from society in order to live the life of a hermit, wandering through mountain meadows, meditating for long stretch of times in caves, and thus getting nourishment directly from the energies of the natural world.

The Highest Form of Virtue

The practice of Wu Wei is the expression of what in Daoism is considered to be the highest form of virtue – one that is in no way premeditated, but rather emerges impulsively. In verse 38 of the *Dao de ching* (translated here by Jonathan Star), Laozi tells us: "The highest virtue is to act without a sense of self. The highest kindness is to give without any condition. The highest justice is to see without a preference.

"When Dao is lost one must learn the rules of virtue, when virtue is lost, the rules of kindness, when kindness is lost, the rules of justice, and when justice is lost, one must learn the rules of conduct.

"As we align ourselves with the Dao – with the rhythms of the elements within and outside of our bodies – our actions quite naturally benefit whoever we contact. At this point, we have gone beyond the need for any kind of formal religious or secular moral teachings. We have become the embodiment of Wu Wei, the "Action through Non-action"; Wu Nien, the "Thought through Non-thought"; and Wu Hsin, the "Mind through Non-mind". We have realized our place within the complex web of the inter-being, within the cosmos, and – knowing our connection to all-that-is – can offer only thoughts, words, and actions



that do no harm, and are impulsively virtuous.”

Seeking knowledge is not about seeking wealth, it's about passing the torch - this is the basic value of a teacher

(學問不是求富貴,是薪火的延續!這是作為人師的基本價值)

In the quest for excellence in one's chosen field, the journey to reach the pinnacle or the next level is a rather bumpy ride for some, but effortless cruise for others. In metaphysics, it is rather difficult to search for the essence, particularly in Feng Shui. In the ancient times, metaphysics was the exclusive domain of the imperial ruling class or the few elite community leaders. Some inherited this essence and possess it even today, but sadly due to their selfishness most of them have kept it to themselves.

In the ancient world, it was not possible to teach essence to the masses since traditionally the techniques were not taught in public. Today, metaphysics is taught openly, but unfortunately not its essence. Contrary to their claim, many do not have much knowledge about the essence, and some of them who teach the essence do this according to their own mood or liking. Some charge heavy fee for certain knowledge, and a few of them pass the essence only to their son(s). Thus some of this valuable essence and knowledge has been lost in transition, which is truly the loss for the whole nation.

I would dare to suggest that the Chinese community is a selfish community as it stifles creativity and also the progress of the nation as a whole. Their selfish approach is evident by the fact, that Chinese had invented the compass; however, it was Marco Polo who had used this compass to conquer the world. Chinese also invented fireworks, but Americans were the ones who had used this concept to land the first man on the moon. The concept of Yin (0) and Yang (1) was discovered in China 4,000 years ago, but a German scholar used this concept effectively to initiate the invention of computers. Thus it can be said that if some of the masters stay at the same level as they always have,



then the world of metaphysics will never change and may be labeled as superstitious.

Life is like standing in a Queue

Life is like standing in a queue, a queue to face obstacles and challenges. The hard fact of life is that it is full of challenges and obstacles. However if we display patience and resolve, and remain standing in the queue, sure enough our turn will come and there is always light at the end of the tunnel. Feng Shui will provide a clue as and when you will see that light.

Change

Chinese believe that earth's magnetic field forces are constantly changing to remain in harmony with the movement of other planetary bodies, and the energies related to the time dimension also do not remain static. For instance, Saturn and Jupiter come into a new alignment after every 20 years; such an occurrence will cause changes in the magnetic field forces. These changes also filter down to earth and the humans. In Feng Shui, the time element is crucial. No person, either at home or in office, always enjoys good or bad cycles. Different cyclical patterns of energies have varied weaknesses and strengths, depending on the period at hand. We do not believe in luck, but in opportunities.

Think of 1 and 2

One of my calligraphic masters recently wrote four words in Chinese calligraphy (常想一二), which when translated literally into English means 'Think of 1 and 2'. To understand this statement we have to first examine another common phrase in Chinese (人生不如意事十常八九), which in English means, "Out of 10 events in the journey of life, in a normal course (you) will bump into 8 or 9 of them." 'Think of 1 and 2' is primarily to focus on the positive factors, and level out



events or outcomes, when it comes to handling the predicaments and difficulties of life. For better understanding, we can relate this to the age-old maxim, "Think of half full and avoid half empty." You might say, it is easier said than done, but you can never feel the difference, if you do not even try.

It is true that things will always end up right when hit rock bottom, therefore keep persisting. Learn to be a happy person. Love your family and care for friends. Reorganize your thinking and act positively, whenever possible. Try strengthening the relationships and you will emerge as a stronger and better person. In good times, prepare for the testing times, and when you come across them face them bravely because the worse would be over soon.

Do not ask me when things will turn around, just 'Think of 1 and 2' in testing times.

Reform or Change your Luck?

Sitting on the Ferris wheel will change your luck. The zodiac signs and words on your door will dash your zodiac sign, implying that the coming year will be a bad one for you. Placing some Feng Shui items will change your luck. Changing the direction of your door will also change your fate. These were some of the states the famous Feng Shui practitioners preached and asked the clients to follow. Not so easy; easier said than done?

Unfortunately many followers were convinced of these eccentricities, as such promoting Chinese metaphysics is a giant step backwards. No wonder that many believed that Feng Shui is superstitious. If this is allowed to persist, 5,000 years of Chinese cultural heritage will continue to get distorted. The present Chinese metaphysics has existed for more than 5,000 years, and is deeply rooted and deeply embedded in the Chinese culture and tradition.



I-Ching

The book of change, which dates back to more than 2,000 years ago, would indicate, and I would summarize it as follows:

The Heavenly Law (I-Ching First Qua)



The movement of celestial bodies is continuous, and sages (humans) should follow this movement. The heavenly law tells us that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. It will never lose its balance and rise from the west.

Therefore, a trust is created here.

The Earthly Law (I-Ching Second Qua)



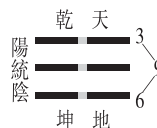
Earth embraces good and bad, to endure, to carry, to hold, and to give unselfishly. Earthly law tells us that mother earth is kind enough to nurture us with raw materials, providing a platform for us to live in.

Crops sow in spring, blossom in summer and will be ready for harvest in autumn. In winter, the land hibernates.

This is called nurturing the love.

The Humanly Law - Embedded in I-Ching

What should humans do, with the trust created and love nurtured?



The humanly laws should also replicate the trust and nurturing the love of both heavenly and earthly laws. Humans should cause no harm to the Mother Nature, which nurtures us (law of kindness) and must also do no harm to both our parents and other humans (law of filial piety).

(世人修道無不是在修人道，人道乃以父母為尊。)

In the Han era, it was written in ancient scripture that all tombs



should be positioned in north and face south.

North (Yin) with strong gust wind.

South (Yang) with warm and moist weather.

Reason: To protect corpse and soul of the ancestors from harm (filial piety), and not because of Feng Shui.

Lao zi: The Heavenly Law has mercy only on those cultivating good deeds 《老子》中講：「天道無親，常與善人」。

I-Ching

Cumulating good deeds in life leads to abundance, and cumulating bad deeds in life leads to karmic debts. 《易經》中的兩句名言：「積善之家，必有餘慶；積不善之家，必有餘殃。」

The sun is never lazy and does never rise late. The earth never spins faster or slower. This is the natural law, which is always followed by the sun and earth. A good karmic return is to replicate the natural law; never lazy and on time - this is Dao!

2,000 years ago, Han Scholar Dong Zhong Xu warned about the disastrous environment exploitation that could lead to devastations on earth. In order to change a person's life for better and attain higher self to gain better luck, one certainly needs to cultivate good deeds, follow virtues, and uphold values.

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What is Dao?

By Wudang Dao



Daoism is the traditional religion of China. In general, it is believed that Daoist organizations were formally established 1,900 years ago by Celestial Master Zhang Daoling during the reign

of Emperor Shundi (126 – 144 AD) of the Eastern Han Dynasty. However, the original sources of Daoist doctrines can be traced back to the Pre-Qin period (4000 – 221 BC).

The ideological system of Daoism covers a wide range of contents. It has evolved into a religious culture based on ancient religious beliefs in China around the worship of heaven and ancestors, as well as Daoist theories and beliefs regarding immortality that arose during the Spring and Autumn Periods, and the Warring States Period. It has also absorbed ethical ideas from Confucianism and folk religious customs.

The core of Daoism is Dao (the Way), which is beyond description. It is said that Dao is the origin of the universe, the basis of all existing things, and the law governing their development and change. The concept of Virtue (De) is closely related to Dao. The Dao De Ching says, “All respect to Dao yet value Virtue.”

Daoists regard Dao and Virtue as the general principles of their beliefs and behaviors. They should not only cultivate Dao, but also accumulate Virtue. Therefore, both Dao and Virtue serve as the basis of the Daoist doctrines. A whole set of principles are derived from the foundation of Dao and Virtue, including non-action, non-attachment from emotions, non-struggle, and the pursuit of simplicity and truth as well as the joy of living.

Daoists believe in Dao as well as in deities and Immortals. In Daoism, 'Gods' refer to the Celestial Worthy of Primordial Beginning, the Celestial Worthy of Numinous Treasure, and the Celestial Worthy of the Way and its Virtue, the Jade Emperor and the Great Emperor of Zhen Wu, who were born before heaven and earth separated, while “Immortals” refer to humans who were born after heaven and earth separated and transformed into deities, becoming immortals through cultivation of Dao. From the Daoists' perspective, both 'Gods' and 'Immortals' are the symbols of Dao.

There exists a hierarchy of 'Gods' and 'Immortals' in Daoism. At



the top of the hierarchy are the 'Gods' of the highest ranks; the Celestial Worthy of Primordial Beginning, the Celestial Worthy of Numinous Treasure, and the Celestial Worthy of the Way and its Virtue, who are the embodiment of Dao or the Dao itself. Below them are the 'Gods' of the lower ranks, who are entrusted with responsibilities according to their attainments in Dao and Virtue. The highest among them is the Jade Emperor, followed by the four major deities and other celestial beings. The Jade Emperor is the highest ruler of the universe. Deities and Immortals have also been assigned different responsibilities.

The highest ideal of a Daoist is to acquire immortality. To achieve this goal, one must practice Daoism, both inside and outside one's physical existence. Inner practice involves physical and breathing exercises, concentrated contemplation, and refining the internal elixir (Neidan). The basic principle of this practice is the desire to cultivate the self, both spiritually and physically. External practice involves doing good deeds and helping others. If one succeeds in both aspects, one could become an 'Immortal'.

Daoist doctrines are referred to as Daoist scriptures. There were different kinds of Daoist scriptures compiled at different moments in history, all under the title of the Daoist Canon (Daozang). The earliest Daoist Canon appeared during the Tang Dynasty, followed by other editions compiled during the Song, Jin, Yuan and Ming dynasties. Two editions of scriptures exist today that were compiled during the reigns of Zhengtong and Wangli of the Ming Dynasty, and are named Zhengtong Daoist Canon and Wanli Supplementary Daoist Canon respectively.

The *Dao De Ching* by Laozi is Daoism's principal and the most important Canon. Other Canons include, Book of Secret Revelations, Book of Purity and Quietness, Book of the Lower Elixir Field, Book of Divine Deliverance, and Can Tong Qi.

Many schools of Daoism were formed throughout history. During the Han Dynasty, there emerged Tianshi and Taiping Daoism; during



the Wei and Jin Period, there were the Shangqing, Lingbao and the Sanhuang Sects; the Song, Jin and Yuan dynasties witnessed different sects, including Quanzhen, Taiyi, Zhenda, and Jinming. Today, the two most prominent sects are the Zhengyi (evolved from Tianshi) and Quanzhen (founded by Wang Chongyang). Today's followers belong to either of these two sects. The Zhengyi Sect is popular mainly in Jiangxi, Jiangsu, Shanghai and Fujian provinces, while Quanzhen flourishes in the remaining parts of China. There is not any major difference in the basic beliefs of the two sects, except in their norms and regulations. Quanzhen Sect, for example, requires its monastic followers to be vegetarian, remain celibate and live in temples, while the Zhengyi Sect places no such restrictions on its followers.

Sites for Daoist activities are called Daoist temples (guan). Monastic Daoists live in temples, practicing Dao and conducting sacred rites. Ordinary believers frequent these places to burn joss sticks and worship the 'Gods'. These temples are open to visitors as well. On the birthdays of the main 'Gods' and 'Immortals', grand services are held, attracting a steady flow of people who come to offer incense sticks and to pray for blessings. Some temples also sponsor fairs, which combine the worshiping of 'Gods' with recreational and trading activities, thus generating lively festivities.

Today, as one of the 5 major religions in China, Daoism has a great number of followers (the other 4 religions are Buddhism, Islam, Protestantism and Roman Catholicism). There are more than 1,600 temples and in excess of 25,000 Daoist priests belonging to the Quanzhen and Zhengyi Sects. The number of ordinary believers is almost impossible to estimate.

Religious and Philosophical Daoism

Daoism refers to a philosophy and a set of spiritual doctrines as well as an extensive ritual hierarchy and monastic institution. Although textbooks often distinguish between 'religious' and 'philosophical'



Daoism, this is a fabricated distinction, and is not more than the difference found in other religions between the practices of the faith, and the theological and philosophical ideas behind them.

Chinese and Western Daoist philosophy

A more useful distinction might be between Chinese Daoism and Westernized Daoism because some forms of Westernized Daoist philosophy add unauthentic new age and other faith elements to Daoism, while removing much of its religious content. Few Western Daoists include Daoist gods and goddesses, liturgy, worship, or specific religious meditative practices in their religious lives.

Religious Daoism - BBC

Today, Daoism in the West is completely different from the Chinese Daoist religion. Very few Westerners have adopted its gods and goddesses, although there are a few organizations that have installed altars in their centres, worship Daoist gods, and celebrate Daoist (and Buddhist) festival days.

-Livia Kohn, Michael Lafargue, Lao-Zi and the Dao De Ching, State University of New York Press, 1998

In the West, Daoism is often taught as an atheist or agnostic philosophy, but in China and Taiwan particularly, Daoism still functions like any conventional religion, and not like an abstract philosophy of life.

There are Daoist temples, monasteries and priests, rituals and ceremonies, and a host of gods and goddesses for believers to worship. These are as vital to the survival of Daoism as individual understanding and practice.

Daoism's rich palette of liturgy and rituals make the Dao more real to humans and provide a way in which humanity can align itself more closely to the Dao to produce better lives for all.

The religious elements of Daoism draw much of their content



from other Chinese religions (including many local cults), and so embrace a wide range of philosophies and beliefs within the wings of the Dao.

The many traditions within the Daoist framework give priests the tools to carry out the conventional tasks of any religion: worship, cure, exorcism, intercession, purification, divination, etc.

Most Daoist temple practices are designed to regulate the relationship between humanity and the world of gods and spirits, and to organize that relationship, and the relationships in the spirit world, in accordance with the Dao.

Religious Daoism – Two Traditions

Religious Daoism follows two main traditions. Each has a clear hierarchical and well-organized structure with special headquarters, rules, guidelines, ordination rites, and registration procedures.

The temples of Dao celestial masters (Tianshi or Zhengyi) are based in Taiwan, while the monastic branch of the Complete Perfection School (Quanzhen) has its headquarters in Beijing.

The Complete Perfection School ordains people and provides monastic communities a focal point for Dao practices and rituals.

A simple, ascetic lifestyle is the norm in Dao monasteries. They are ruled by a strict hierarchy, with the abbot at the head, the prior as the key manager of personnel (assisted by an overseer and several scribes), the provost as main administrator (assisted by a superintendent, treasurer, cellarer, and several vergers and cooks), and the meditation master in charge of spiritual practices (assisted by an ordination master, manager of offerings, and several overseers).

The time schedule is very rigid. A typical day begins at 3:00 am and ends at 9:00 pm. It consists of several periods of seated meditation, worship, meals and work, including much (as in Chan Buddhism meaning work in the gardens and the fields). Everybody is kept busy at all times. All movements throughout the day are prescribed beforehand



and have to be executed with utmost control. Usually meditation, sleep periods and meals are times of complete silence, and even at other times words are to be used with extreme care and circumspection. Daoists, moreover, observe the natural cycles of the seasons and often avoid the use of artificial lights, so that their winter days are much shorter than the ones in summer, allowing for more rest in the darker phases of the year.

-Livia Kohn, Daoism and Chinese Culture

Dao Priests

Dao priests undergo long and intense training to acquire the necessary skills. They must study music, liturgy and ritual, as well as meditation and other physical practices; and they must learn Dao spirituality and the spiritual hierarchy of the Dao deities. During this period, they have to live highly disciplined lives.

Shamanism

The Dao experts believe that their spirits can journey to higher realms of being - in much the same way that Shamans can journey out of the body. They make such journeys through ritual, meditation and visualization, which separates them from this world and harmonize them with the energy flows of the universe. These journeys gradually bring them closer and closer to the Dao itself.



generally believed that Daoist organizations were formally established 1,900 years ago by Celestial Master Zhang Daoling during the reign (126 – 144 AD) of Emperor Shundi of the Eastern Han Dynasty. However, the original sources of Daoist doctrines can be traced back to the Pre-Qin period (4000 – 221 BC). Thus there is the common reference to the 'Three Ancestors'; this indicate to the Yellow Emperor, Lao Zi and Celestial Master Zhang.

Ideologically, Daoism covers a wide range of contents. It has gradually evolved into a religious culture by taking inspiration from the ancient religious beliefs in China which are based on the worship of heaven and ancestors, and also the Daoist theories and beliefs regarding immortality arising during the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period.

The core of Daoism is, of course, Dao (the Way), which is beyond description. It is said that Dao is the origin of the universe, the basis of all existing things, the law governing their development and transformation, and the ultimate god of Daoism. The concept of Virtue (De) is closely related to Dao. *Dao De Ching* correlates Virtue and Dao, "All respect to Dao yet value Virtue." Virtue has distinctly varied connotations. One common explanation is that Virtue is the specific manifestation of Dao in specific things.

Daoists regard Dao and Virtue as the general principles of their beliefs and behaviors. They should not just cultivate Dao, but also accumulate Virtue. Therefore, both Dao and Virtue serve as the basis of Daoist doctrines. A whole set of principles are based on Dao and Virtue, including non-action, non-passion, non-desire, non-struggle, and the pursuit of simplicity and truth.

Daoists believe in both Dao as well as in deities and Immortals. 'Gods' in Daoism refer to the Celestial Worthy of Primordial Beginning, the Celestial Worthy of Numinous Treasure and the Celestial Worthy of the Way and its Virtue, the Jade Emperor and the Great Emperor of Zhenwu, who were born before heaven and earth



separated, while 'Immortals' refer to humans who were born after heaven and earth separated and transformed into deities, becoming 'Immortals' through cultivation of Dao. Among them are Celestial Master Zhang and Lǚ Chunyang. From the Daoists' perspective, both 'Gods' and 'Immortals' are the symbols of Dao. There exists a hierarchy of 'Gods' and 'Immortals' in Daoism. At the top of the hierarchy are the 'Gods' of the highest ranks; the Celestial Worthy of Primordial Beginning, the Celestial Worthy of Numinous Treasure, and the Celestial Worthy of the Way and its Virtue, who are the embodiment of Dao or may be identified as the Dao itself. Below them are the 'Gods' of the lower ranks, who are entrusted with responsibilities according to their attainments in Dao and Virtue. The highest among them is the Jade Emperor, followed by the four major deities and other celestial beings. The Jade Emperor is the highest ruler of the universe. Different deities and 'Immortals' have also been assigned different responsibilities. The most popular among them are the celestial beings in charge of wind, rain, thunder, lightning, water and fire, the God of Wealth, the Kitchen God, the God of the Town, and the God of the Land.

According to Daoism, the universe contains 36 heavens above and 36 hells below. The highest heaven is called Da-luo Heaven, the preceding 3 heavens are the Realm of Absolute Purity, the 4 heavens after that are the 4 Brahmas; while the remaining 28 heavens include the Immaterial Realm (4 heavens), the Material Realm (18 heavens), and the Realm of Desire (6 heavens).

Da-luo Heaven is the dwelling of the Celestial Worthy of Primordial Beginning, the Celestial Worthy of Numinous Treasure, and the Celestial Worthy of the Way and its Virtue; the Realm of Absolute Purity is the abode of 9 grades of saints, realized beings and 'Immortals'. Those in the 4 Brahmas are free from the pain of life and death; those in the Immaterial Realm enjoy longevity but are not free from the pain of life and death; while the people residing in the lowest



tier, the Realm of Desire experience all kinds of desire as well as pain.

The 36 hells are the netherworld where the souls of the deceased live. Daoists believe that the deceased will be judged by the Ten Kings of the netherworld. A benevolent person will be reincarnated, while an evil-doer will be subject to punishment in these hells.

In Daoism, it is believed that, among the famous mountains of the earth, there are 10 Big Daoist Caves, 36 Small Daoist Caves, and 72 Promised Lands, which serve as the abodes of 'Immortals'. Among the 4 seas, there are 10 continents and 3 islands, where 'Immortals' take rest and the divine grass grows. It is believed that if one eats this grass, one will become 'Immortal'. According to a Chinese legend, the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty and Emperor Wudi of the Han Dynasty sent people to look for these fairy islands off the sea in the hope of obtaining those elixirs.

The highest goal of a Daoist is to acquire immortality. To achieve this goal, one must practice Daoism both inside and outside one's physical self. Inner practice involves physical and breathing exercises, intense contemplation, and the taking of elixirs. Later, this practice is carried out to refine the interior elixirs (Neidan). The basic principle of this practice is to cultivate the self, both spiritually and physically. External practice involves doing good deeds and helping others so as to acquire further significance and virtue. If one succeeds in both aspects, one could become an 'Immortal'.

The books that record Daoist doctrines are referred to as the Daoist scriptures. There are varied scriptures that were compiled at different times in history, all under the title of the Daoist Canon.

The earliest Daoist Canon was compiled during the Tang Dynasty, followed by other editions compiled during the Song, Jin, Yuan and Ming dynasties. Two editions compiled during the reigns of Zhengtong and Wangli of the Ming Dynasty exist today, which are named as Zhengtong Daoist Canon and Wanli Supplementary Daoist Canon respectively. The decree of a Yuan-dynasty emperor to burn



Daoist Canon resulted in the loss of a large number of Daoist doctrines. Today, the Daoist Association of China is making efforts to recompile an anthology of Daoist doctrines, titled China's Daoist Canon.

The *Dao De Ching* by Laozi is Daoism's principal and most important Canon. Other canons include Book of Secret Revelations, Book of Purity and Quietness, Book of the Lower Elixir Field, Book of Divine Deliverance, and Can Tong Qi.

Many schools of Daoism were established throughout the Chinese history. During the Han Dynasty, there were the Tianshi Daoism and Taiping Daoism; during the Wei and Jin Period, there were the Shangqing Sect, the Lingbao Sect, and the Sanhuang Sect; the Song, Jin and Yuan dynasties witnessed Quanzhen Daoism, Taiyi Daoism, Zhenda Daoism, and Jinming Daoism. Historical fusion brought many different sects together, from which two important sects; the Zhengyi Sect (evolved from Tianshi Daoism) and Quanzhen Daoism (founded by Wang Chongyang), eventually developed. Today's Daoist followers belong to either of these two sects. The Zhengyi Sect is popular mainly in Jiangxi, Jiangsu, Shanghai and Fujian provinces, while Quanzhen Daoism flourishes in the remaining parts of China. There is no major difference in the basic beliefs of the two sects except in their norms and regulations. Quanzhen Daoism, for example, requires its followers to be vegetarians, remain single and live in temples, while the Zhengyi Sect places no such bar on its followers.

Sites for Daoist activities are called Daoist palaces (gong) or temples (guan). Daoists in the early days preferred to build their temples faraway in the serene mountains and forests. With the spread of Daoism, more and more temples were built in urban areas. Each of them enshrined a great number of statues of deities and Immortals. Daoists lived in the temples, practicing Dao and conducting sacred rites. Ordinary believers frequented these places to burn joss sticks and worship the 'Gods'. These temples were also open to the visitors. On the birthdays of the main 'Gods' and 'Immortals', grand services



were held in the temples, attracting a steady flow of people who came to offer incense sticks and to pray for blessings. Some temples also sponsored fairs, which combined the worship of 'Gods' with recreational and trading activities that resulted in lively festivities.

Daoism, during its time-honored history of development, has exerted far-reaching influences on China's philosophy, literature, arts, medicine and science. What merits special attention, is its great contribution to the ancient Chinese medicine and chemistry. There is a well-known folklore that, "9 out of 10 Daoists are doctors." Daoists' pursuit of longevity and health resulted in many Daoists excelling in medicine. Some renowned Daoists, like Ge Hong of the Jin Dynasty, Dao Hongjing of the Southern and Northern Dynasties, and Sun Simiao of the Tang Dynasty, were also renowned doctors and pharmacists. Daoists of the ancient times attached great importance to minerals, mainly lead, mercury, sulfur, gold and silver, as they believed elixirs could be made from them. They had hoped that these elixirs could free them from the 'terrors' of death. While pursuing their objective, they discovered certain chemical phenomena, which they recorded. These records are now the most valuable documents in ancient Chinese chemistry. Joseph Needham, historian of science, wrote in his book *Science and Civilization in China*: "Many of the most attractive elements of the Chinese character are derived from Daoism. China without Daoism would be like a tree without its deepest roots." Here it is worth mentioning that gunpowder, one of China's four great inventions, was actually invented by Daoists during their attempts to create elixirs.

Daoist culture has long permeated the everyday life of ordinary Chinese people since it exerted great influences on social customs in ancient China and on the shaping of national consciousness. The venerated Lu Xun, the great Chinese writer, once said, "China is rooted in Daoism." Daoism has played an important role in the development of traditional Chinese culture. To know it is to possess the key to a



better understanding of traditional Chinese culture.

Today, as one of the 5 major religions or teachings in China, Daoism has a great number of followers. The other 4 are Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam and Protestantism/Roman Catholicism. There are more than 1,600 temples and in excess of 25,000 Daoists priests of the Quanzhen Daoism and the Zhengyi Sect. The number of ordinary believers is almost impossible to estimate.

Daoism has also found its way to other parts of the world. Daoist methods of keeping fit and healthy, as well as the Daoist concept of harmonious co-existence between humans and nature have generated enormous attention. Daoism is attracting an increasing number of people worldwide.

The emblem of Daoism is the Taiji symbol, or diagram of the cosmological scheme, comprising of a circle with an S-shaped line dividing the white (Yang) and black (Yin) halves.

Daoism on Meditation

Meditation has been capturing scientists' fantasy for many years. A large volume of scientific literature documents that meditation increases brain size, improves cognitive function, helps learning and memory, builds emotional intelligence, and optimizes human potential. Daoism meditation goes one step further in achieving alchemy, i.e. longevity beyond death. This term is often misinterpreted that one will never die. Of course all humans eventually die. What Daoism meditation preaches is something beyond death, as it opens the door of heaven rather than that of the hell or the reincarnation again!

Laozi, in his widely printed book *Dao De Ching* – which also is the oldest scripture – explains the complexity of how the universe was formed, and where we have come from, besides expounding that we do have a choice about where we are heading. This book was initially called *Laozi*, and it was not until Han Wu Ti (Emperor Han) found it extremely powerful that he changed its name to *Dao De Ching*. Ching



or *Jing* is an official word for scripture. It was honored by the King to acknowledge the importance of a meaningful book.

Throughout the different eras of Chinese kingdoms, due to varied reasons and translations, this book is said to set guidelines and principles to rule a country, a county, a district, etc. This book is mainly a set of principles along with philosophical approaches to rule a country. Since written more than 2,000 years ago, this old scripture with ancient text has been translated into many different ways according to the understanding of the translators. Today it is estimated that at least 3,000 different translations of this scripture are available. Thus it should be realized that the crux or the core meaning of the scripture is hidden somewhere between the lines, and in order to understand what Laozi actually wanted to communicate, we need to go back in time and at least try to search what he had in his mind.

Qi (氣) and Cultivation Energy (功)

The 'qi' (氣), which we always refer to in Chinese metaphysics namely Feng Shui and Chinese Medicinal field, is referring to air, while 'qi' (炁) is referred by the ancient Chinese to invisible forces or cosmic energy. Both these words are used in the same terminology and context. They both refer to cosmic energy or breath; the formless and invisible matter in the universe.

In Feng Shui, the subtle energy radiated or permeated from different settings, orientations, directions and time is called 'qi'. In Qigong, human body can utilize the energy of this matter through cultivation, which can drive out diseases and improve physical conditions. Expert practitioners release high-energy mass and high-energy matter in the form of light along with tiny particles in high density. This high-energy mass is called cultivation of energy (功).

Qigong and Martial Arts

Qigong and martial arts were well-developed by the Ancient



Chinese. The practice of martial arts and qigong begins with the exercise of 'qi'. To chop wood by hand or feet, or to cut stone by palm is done through utilizing the inner 'qi', which is transformed into energy mass to achieve the desired aim. This requires the cultivation of energy. When in a combat, just the thought of a fight immediately brings this cultivated energy to work, however this requires intense training and practice.

The important and yet basic concepts in Metaphysics -

Yin and Yang

The in-depth understanding of Yin and Yang is important to study Chinese metaphysics. As we know by now that Chinese language and culture is unique and to understand them requires one to comprehend in a metaphoric sense. Some of the differentiations in Yin and Yang are mentioned below:

The Segregation

- One Yin and one Yang combine to form Dao 一陰一陽謂之道
- Sky is Yang, while earth is Yin 天是陽，地是陰
- Sunny day is Yang, while rainy day is Yin 晴天是陽，陰天是陰
- Clear is Yang, while muddy is Yin 清者為陽，濁者為陰
- Breathing in is Yang, while breathing out is Yin 呼者為陽，吸者為陰
- Ascending is Yang, while descending is Yin 升者為陽，降者為陰
- On top is Yang, while at bottom is Yin 上則為陽，下則為陰
- Left is Yang, while right is Yin 左則為陽，右則為陰
- Heart is Yang, while kidney is Yin 心氣為陽，腎氣為陰
- Liver is Yang, while lung is Yin 肝木為陽，肺金為陰

The Oneness

- Pure Yin without Yang, devil beings 純陰而無陽者，鬼也
- Pure Yang without Yin, immortals (celestial beings) 純陽而無陰



者，仙也

- Yin and Yang together, humans 陰陽相雜者，人也

The Concept of Yin and Yang in Broader Context

- Heaven (sky) consists of both Yin and Yang 天有陰陽
- Earth consists of hard and soft 地有剛柔
- Humans being equipped with righteousness and justice (justice at times can harm loved one) 人有仁義

The concept of Reciprocity

- Ruler benevolent, while courtier loyal 君仁臣忠
- Father loving, while son filial 父慈子孝
- Teacher caring, while student respectful 尊師愛生

It's people that matter, not the Dao! 「人能宏道，非道宏人。」

Dao is taught naturally and cannot be coerced or forced into agreeing upon a certain set of principles. However, having said that, 'natural' should fall into a certain set of paradigms, or must be looked on in the right perspective, or should I said 'ethical' thresholds. For instance bravery is a good act, but robbing is also regarded as an act of 'bravery'. Therefore it is vital that every act is accompanied by certain 'moral' values or 'protocol' according to the cultural practices and beliefs. Dao is an enlightened destination, and we can reach such a state by trudging on a certain path that I will call the 'road to inner self'. However, this violates the basic Dao principle of Wu Wei 無為, or 'doing nothingness'. I will comment on this later.

There is a famous Chinese saying, "Follow your heart and not your head." This simply means to follow your experiences of life. These experiences are a set of behaviors that are 'learned' from or through 'inexperience'. Meditation process does help us to focus on our inner voices and inner healing, which eradicates ignorance and unwarranted 'words' that might harm others inadvertently especially



our loved ones.

WE need to revert back to the Wu Wei 無為 or ‘doing nothingness’. The core of doing nothingness has to do with our inner heart that is pure and naive. Try this for comparison; we need ‘moral’ values because of the ‘immorality’, we need ‘trust’ because of the ‘untrustworthiness’, we need ‘law’ because of the ‘lawlessness’, etc. The list goes on and on, if you know what I mean. The ideal state is to go back to the pass (覆古), whereby one must act according to the ideology of ‘free from a set of ideas or rules’. This may seem impossible, but this is Dao.

Chinese metaphysics particularly Fung Shui are directly or indirectly linked to Daoism and Confucian teachings because of the ideology of the interactions between humans, heaven and earth. (天地人三才)

18

10 Easy Feng Shui in Modern World Living



1. Anything that is too big or too small is not ideal, be it bedroom, living room, home or office. Privacy is the key issue here, but too big will lead to dispersal or divergence of energies, while too small may lead to depression or emotional swings.
2. For those living in high-rise apartments of condominium, neither too low nor too high is good. Too high is deemed as lack of support, while too low may have noise, smell or even insects’ threats.
3. There must be adequate sunlight for the living room, bedrooms as well as kitchen. Use energy saving bulbs, and immediately



replace bulbs where lights are not working.

4. For safety reason, avoid sharp corners that you or your kids might bump into it.
5. Avoid any objects that would press the sofa and bed. According to the natural law of wind flows, if such an eventuality occurs wind direction will be disrupted, causing the wind to hit you. This may even cause headache.
6. Reduce the use of electrical appliances and, if not in use, shut off the switches. This would reduce radioactive emissions.
7. In order to conserve energy, use less water since water represents wealth.
8. Recycle whatever you can.
9. More greenery at home ignites fresh and lively energies. Therefore sow plants or flowers in your home.
10. Last but not least, ensure there is no leakage of pipes, which is a sign of wealth leakage. It is also a fact that you also pay for the water wasted.

Feng Shui Taboo

- Q1.** Mirror in bedroom causes bad relationship
A: This is not true at all. The only thing that it may cause is a headache. Imagine you wake up in the middle of the night without light on and see yourself in the mirror; this may just scare you.
- Q2.** The toilet should not be located in the center
A: There seems no logic behind this. The Ancient Chinese also always had their toilets outside the main building. The only rationale can be the hygiene part. As long as toilets are kept clean and the toilet door is always closed, things should be in order.
- Q3.** 4 is a bad number and 3 is a good number
A: The Chinese main language is Mandarin, while the most popular dialect is Cantonese. Therefore it is only logical to have beliefs



about the phonetic meanings of certain numbers. 4 sounds like 'dead', while 3 sounds like 'alive'. Surprisingly the reverse is true in Feng Shui flying star numbers, where the 4-star is good for 'academic excellence', while 3-star is associated with 'grievances'. Let's not blame your luck when you live on the 4th or 14th floor, etc. Just remember that 4 will enhance your intellectual capability.

Q4. T-Junction brings bad luck for business

A: The energies created in such an area certainly bring some uncertainty, but never conclude that such energies are bad. Contrary to the assumption, in certain cosmopolitan cities like New York, Hong Kong and London, to name a few, such settings bring fortune. Never assume things; just apply logic to make your quest for Feng Shui a more meaningful one.

Q5. Fish Tank represents wealth

A: It is a common practice to place a fish tank in the wealth sector. This created uncertainty that fish tank equals wealth. This is taken for granted by many. Is it the fish tank, the fish, or the water that created this magic touch? The answer to the best of my knowledge is: it is the movement created by the fish inside the water that matters. The movement of fish or any object in the wealth sector ignites the subtle fortune energies and thus infiltrates kind energies into your family.

Q6. Red color is auspicious for all occasions

A: Traditionally, red is synonymous with auspiciousness and celebration in the Chinese culture. Nevertheless please keep in mind that red denotes strong fire and it is a strong Yang energy, therefore one should never take this for granted that red is auspicious for all occasions, especially when it comes to your main door or your bedroom color. Certain people should avoid using red color, especially those born in summer.

Q7. Black color is inauspicious for all occasions



A: This is also a traditional belief in the ancient Chinese culture that black brings bad luck. Certain people will however discover that black color brings kind energies to them, especially those who are born in summer will find water element brings such energies to them. This is because black color is the water element. Only those born in winter will find black color inauspicious for them.

Q8. Graveyard in vicinity will bring bad luck

A: Traditionally, Chinese in the ancient times, and even today, place great emphasis on the Yin Feng Shui whereby their ancestor graveyard is treated as the most critical factor that will determine the fame and fortunes of the young ones. Therefore, to begin with, such an area should be a good Feng Shui. By the same token, since such an area carries too much Yin energies and also creates psychological impact on the living beings living close to the graveyard, most people will avoid living close to such a place. If your apartment or house is near a graveyard, as long as you feel comfortable about it, you should stay there.

Is your front door facing the staircase?

A staircase directly facing the main door is recognized as a 'leakage' of wealth. Many of my clients in the United States face this predicament, since their staircases directly face the main door and they indeed experience difficulty in retaining wealth. Avoid such a house setting, if possible. However, if it is unavoidable, the issue can be resolved by placing a plant at least three feet tall and with big leaves in front of the main door to retain the energy. Take a minute to think of the logic behind such a rationale; the flow of energies from upstairs exiting the main door is not something superstitious, it's simply commonsense.

11 Do's and Don'ts of Home Feng Shui

Q1. The front door should not directly face the kitchen.



A: Such a setting is classified as ‘retreating’ of kind energies from home.

Q2. The bedrooms’ doors should not face the main door.

A: Such a setting is said to bring ‘lust’ to family members.

Q3. The living room in the middle of the house is ideal.

A: Such a setting is said to generate kind energies to family members.

Q4. Iron bars suppressed from the ceiling.

A: Such a setting creates an obstacle to your subconscious mind.

Q5. The mirror should not be facing your bed

A: You do not want to wake up and see yourself in the middle of the night, or early in the morning before you wash up, do you?

Q6. Bedrooms should not be in dark colors.

A: Colors such as dark blue, dark red and black are said to bring excessive Yang energies to your peace at night.

Q7. Washrooms should not face your bed.

A: This would generate inauspicious energies which may lead to health problems.

Q8. Plants with ideal size are recommended.

A: Adequate sized plants are much recommended, as these will bring more lively energies to the house and in particular for those who require more wood in their life.

Q9. Avoid leakages and keep toilet clean all the time.

A: This is to avoid leakage or release of wealth.

Q10. Bed should not be under a big window

A: Commonsense tells us that such an orientation will cause severe headache.

Q11. Enough sunlight or lighting at night.

Sufficient sunlight in the daytime and lightings at night sets the mood for family members.



11 Do's and Don'ts of selecting a site for Home

Q1. Flyover nearby especially above.

A: Besides suffering from a noisy traffic, such a setting also brings unkind energies to the house.

Q2. Sharp object directly facing your window or door.

A: When I say directly facing, it basically means that the sharp object is within your sight from your house or window. If the object is at a fair distance then it should not cause you much concern.

Q3. Road coming directly at your front or rear door.

A: Such a setting is believed to bring unnecessary grievances or betrayal to family members, be it at work or home.

Q4. A large tree near your door.

A: Anything that is too big is bad for the family members. Such a setting will block the way of any kind energy entering your house.

Q5. Factory nearby.

A: Any factory especially chemical factory near your home can cause serious health problems for family members.

Q6. All glass home.

A: Transparent home is bad for privacy and causes constant arguments among family members.

Q7. Round shaped home.

A: There is general saying in Chinese that the heaven is round and earth is square. We humans can only live in a square shaped home and only the ‘God’ can live in a round shaped home.

Q8. Hospital, funeral home and church nearby.

A: Such a setting is believed to attract too much unknown energies, either good or bad, in the vicinity.

Q9. Your front door in front of dying trees.

A: Such dying trees or plants nearby may cause health problems for family members. Simultaneously facing dying trees also cause



retreat of energies.

Q10. Too small or too high residential units.

A: Avoid selecting a residential unit that is either too high or too small in the area.

Q11. A cross road that's mirrored like a scissor.

A: This is a big no in Feng Shui principle. Such a setting brings unkind energies to your home that could lead to mental disorder or depression.

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Articles of 3 teachings



Some of my articles related to three teachings (DAOISM, CONFUSIANISM AND BUDDHISM) appeared in Hong Kong Standard daily newspaper.

How Lu Dongbin lives on today

Lu Dongbin, or Lu Ju, was born in the year 638, on the 14th day of the fourth month, in Yong Le district, Shanxi province.

A historical figure, he is regarded as a deity or an "immortal" by many in Chinese culture - especially by Daoists.

Lu is one of the most widely known of the group of deities known as the Eight Immortals and considered by some to be the de facto leader.

Mention is made of him, one of five pioneer Daoist masters, in the official history book History of Song.

Lu was the founder of the School of the Golden Elixir of Life (Jin Dan Jiao) and is widely considered to be one of the earliest masters of



the tradition of neidan, or internal alchemy.

In art, he is often depicted dressed as a scholar with a sword on his back that dispels evil spirits. An expert in sword arts, he is also hailed as the master of Chinese meditation.

Some of his metaphysical knowledge lives to this day - he passed the tai chi diagram to another Daoist sage, Chen Tuan.

His contributions are not only to feng shui studies but religion as well.

He was seconded by the heavenly ruler to represent the three teachings of Daoism, Confucianism and Buddhism.

Today, when we visit any Daoist temple, we cannot miss Lu Dongbin. In Hong Kong, there are many temples and koons (Daoist temple) remembering his contributions to the Daoist world: Wun Chuen Sin Koon and Fung Ying Seen Koon in Fan Ling and Man Tak Garden in Tai Po, to name a few.

Thought of the week: Let your heart cure your heart. Let the elixir of your soul cure and purify your sins - Lu Ju

Dao the eternal line

Dao is variously defined as the way, the path, the truth, reason or moral order.

However, Lao Zi says the Dao that can be given a name is not the eternal Dao. Also, such a name, if given, is not the eternal or everlasting name for Dao.

Try this on for size: once we ascribe a name to, let's say, a cup, then everything else is "not-a-cup!"

We are required to see things with the heart and not merely with our eyes.

The teachings of Dao will eventually lead us to love and do things in accordance with the natural way.

Han dynasty scholar Dong Zhongshu used the term Unification of Tian (heaven) and Ren (human) to describe the natural movements



of planets. He said the universe and Earth's very structure embodies the principle that all humans are meant to co-exist harmoniously.

The sun rises every morning to wake us up and provide life-giving sunlight to all beings. The moon rises on time each night, signaling a time of rest.

The sun will not rise in the west and set in the east, neither will the moon change its course. They are not temperamental and will never be late.

The ancient Chinese interpreted this as trust and called it the Dao of Heaven.

Likewise, humans and all living beings must not act against the Dao of Heaven by destroying the environment that we live in.

The Dao of Humans requires us to mimic the heavenly law of Dao by trusting naturally.

Confucius' teachings say the Dao of Humans is reflected in the five virtues of benevolence, justice, rituals, knowledge and trustworthiness.

In other words, this "path" shows the way to following the spirit of righteousness and filial piety.

Chinese metaphysics is based on such principles and parameters to help human beings function properly and morally.

The responsibility lies with the practitioners of Dao, as success in promoting the ancient arts will only be as much as they allow it to be.

Thought of the week: Nobody can go back and start again, but anyone can start today and make a new ending.

Building up good karma

The word "karma" means doing an action. Doing good is kusala karma, doing evil is akusala karma, and doing neutral actions - neither of merit or demerit - is avyakata karma.

The person who does all these forms of karma is the owner of his karma, and it is he who is responsible for his own good or evil. Each



one of us should realize that we own our karma, which is what we have done in absolutely every case.

Think of someone who is intelligent, clever and wealthy; who has never had much illness, who has physical well-being; who, when he thinks of something he wants, it comes to him as though the gods sent it. And wherever he goes, people look after him with care and respect, and venerate him. He has so much good fortune, but he cannot share it with anyone.

In the same way, each of us is responsible for the results of our own karma, good or bad.

This is the way of karma, and the owner of good karma is the heart that knows.

Obstructing Tai Sui (Grand Duke Jupiter)

Tai Sui literally means the star that is fully in charge, or in command, for that particular year. This is heavily associated with the Heavenly Stem and Earthly Branch.

The Heavenly Stem represents heavenly energies, and thus the sky's energy. In scientific terms, this is the magnetic field and radiation emissions. The Earthly Branch represents the earth's energies with directions.

Each year, the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches combine in different ways, and the chemical reaction results in different energy directions, some kind and some unkind.

In the Year of the Boar (2007), for example, the North direction/sector had a candlelight fire element.

Imagine a water-loving Boar interacting with light fire energies - what would the chemical reaction be like?

You tell me. Stock markets crashed, bankruptcies surged. Volatility, volatility and volatility!

The Tai Sui sector should be kept quiet. Construction, demolition or any movement in such a sector is said to obstruct the natural flow of energies.



That is why there is a saying in Chinese: Never obstruct the Tai Sui, and leave it alone.

This year, the Tai Sui sector is in the northeast and next year, in the east.

Thought of the week: Experience is the name everybody gives to their mistakes.

Sleep on it

- **Best time to sleep. Rat 11pm-1am: Gall at work**

Ever wonder why you feel lethargic between 9pm and 11pm but refreshed after 11? This critical period is when the first yang (bright) energy emerges and the yin (dark energy) and yang combine. Our gall is working at this time.

In Chinese medicine, we don't treat just the organ, but its related components such as the bloodstream, surrounding organs and body parts.

We treat this at three levels. The first is form because if this is damaged, the totality of the organ is affected. The second is energy and this is related to the movement of the bloodstream. The last is spirit, or how form and energy combine at certain times. The function of the gall is to keep up the body's alertness level.

- **Best time to sleep without interruption. Ox 1am-3am: Liver at work**

Rising yang energy from the liver can cause dizziness. This is because of energy expansion and contraction. Energy expands when it rises and contracts when it reaches a critical stage, causing headaches and dizziness.

The liver also eliminates waste or toxins in our body. A healthy liver is critical to determine the level of responsiveness and wit. It is wise to sleep soundly from 1am to 3am to give the liver a chance to work.



- **When heart attacks happen the most. Tiger 3am-5am: Lungs at work**

This is a period where most of our body functions transform from a static to dynamic state. That's why most elderly people wake up or cannot sleep during this time.

This is when our blood flow starts to quicken and elderly people need special care before waking up. The distribution of blood flow needs to be slow and steady, especially for elderly people with heart ailments. Statistics show that most heart attacks happen from 3am to 5am. This is due to uneven distribution of blood flows.

Quote of the week: If you wait to do everything until you're sure it's right, you'll probably never do much of anything.

In sync with body clock

The best time to use the loo is the rabbit hours from five to seven in the morning, when the large intestine is at work and we start having bowel movements. This is a natural phenomenon: as the sun (yang) rises, our body starts to discharge toxins.

According to Chinese medicinal theory, all the organs in our body depend on one another to function efficiently. For instance, lungs aid in the smooth functioning of our bowels, and constipation takes place if our lungs are not working at their optimum.

- **Breakfast**

The best time for breakfast is during the dragon hours between seven and nine. The stomach is one of the most important organs, and its operations have an impact on other parts of the body. It is important that we eat breakfast during this time as our digestive system is at its most efficient. Pimples, especially on the face, are also caused by a poorly working stomach.

- **Work**

The best time for work is during the snake hours between nine



and 11 in the morning, when the spleen is at its operational best. After food has been digested, the spleen disperses the energy into the blood and distributes it to the body via the heart. To check whether our spleen is working properly, we can observe two things: one, the muscles in our body are firm and, second, our lips will have a nice gloss.

- **Naps**

The best time for naps are during the horse hours between 11am and 1pm. People in ancient times paid particular attention to the horse and rat hours (11pm to 1am) because two important organs are hard at work during these times - the heart and the kidney. It is best that we rest or nap awhile to recuperate during these times. The heart, the fire element, is on the ascendancy, as is the kidney, a water element that suppresses the strong fire.

Quote of the week: In school, you're taught a lesson and then given a test. In life, you're given a test that teaches you a lesson.

Right times for your body

- **Best time for lunch. Goat 1pm-3pm: small intestine at work**

The function of the small intestine is to absorb the food after it is processed in the spleen. It then transforms and distributes it to all the organs. If your face is red and your chest is having difficulty breathing in this period, it means the heart is malfunctioning.

The heart and small intestine work closely. It is believed that a healthy lunch is required to alleviate our hunger and at the same time satisfy our desire for taste. This is the time our taste functions at its fullest.

- **Best time to build strong memory. Monkey 3pm-5pm: bladder at work**

The bladder system is directly related to the brain via the bloodstream. It is believed that in order to have a good memory,

things that we learn in the morning should be restudied during this period to strengthen our memorizing ability. The bladder and kidney are interrelated organs. The function of both is to determine the smooth flow of urine and bowel movement.

- **To determine your alertness level. Rooster 5pm-7pm: kidney at work**

The kidney is the most important organ, according to the ancient Chinese. It determines a person's activity level due to its storage and transformation ability. The transformation acts as a catalyst for the normal functioning of other organs. The storage determines the level of activity one can handle in a day.

- **Best time to relax. Dog 7pm-9pm: heart system at work**

The whole heart system ranges from the surrounding bloodstream to 7.5 centimeters below the armpit. It runs through the middle path of our hand down to the middle finger. Should our middle finger feel numb, there is a high possibility that our heart is having a problem. The pressure point in front of our chest will determine the level of our happiness as it is the control center of our emotions. This critical point is in the center of our chest between the nipples. Massage this area gently to relieve depression as well.

- **Best time to have sex. Boar 9pm-11pm: San Xiao Ching at work**

This is the time to relax and prepare to sleep. But before we sleep, this is also the best time for couples to make love. It is believed to be the right time since the previous period sets the tone.

San Xiao Ching is divided into three parts. The first governs the heart and lungs, the middle governs the spleen and stomach and the last governs the liver and kidney. The whole system includes tissues, tendons and the bloodstream surrounding them.

Quote of the week: intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death.





Watch your mouth

- ***Steady mouth, content heart is essential***

Knowing when to open and shut your mouth is an important aspect of learning the traditional metaphysics.

Ancient values such as filial piety and respect are deeply rooted in the Chinese communities. The more you know, the more you will find out what you lack; the only constant thing is learning and never be off your guard.

- ***Passing on knowledge via oral teaching***

Traditional teaching was based on passing the real essence of knowledge through face-to-face oral teaching.

This was done to explain the crux of the message and its application.

Books are the tools to understand the surface or meanings, and often oral teaching will be able to make use of bilateral communication in a broader and in-depth manner.

In ancient texts, words have hidden knowledge, and one should read between the lines, which carry metaphors that can only be explained by the author. That is why when learning metaphors of any art, face-to-face oral teaching is critical.

- ***A term that is often widely misused***

One phrase that people often apply to all of fung shui is "gathering the wind and harnessing the energy." However, this phrase from an ancient text is meant purely for yin fung shui application (as in a graveyard).

In the old days, the graveyard was an extremely important place and was believed to have impact on living beings.

A good yin fung shui will ensure the younger generations live with good health and prosperity. In searching for such a site, the basic yet difficult theory of "gathering the wind and harnessing the energy" will apply.

The rationale for such a theory is that the ancient Chinese



believed in the science of chemical reaction.

It is believed that the bones of the dead, at some point in time, will react with the earth below to form and radiate energy that will have an impact on living beings. A good site will provide positive impact and vice versa. Such a term is used for ying fung shui only.

For yang fung shui, especially in house location, sunlight and good air circulation are important. Without them, we will feel lethargic, uneasy and depressed.

It is common sense that these two factors will affect our thinking and consequently our behavior. Too much darkness or poor ventilation will result in poor behavior and such characteristics.

Note that good air circulation is crucial in yang fung shui because we need to breathe in clean air and have light breezes flowing by us.

The notion of "gathering the wind and harnessing the energy" did not, does not and will not apply in yang fung shui. Such interpretation is due to a lack of in-depth understanding of the ancient terminology.

Thought of the week: One day your life will flash before your eyes. Make sure it's worth watching.

Complexity clouds proposals

Recently I have been interviewed by many prominent reporters, including one from The New York Times, asking my opinion on the formation of the Fung Shui Association.

The recent commotion created in the industry following the Nina Wang case and malpractices by certain Daoist sects of Mao Shan related to tax evasion, molestation, sex seduction and other cases has put fung shui in the limelight.

This is a typical example of one bad apple ruining the whole basket.



It is common sense to say that if these are civil or criminal cases, we ought to call the police.

Society has authority figures to settle such cases and we do not need an association to govern Chinese metaphysics. Indeed, who has the right to govern our biggest Chinese heritage, namely Chinese metaphysics?

The rationale behind the formation of such an association is simply commercial; specifically to promote those in the association and help them harness the rapidly growing market in the mainland. Of course, the organization is charging handsomely for membership.

Who is running the association? The current standing of the personnel running such an organization is questionable. How and why they set the industry standard is in doubt.

Those who study and learn the craft will know that to understand Chinese metaphysics is a complex issue - let alone the complexity involved in setting standards to govern it.

To my knowledge, there are eight traditional fung shui schools. They are not on good terms with each other because of conflicting methodologies as well as differing basic beliefs. As such, to set standards for the industry is impossible.

From the eastern Han to the Song era, the variation of different techniques and schools was obvious. It varied from era to era and dynasty to dynasty in accordance with time and space.

This is clearly a time and space issue in which certain techniques must be working in certain periods of time and not in other times.

Such complex issues would lead us to wonder how they are going to run the organization if basic questions - such as who is qualified to set the standards, and who is going to set the requirements for member entry - cannot be answered.

In my view, until these questions and uncertainties are addressed, the current proposals are merely hype for some to ride for more publicity and self promotion.



Quote of the week: Real true generosity is doing something nice for someone who will never find out.

Let a thousand schools bloom

In the second part of my response to the issue of uniting the various fung shui schools in Hong Kong under one umbrella body, I will look at the difficulties of any attempt to do so.

As I have indicated in the first part, the motive for any such move is unclear as only a few practitioners would profit.

Chinese metaphysics can be covered under five categories: mountains, medical, life reading, facial and predictive tools. They should go hand in hand.

In fung shui alone, there are more than eight schools of thought, each with their own mission, ideology, unique strategies and tactics.

It is well nigh impossible to unify the schools due to their differing histories, cultures, standards and organizations.

Traditional fung shui methodologies were passed on from generation to generation for two main reasons. In ancient times fung shui tools were meant exclusively for the use of imperial rulers - ordinary people were prohibited from learning and possessing such tools and knowledge in any form. Often, such knowledge was taught orally and was treated as a closely guarded secret.

Secondly, since such a powerful tool could be used to discern the future, responsible masters would not have public classes but instead taught it in private to only a select few.

Fung shui is a natural science, like Daoism, which should be allowed to mature over time. This is the eternal Dao. In years to come, more and more secrets will surface to help not only the individual but countries as well. Generally, a good fung shui, or life reading, master is always found through word of mouth. Therefore an umbrella organization, as has been proposed, is unwarranted and unnecessary.

Thought of the week: Liberate your mind and you liberate your



world.

Let freedom reign

In this final part of my exposition on the need for a fung shui association, I throw a question to my readers: do fung shui items really exist?

One can buy and obtain items or ornaments related to fung shui on almost every street corner in Hong Kong.

Items such as crystal, ancient coins, ingots, water fountains and many others have been used for fung shui purposes by many Chinese people since ancient times.

But do you know if these items really work? Or for that matter, is there such a thing as a fung shui item? The answer may be a surprise to many: No.

I have been studying and practicing fung shui for the past 14 years and have never found any mention of fung shui items in any ancient scriptures or books.

They are used in Daoist practice, though, to modify the aura of a house or a person.

But they must be used in accordance with need and with permission from the deities or gods in the form of a fu, or a yellow piece of paper with Daoist magic symbols.

The fu has to be written by a qualified Daoist master, who has to recite the proper incantation into the fu.

This insertion of powerful words is important for the fu to function properly.

Normally such a fu is tailor-made for a particular person at a particular time.

In ancient days, such practices were meant to fend off evil spirits.

If you followed my three-part argument closely, you will have understood by now that our 5,000-year-old Chinese heritage is being exploited by certain groups of people for personal gain.



Such practices are unwarranted as Chinese metaphysics should be based on a principle of laissez-faire and allowed to grow naturally.

Quote of the week: Love is forgiving and love is for giving.

Deep breathing secrets

A baby's first breath is through the nose and right down to the abdomen. Many doctors agree that this is the correct way of breathing to ensure a healthy body.

This is the way of Dan Dao breathing.

Dan Dao, which dates back more than 2,000 years, is an ancient practice of breathing technique, or meditation, to ensure a long life.

The Confucian sage Lao Zi said that when you feel you're breathing through your lungs, that means your lungs are not functioning well. Ironically, when you breathe normally without feeling your lungs, then they are working fine.

Today, people think that consuming the right food, vitamins, medicines and supplements help them live longer.

But one Indian yogi has claimed that he has survived for seven years without food and water, just yoga and meditation. This shows the importance of breathing - especially the correct way of breathing.

The beauty of it all is that air is, of course, free.

An ancient text, Chan Tong Qi (Three in One) by Han scholar Wei Boyang, talks about methods of prolonging one's lifespan such as Swapping the Ham and Lei Guas, Exchanging the Dragon and Tiger Energy. But in my opinion, these are all simply breathing techniques.

Thirty minutes to an hour of deep breathing a day, using the Dan Dao Small Cycle techniques as laid out below, would ensure one stays healthy.

We often neglect the simple, yet essential, practice of relaxing our muscles to help the circulation of blood and air in our bodies.

The difference will become obvious after one does it for only seven days. Remember the simple rule: breathe deep, down to your



abdomen.

There are basically two breathing techniques.

Natural breathing. A relaxing technique that utilizes and maximizes the oxygen that we take in. The important thing to look for is a bulging of the belly when you breathe in, especially about six centimeters below the belly button.

Unnatural breathing. Here, you use your lungs to take deep, powerful breaths. In line with the yin-yang balance, this hard type of breathing balances out the soft natural breathing. It is used to detoxify the body. This cleansing technique can be used only during daylight.

Quote of the week: Filial piety ensures harmony.

Confucius says

Fung shui is closely related to Confucianism and Daoism. So I will be looking at the two teachings.

Developed by Confucius (551-479 BC) in the Spring and Autumn Period, Confucianism became an established philosophy in China.

Confucius held that everyone was entitled to education, not just the elite, and emphasized that people from all walks of life should have the opportunity for education "as long as the desire to learn is burning."

His fundamental teachings are about building internal and external values and interacting harmoniously with others. Values such as filial piety, honesty, etiquette and camaraderie are held in high esteem.

He also defined the protocol for important relationships such as between ruler and subjects, husband and wife, and father and children, and the values which should guide them - benevolence, justice, etiquette, wisdom and honesty.

Confucianism differs from religion in general and Daoism particularly in the subjects covered, focusing on individual growth and social relations.

Daoism was popularized by Lao Zi in the late Spring and Autumn



Period. At the beginning of the Han era (221-206 BC), it was termed Dao De Jia.

At that time, there were five other schools of thought: Confucianism, Mo Jia, Ming Jia, Fa Jia and Yin Yang Jia. Daoist philosophy blends these five teachings. The famous philosophers of the Daoist school are Lao Zi, Chuang Zi and the Huang Lao sect. Its main focus is on building a stronger body and mind to achieve health and longevity. Instead of promoting materialism, Daoism places emphasis on developing a healthy body whereas Confucianism emphasizes building a better soul.

The ultimate destination of Daoism is not heaven but being one with nature - which is the way of the Dao. More than any other school, Daoism focuses on nature.

Lao Zi said that Dao is the source of creation of the universe and therefore its main driving force. Daoism pioneered explorations into the nature of the universe and incarnate beings. It is Daoism's biggest contribution to metaphysics.

Some of Lao Zi's precepts include:

- One should uphold "nothingness";
- To be weak is to avoid competing; and
- Be stupid to harness substance.

Daoism, which stresses the importance of life over material things, does not give prominence to fame and fortune as ultimate life goals, for they are meaningless without the spirit of Dao.

Western Han historian Ser Ma Tan has acknowledged that Daoism blended the unique teachings of other schools to become the perfect school of thought for its time.

Quote of the week: I can't hear you because you're talking too loudly.

Of heaven and earth

The ancient narrative history Zuo Zhuan, or Commentaries of



Zuo, is attributed to Zuo Qiuming - a contemporary of Confucius.

In it, a doctor named He from the Qing era says heaven consists of six energies (or qi): yin, yang, wind, rain, day and night. These six energies are categorized as follows: a cloudy day is termed as yin; a cloudless day is yang; wind and rain are the movements of clouds; the night is hi; and the day is ming. He adds: "Any imbalance in the equation will end up [creating a] disastrous state."

A few centuries later, Dong Zhongshu wrote in his book Chun Qiu Fan Lu, or Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals: "The path of heaven is about giving, earth about nurturing, while that of man is about justice and manners. The eyes are for seeing the right colors; the ears are for hearing the right voices. The mouth is for tasting the right flavor and the body is for walking on the right path."

• ***False knowledge and false preaching***

It is hard to judge the authenticity of ancient scriptures: some are plagiarized and some created without proper basis.

In pursuing ancient knowledge, many practitioners may have unwittingly learned the wrong thing and passed it on to their followers.

So how do you know which teaching is real and which false? The answer is simply to practice what you have learned and the true teaching will emerge through trial and error. The process may be taxing and at times frustrating, but seek and you shall find.

How can this be done? Use your eyes and find the answers in your heart. For example, the only way to learn the topographical element of fung shui is by observing and experiencing the surrounding nature physically - especially through your eyes. Interpretation, however, is another matter.

In olden days, knowledge of the time aspect, or gua energy, was passed on orally. This tradition resulted in a loss of the great art and science as some practitioners took their precious knowledge to the grave without passing it on to anyone.



Thought of the week: Love gives all and requires nothing. If everyone gave their all, what more would you require?

Natural laws

Western Han era scholar Dong Zhongshu also wrote in depth about the five elements and the filial concept in his tome Chun Qiu Fan Lu, or Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals.

The five elements theory explains creation: water breeds wood, wood creates fire, fire breeds earth, earth creates metal, and metal creates water - and the cycle goes on.

Implied in this creation concept is that unique relationship in which a son must respect and be loyal to the father, while the father has an obligation to nurture the son - leading to balance and filial piety.

For ancient Chinese, one acts in harmony with the natural laws in performing ritual worship in accordance with the four seasons, with the son and wife strictly following them.

The names of this ritual change according to the season. In spring it is ci, in summer yue, in autumn chang and in winter zheng.

If such rituals are neglected, the laws of life are violated.

The traditional Chinese follow three forms of worship: worship of heaven or cosmic powers; worship of ancestors; and the worship of gods and devils.

Through such practices, one pays respect to supernatural powers.

Dong wrote: "The emperor receives heaven's command. Ministers should follow the emperor's command. The son follows commands of the father, a wife should follow the husband's command, and so on. Such relations are absolute."

But according to The Book of Rites, such relations are relative - meaning if the emperor violates his order, ministers can violate the emperor's.

It is up to you to decide which writing is more applicable to today's world.



Quote of the week: If you want the world to change, change your own world first.

Law of order

Western han scholar Dong Zhongshu, in his tome Chun Qiu Fan Lu, or Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals, wrote about the importance of harmony between heaven and humans and how any deviation would violate that.

Humans have 365 minor bones, matching the 365 days in a year, and 12 major ones, matching the 12 months of the year. Our skin is like the earth's surface, while our blood vessels are like the rivers, oceans and mountains.

Our happiness is like a summer day, anger a cloudy day or autumn, joy like spring, sorrow like winter. The body's wu zhang, or five major organs, relate to the wu xin, or the five elements, while our limbs match the four seasons.

This systematic wisdom handed down by the ancients means that fung shui is neither superficial nor superstitious.

The concept of yin and yang is also embedded in our lives. We wake up in the morning, when the yang is predominant, and we go to sleep when the yin suffuses the air. Women represent yin and men yang, just as the sky is yang and the earth is yin.

Based on this knowledge, the ancient Chinese were able to devise predictive tools to conquer the unknown. They knew that unkind energy is often the result of a violation of the cosmic or natural law, while kind energy flows from the natural order of things.

Put simply, auspicious events result when energy is flowing naturally, while inauspicious events occur when there is a violation of the natural law or a disruption in the interaction between humans and heaven.

That is why the Chinese emphasize filial piety, because it means not just respect for the elderly but also respect for mother nature and a



world that gives us life and energy.

Thought of the week: Use every moment to think the purest thought, say the kindest word and do the noblest deed.

True masters

A good fung shui practitioner should not only master the laws of topography and gua but also adhere strictly to righteous or heavenly laws.

You can master fung shui principles and maneuver the setting of your house to maximize your chances of fulfilling your needs and wants (become healthier and richer), but you violate the heavenly laws at your peril.

These are reflected in the laws of man, which legislate against people who steal, kill and sabotage for short-term gain or gratification, leading to pain in the long run.

A good fung shui master will not help people involved in illegal activities.

For instance, a robber with a good luck pillar can ask a fung shui practitioner if he should go ahead with his plan to rob a bank.

A skillful master would know that the good luck pillar would probably result in the robbery being successful.

But he will advise the robber against the crime and instead, steer him away from criminal to legal endeavors.

Confucius younger brother Yian Chu Ji was a robber, but the sage transformed him.

That is leading by example, preaching what you practice and practicing what you preach.

Quote of the week: Be a light unto the world, and hurt it not. Seek to build, not destroy.

The cycle of life

Chun qiu fan lu, or Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn



Annals, is a huge tome on metaphysics written during the Western Han era (206 BC to 9 AD) by Dong Zhongshu.

Let us look at one key aspect of it involving the five elements - wood, fire, earth, metal and water. The cycle of creation is made up of these elements.

The energy embedded between the sky (cosmos) and Earth consists of yin and yang, the interaction between the two resulting in the four seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter.

Every phenomenon has its own pattern or path. If it follows the five-element creative cycle, it will have a positive and harmonious outcome. Chaos is created if it moves against the cycle.

East represents wood, the base and source of natural produce. It is manifested in spring, which is when benevolence reigns. This is the beginning, the time to cultivate the five main grains, or staple foods.

The creative cycle is of fundamental importance in both fung shui and agriculture as going against its flow will create havoc. Things should obey the nature of the Dao, or the way. Wood breeds fire in the cycle of the five elements.

Fire is represented by the south, or early spring, when things are starting to grow. Wisdom is crucial during this period. Many fung shui scholars, well versed in cosmology, have to prepare for bad weather, or catastrophe.

Well before crops start to grow, accurate predictions of the weather are needed to help minimize potential damage and are critical for disaster management. In this important period, loyal and helpful aides to the king can play a key role to ensure the country prospers in peace.

Fire breeds earth, which is represented by the center. Here, honesty is crucial.

To prevent disaster to yourself and abstain from criminal acts, you must strengthen mind and body to accept both victory and failure, having a firm and convincing ideology and a conviction led by loyalty



and filial devotion. You must be able to adapt to circumstances.

Earth breeds metal or gold, which is represented by the west. Here, justice is in command. Filial piety is the key here and applies not just to your parents but also to the king and the elderly. The rule of law and order should be adhered to both by the ruler and his people.

Justice and incorruptible values should be placed above all and wrongdoings rectified or punished without fear or favor.

Metal breeds water, which is represented by the north. Here, courtesy commands respect. This means the government should rule according to proper procedures and crack down on bribery. The teachings of Confucius reflect this value. An incorruptible official tames riots and appeases unhappy residents.

Water breeds wood and the cycle continues.

Thought of the week: The correct prayer is never one of supplication, but of gratitude.

The essence of time

Time never stands still. The ancient Chinese believed that as the Earth's magnetic field constantly moves in harmony with planetary bodies, energies related to the time dimension also change.

For instance, Saturn and Jupiter come into a new alignment every 20 years and it changes magnetic field forces. In fung shui, these changes are believed to filter down to Earth and to humans.

That's why the element of time is crucial in fung shui.

No person enjoys good or bad cycles forever, whether in their personal or working life.

Different cyclical patterns of energies have different strengths and weaknesses, depending on the relevant time. So pick the right moment and you will maximize your opportunities.

Take the American experience in the current economic downturn. Property prices are dropping and negative equity is rampant, a situation many Hongkongers experienced after 2001 and SARS.



US asset values are shrinking and unemployment is rising, leading to widespread job uncertainty. Confidence is low, and many people feel discontented and lethargic. There are constant arguments among family members and health suffers.

What can you do, you ask yourself. You're just caught in a cycle of bad luck. Stop and reorganize your thoughts and actions for a moment.

US theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, who studied the state of happiness, concluded that contentment is determined by these factors:

- 50 percent by DNA (fate determines your level of happiness);
- 10 percent by external factors (fame and fortune); and
- 40 percent by thoughts (perceptions, paradigms or mindsets).

You cannot change your fate or external factors, but you can change your perception.

If you want to feel happy, do so because it's all in the mind. When you feel happy, you radiate positive energy to those around you, and the returns will be overwhelming. It is entirely up to you.

The current downturn will not last forever as things are always cyclical.

What goes up must come down - and the good thing is, what goes down will rise again. It is just a matter of time.

There is always light at the end of the tunnel.

Thought for the week: Never overreact or fake humility in the presence of elders.

Power of three

Fung shui is based on three forces or energies. The first comes from the heavens, that is everything above the ground that is not attached to the earth - cosmic energy.

The second is earth or anything rooted to it.

The third is related to living things, including humans.

Put simply, fung shui is the study of how the interaction of



cosmic, earth and human energies influence our living and working environments.

An ideal home or office should satisfy the following three criteria:

Good support from the rear, be it in the form of a hill, a mountain or a taller building. To be effective, the supporting structure should not be too far or too close. Proximity is a judgment call based on the topography of the area - for example, if you live on an island, you should look at the island as a whole. The same applies to a county, district or state.

The support can manifest itself in backing from an elder, a superior, a business associate or your guardian angel. Without such support, you will lack social skills. Also when you are in trouble, you won't be able to get help quickly.

Without such support, your relationships and your health may also be affected. Good support is necessary for good health. This makes sense since support from the rear protects our houses against strong cold gusts that come in from the back and make us sick.

A bright hall or a water element in front of the premises is essential to harness wealth energies. Notice how coastal towns attract commercial activity, creating wealth. The ancient Chinese knew this and fung shui is definitely a study of the environment that has thrived for more than 3,000 years ago. As such, it is a time-tested method.

Such energies will come with opportunities and if your income stream is unstable, being ad hoc or based on commissions, such an element is essential to make your livelihood more diversified, if not more steady.

Fung shui recommends good support from both the left and right sides of your premises.

Such support need not be too high.

They serve to deflect strong or unwanted wind or energy flow from the sides hitting your home and office.



Thought for the week: Address elders by their proper title, not by name.

Affairs of the gods

Deities are immortal beings who reached that state by way of meditation and good deeds or through Dao.

The highest level in practicing Daoism is to attain or get close to such a state.

Deities are also thought of as holy, divine or sacred and often referred to as gods.

The notion of cosmic and human oneness highlights an important element - that the cosmic is something that can be controlled by deities.

Certain roles are ascribed to deities in performing the interaction between the cosmic and humans.

Deities rarely reveal or manifest themselves to humans, and make themselves known mainly through their impacts. These include natural phenomena such as lightning, floods and storms, but miracles are also attributed to them.

The most eminent deities are thought to be controllers of various aspects of human life - birth, death and the afterlife.

Some are believed to be controllers of time and fate, dispensers of human law and morality, the ultimate judges of human worth and behavior, and designers and creators of the Earth and the universe.

It is not hard to get in touch with deities - just go to a Daoist temple offering fu kei service. Deities are invited to communicate with humans through mediums, who pass on the messages by writing them down.

My first experience of fu kei was in 2001, and it both amazed and puzzled me. But anything is possible in this world.

Since 2009, I have managed to communicate with about 20 deities. I have asked them a range of questions, such as those concerning the universe or more earthly queries like when will I get



rich.

But most of my questions are related to the metaphysical, or fung shui.

In my new book, *Conversation with Deities*, I recorded more than 100 questions related to fung shui. Keep reading this column because, from time to time, I will reveal its contents.

Thought of the day: To explore what it would mean to live fully, sensually alive and passionately on purpose, I have to drop my preconceived ideas of who and what I am - Dawna Markova.

Truths strike closer to home

Stephen Hawking's take on the Big Bang is widely considered to be scientifically feasible because of who he is - a physicist and cosmologist.

In contrast, Lao Zi's Wuji, or nothingness, is mainly seen as a philosophical concept.

Similarly, the butterfly effect is acknowledged by modern science.

But there is also a similar Chinese theory.

When one stops to think about it, one realizes there is a lot of substance in ancient Chinese wisdom.

Yet, we still doubt our ancestors' ability to understand the world.

Lao Zi's *Dao Te Ching* uses a broad context to explain the formation of the universe - just like another Chinese ancient work, the *I Ching*, or the *Book of Changes*.

Both, written over 2,500 years ago, offer a deep well of knowledge for us to draw from.

We should not lose sight of what we have in front of us. More often than not, we prefer Western over Eastern teachings - perhaps because ideas emanating from the first are supposedly more scientific, more advanced or more popular.

We prefer the far over the near.



Stop seeking far and start digging in your own backyard for treasure. It is right here and now.

Wayne Dyer and Deepak Chopra have this in common with our ancient scriptures: they speak the language of the universe. So listen to your heart and you shall find the answer. In fung shui, things like this can be felt but not held.

Chinese medicine is based on the foundation of qi, or energy, movements in our body. To maintain its balance, the body needs a healthy diet and exercise. Sounds familiar? This is what Western doctors tell you now - and yet the ancient Chinese knew this thousands of years ago.

Thought of the day: We must find our true self, which is eternal.

Death the great puzzle

A person who died during the 2008 Sichuan earthquake was born at 1pm on May 17, 1972. Another person born in the same hour and date remains alive in Hong Kong.

A mainlander who died during the Japanese tsunami was born on March 18, 1955. Another person with similar birth details lives in Malaysia.

What these examples tell us is very clear: there is a flaw in using your birth date when seeking to divine your destiny from fortune tellers or fung shui masters.

The life-reading experts can tell you all sorts of things in a beautiful and nicely written Chinese poem. But one thing is for sure: they can't tell you your actual date of death.

If anyone can, please let me know so I may learn from him or her.

I have been searching for great masters for the past 15 years - and I am still searching.

No one can tell you precisely when you will die - or even the exact date and locations of disasters, such as the quake and tsunami in



Japan.

We have to understand that all living beings are on Earth for a reason.

If you believe in karma, you know that only saints are sent to heaven while those with sins are sent back to Earth to rerun their life.

This is to say that all humans are not perfect and often make mistakes. We are here to live again to make us better - although some often make the same mistakes again and again, creating a larger and larger karmic debt. A collective debt - mistakes by the same group of people - is especially detrimental.

In my previous article, I pointed out that respecting others will certainly change your course of life. It is that simple.

However strong you are, you will still not be as strong as a tsunami.

However rich or significant you are, you can still become a victim of an earthquake.

So love your parents, love your country and, above all, be nice to Mother Earth, which nurtures us.

Thought of the day: We are not whole, we are only part of a whole.

Show respect for others

Can we change our fate by riding on a ferris wheel? By placing expensive fung shui items? By changing our bed position? The answer is no.

Bear in mind that fung shui is a natural science and not superstitious practice.

In your quest to change your fate, the most important thing you should





understand is the law of the universe.

The heavenly law tells us that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. It will not get a temper tantrum and rise from the west.

Therefore, a trust is created here.

Earthly law tells us that Mother Earth is kind enough to nurture us with raw materials, providing a platform for us to live in. Crops seeded in the spring blossom in the summer and will be ready for harvest in autumn. In winter, the land hibernates.

This is called the nurture of love.

That is the law of heaven and earth. What is missing is the middle echelon: humanly law.

The humanly law should also mimic the trust and nurture of love of both heavenly and earthly laws. Humans should in no way to harm Mother Nature, which nurtures us (law of kindness) and also should do no harm to both our parents and other humans (law of filial piety).

The ancient Chinese have 24 traditional stories of filial piety - all of which show people changing their fate by showing respect to Mother Nature and the elderly.

Today, billionaires like Bill Gates, Warren Buffett and Li Ka-shing are philanthropists who make a difference to this world. And that changes not only their fate but those of others as well.

The journeys of living beings should be in accordance to such law - which is actually none other than plowing kindness back to the community. Showing respect to others is another way of asking for respect in return.

So you want to change your fate? Start by showing respect to the elderly and do good deeds for your community. After all, we are the community.

Thought of the day: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.



In pursuit of harmony

Q: Why do mountains govern health while water governs wealth?

A: A mountain, or dragon, is that part of mother nature that helps crops grow. It also releases certain kind of energies when our ancestors' bones are buried.

Bones are considered yin as they are bereft of life force. When they interact with the earth - the mountain/dragon is considered yang as it has a life force - this results in the intermingling of yin and yang energies.

The chemical reaction produces either kind, or unkind, energies that affect future generations. That is why the ancient Chinese believe that a good mountain is auspicious for growing populations. Proof of that can be gleaned from the fact that the world's tallest and most powerful mountains, the Himalayan range, sit between India and China - the two most populous countries.

In fung shui, population correlates with health. So most meditation, or zen, masters would normally take their sabbaticals high up in the mountains because of its association with serenity and clean air.

As for water, the term "logistics" was normally related to water transportation in the early days. Waterways such as canals, ponds, rivers, lakes and seas are conduits of commercial activities - look at all the coastal regions in the world where the most affluent cities are located.

Water is also crucial for crops and staple foods. That is why it is associated with wealth.

Q: Why are north and south auspicious?

A: Ancient Chinese houses were usually built facing the south, with the mountains at the back for protection from gusty northern winds or storms.

The south is also where the source of water for agricultural



activity is located, helping keep the houses much cooler during summers.

The north and south directions are also auspicious directions to place your bed. This is in line with the natural scientific position of the magnetic poles. When we take our rest in these directions, blood flow and circulation are eased.

So you see, fung shui is a natural science. The aim is for humans to exist in harmony with the sky (cosmic energies) and Mother Earth.

Thought of the day: Chase happiness and it will elude you. Give it and it will come to you.

Go with the flow

The five elements of ancient Chinese metaphysics refer to the study of mountains, medicine, forecasting, astrology and facial reading.

But there is a caveat because once a name is given, say, to a cup, then everything else is not a cup. Another example is when water is in a bottle, it becomes a bottle; when water is in a bowl, it becomes a bowl. This is Dao.

The term fung shui in Chinese simply means wind and water, but wait - this is not so simple in ancient texts and applications.

Ancient scriptures use the broader term kan yu, which refers to anything above (sky and cosmos) and on the ground. So actually the term fung shui refers not only to wind and water, but to the formation of the universe.

The Dao is formed from darkness. Yin and yang emerged from that and formed heaven (cosmic sky) and earth, then male and female, and so on.

One can see that Dao is not about religion, it is more philosophical and theoretically oriented toward explaining the universe - as does kan yu and fung shui.

Many, especially those with religious beliefs, think that kan yu or



fung shui is superstitious and would rather not talk about it. I've had a professor, a government minister and others refuse to talk to me about this, and I can't blame them because I was once a skeptic as well.

Twenty years ago, I was in the United States teaching martial arts to doctors, lawyers and accountants. Their enthusiasm and interest toward Oriental arts was intense.

A student came to talk to me about fung shui. Being young, I tried to change the subject by saying to him that this was superstition.

I can still remember seeing the frustration and anger in him as he replied: "How can you simply disregard your 5,000 years of Chinese heritage?"

I was shocked by his remarks. He then went on to elaborate that fung shui is nothing but a study of the environment and our surroundings - we are all involved whether we like it or not.

So do not belittle fung shui, just go with the flow.

Thought of the day: I do charity not because I have plenty but because I know what the needy do not have.

Guiding principles

Chinese metaphysics can offer many insights into life and how to live it.

High-rises offer no more than views

To tap into a dragon's breath, a high-rise building is neither conducive nor receptive to such energy. High-rises only come up with nice views and our harbor views are among the best in the world!

- **Female dominance**

To strive for a balance is hard in today's ever-changing world. Women want equality but the shift in the social paradigm and priorities will result in late marriages and an unwillingness to raise families. That is a hard fact.

- **Mountain meridian spots**

A real meridian spot is normally a peak or hill that is unique to



that particular site and space. Hong Kong has mostly mountains and hills with little flat land, so it has many good meridian spots.

• ***The Ghost Month***

It is believed that the seventh month of the lunar calendar is ghost month, during which many people are unwilling to move house. But according to ancient texts and beliefs, the only day you aren't supposed to move is the seventh day of the seventh month, instead of the 14th day.

• ***Seat of knowledge***

The Chinese University was built after all the others but it will soon outshine all of them due to fung shui that embraces beautiful mountain greenery in a valley. Chinese University's man chong star is located at its Lady Ho Tung Hall.

The Polytechnic University is like a solid fortress that produces only a stable flow of energy. A solid mountain backs the rear of Hong Kong University. But its man chong star is to be found on the south side, especially at Queen Mary Hospital, and that will last for another 100 years.

• ***San kei***

San kei is a form of yin fung shui. The idea is to tap into future wealth and health. But one must bear in mind that this method is like a credit card that gives you an advance on your future wealth and health for current gratification.

• ***Change your fate***

In order for us to change our destiny and fate, one must be free of desire and cultivate good deeds in our communities.

• ***Dining and fate***

Having auspicious food will not change your fate, contrary to what many practitioners advocate. Nevertheless, how you drink and dine dictates your upbringing.

• ***Penholder mountains***

Forms and visible structures are an important aspect in fung shui.



Mountains in the shape of penholders are said to radiate and permeate kind energy - especially scholarly energy. Therefore, any flat or house that faces Beacon Hill will have an advantage over others.

Search your soul and find serenity



I cannot emphasize enough that a good fung shui setting is important for a harmonious living environment. For fung shui to work, each of us should have a sense of harmony within so as to reduce animosity and lessen stress. To have self harmony means being at peace within. Serenity is

the key word here.

If you are self-centered, full of hatred, always restless to finish everlasting assignments, then good fung shui will not be able to serve you. For one, your health will be badly affected by such characteristics.

To strike a balance, you need to do some soul-searching to find out what you really want in life. Qigong, Wudang tai chi and breathing techniques will help you find your soul and serenity. As I have always said, if you are a heavy drinker and smoker, it doesn't make sense for you to expect fung shui to improve your health.

On a larger scale, the cause of the tension between the government and the Hong Kong people is basically self-centeredness and ego.

When was the last time you offered a seat to an elderly person? Or held a door for a person behind you, held a lift for someone, smiled at a beggar or said "Hi" to your neighbor? We neglect to do these things and yet we want or expect someone to do them for us.

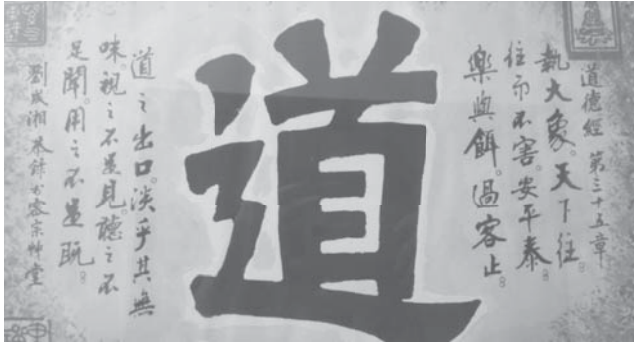
Let me tell you that the secret of getting good fung shui in 2013 is to search your soul. Let go of your ego and start to care for others. That will make your life even more meaningful.

Have a good Christmas and wonderful New Year.



Thought for the week: An ounce of patience is worth more than a tonne of preaching - Mahatma Gandhi

How Genghis learned restraint



In this column, I would like to take us all back to the 1200s - when Genghis Khan, founder and great khan (emperor) of the Mongol Empire, defeated the Song dynasty emperors and established the Yuan dynasty.

As head of the ruling clan, Genghis was filled with the desire to defeat and possess. But, contrary to popular belief, he did not conquer all of the areas of the Mongol Empire.

This restraint was heavily influenced by a Daoist master by the name of Qiu Chuji.

The founder of the Dragon Gate sect of Daoism was the most famous among the Seven True Daoists of the North.

He was also an expert in fung shui and astrology.

In a letter date May 1219, Genghis commanded Qiu to visit him. The sage left his home in Shandong in February 1220 and journeyed to Beijing - only to learn that Genghis had gone west.

Qiu spent the winter in Beijing then embarked on journey of thousands of kilometers, passing through 14 states.



The journey lasted two years and Qiu finally met Genghis near the northern Indian border in 1222.

Genghis honored Qiu as a great sage and gave him the title of the Spirit Immortal.

Below is a conversation that led Genghis to respect Qiu and follow his advice to kill less.

Genghis: What is thunder?

Qiu: Thunder is the embodiment of heavenly power. The gravest of human sins is the abuse of filial piety, not being filial (showing respect). Being unfilial is an abuse of the heavenly mandate and as such thunder is the heaven's infuriated warning. Killing is not filial so your majesty should take note of this heavenly omen and remedy the abuses.

Of course there were many more conversations that enlightened the Mogul emperor and influenced him to kill less. Qiu even advised Genghis not to hunt because that would mean more killing.

A book called Travels to the West of Qiu Chang Chun (Qiu's Daoist name) was written by a pupil who accompanied him and explained the journey at great length.

Thought for the week: The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is an attribute of the strong - Mahatma Gandhi

Mental peace vital for success

Ancient wisdom has it that the three treasures in the heavenly realm are the sun, moon and stars, while those on Earth are the oceans, rivers and mountains.

In humans, the three treasures - mind (sen), spirit (jing) and energy (qi) - interact with each other and cause kind and unkind energies.

A person with a lofty mind, spirit or energy will normally be seen as being proactive. In good times, he or she will thrive, while in bad, such a person will be able to survive.



The point here is that no matter how good the place or fung shui is, should you not be in the right frame of mind, things won't be in your favor.

This is why irrespective of how rich a person may be, if they are never contented but always grumbling that the world is unfair, they will not be at peace with themselves.

You have to be at peace with yourself to create the right climate for good fung shui to work. Good people always attract good things!

The rationale of having a good connection within oneself to connect with good fung shui is of utmost importance in metaphysics.

Imagine if the sun, moon and stars were at odds with each other and wouldn't come out on time. Chaos and destruction would follow. Imagine, too, if the oceans, rivers and mountains would not support each other - say, if an ocean reversed the flow of water back into a river.

So, what do you think the consequences will be if our mind, spirit and energy are not at ease with each other? You have the answer.

Thought for the week: Everything has its own beauty but not everyone sees it – Confucius

Good deeds invite good karma

One of the famous eight deities or immortals is Lu Ju or Lu Dongbin - or, as he preferred, The One Who Returned to Dao.

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According to the Li Shi Zhen Dao Xian comprehensive text, he was born on the 14th day of the fourth month in the 12th year of Tang dynasty Emperor Zhenguan's reign (Year 638).

It was said that Lu failed his scholastic examinations three times before he finally passed the jinshi - an academic level in the Tang dynasty allowing him to join the ruling elite.

One day, Lu was awakened by a huang liang meng, or "golden



millet dream," which foretold that he would end up being killed by the emperor.

Enlightened by the dream, he left the palace and followed his master Zhongli to practice Dao and eventually became an immortal.

He is an icon for today's Daoist world. And metaphysics, or fung shui, is one of the branches of Daoism. Master Lu's teachings encompass Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism.

He created the famous zhewedoushu, a life-predictive astrology tool that he passed on only to his disciple Chen Xier.

Some of the most important aspects of metaphysics, such as the tai chi diagram, were his inventions.

He is said to come to Earth in many forms to help the needy. He also prescribes Chinese medicine to help cure diseases.

His teachings advocate the importance of yin and yang - at its core is the belief that good and auspicious fung shui is related to good deeds and a few bad karmic debts.

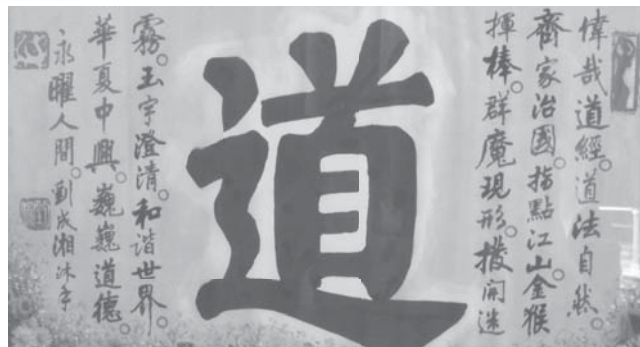
If you watched the movie Running on Karma, starring Andy Lau Tak-wah and Cecilia Cheung Pak-chi, you will be able to understand that this world is affected by debt and karmic effect - or simply, cause and effect.

So, should you want good fung shui ask yourself whether you deserve it or not.

Do good deeds and good fung shui will follow you!

Good deeds do not have to come in only monetary or material forms. A simple gesture of giving up your seat to the elderly on the MTR or bus, helping the handicapped across traffic lights and so on will do the job.

Thought of the week: When Master Zhongli transformed a rock into gold for Lu Ju, Master Lu said: "I do not want to possess the gold as it will turn back to rock 500 years later and that would harm people 500 years later."



Thoughts that count

Will bad thoughts count toward bad karma? More often than not, people tend to believe only what they see.

Humans love to set up a hypothesis, test it and come up with data to form a conclusion. That is the scientific method. Humans rely on these facts and figures to form their convictions.

In the early 17th century, Galileo claimed that - contrary to religious teachings - the sun did not revolve around the Earth.

He was summoned to Rome and eventually made to recant.

He was sentenced to jail, later commuted to house arrest, and his book was banned.

Algebra and calculus were called superstitious because of their magical formulas. Yet today, we can't live without such formulas.

It is not religion that creates this fiasco, but the self-interest of human beings. Even today, people can't think on their own. They prefer to accept what is given to, or interpreted for them, and rely on popular belief, consensus or scientific facts and figures.

Stop and think for yourself!

When I tell my clients that doing good deeds and repaying one's own karmic debt is better than buying expensive fung shui items to alter their destiny, I get cold responses.



People like to do something more concrete or tangible, such as buying fung shui items, or altering their door directions to change their fortunes.

I often have to explain this is not necessary, since fung shui is natural and only natural things will counteract bad fung shui energy.

Today, under the pressure of massive economic development, we are destroying mother nature - directly affecting ourselves, our children and future generations in a tangible way.

What makes you think that intangible things such as swearing, cursing or backstabbing will not have an impact as well?

So, the next time you get angry, think of something nice to say in order not to create bad karmic debt.

You had better believe in this!

Thought of the day: "Is it so bad to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood" - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Balance sheet of justice

Who says the world is unfair? What did these four countries - Spain, Portugal, France and Britain - have in common in the past? They were once great intruders and had colonial empires.

And what do these four countries have in common now? Again, their economies are in a disastrous state.

The law of karmic debt tells us that we must repay our debts in order to create a balanced cycle. This is the balance sheet of justice. Ancient wisdom has it that it is just a matter of time before justice will be served.

Dao tells us that we must act in accordance with the natural law of harmony - to conquer, kill and deprive is to deviate from the law of nature. Such acts are detrimental and will result in a bad karmic cycle.



Do you want to know when the European debt crisis will end?

It will be when the British economy hits rock bottom. Why? Because the British were the last big imperialists.

What goes around comes around. This applies to individuals as well.

If you want fung shui to help improve your state of living, ask yourself: "Do I deserve it?"

Turn on the television or flip through the newspapers and you will find stories that are disheartening.

Things that were not supposed to happen are happening nowadays, things that were unthought of in the past are happening now.

One of them is the gay and lesbian communities asking to get married. Don't get me wrong. I do respect them as people but I think moral issues are being set aside to satisfy this unique group.

The natural order has been upset. Think of the karmic debt that we as a society will need to repay in the balance sheet of justice.

We are not a whole; we are only part of a whole. We cannot live harmoniously without others.

Thought of the week: Stop to think and think to stop.

Going to extremes

Things happen for a reason. Take recent catastrophes - the Sichuan earthquake and tornado in the United States, for example - and even the black rainstorm in Hong Kong.

On May 17, NASA scientists reported that they had just seen the biggest explosions on the moon in the history of the program. These were caused by meteoroids hitting the lunar surface.

Just two months before, on March 17, the scientists had spotted a gigantic hurricane on Saturn.

Ancient Chinese astrology tells us that a hurricane on Saturn and disturbances on the lunar surface will have an impact on the weather



on Earth. As the ancient Chinese believed that the moon represents women, the menstrual cycle and night, this impact could have an upsetting effect on humans - especially women.

To make matters worse, a solar storm is also anticipated to affect Earth this year. We will probably experience the hottest summer ever. Be prepared for temperatures of 40 degrees Celsius or over!

Solar activity has a regular cycle, with peaks about every 11 to 12 years. NASA cautions that the solar flares could interrupt satellite communication and cause havoc to Earthlings.

A combination of these three events will affect our world.

Feng shui is related to the sky and earth. And what is in between is qi. Qi, or energy, can empower us - but it can also affect us negatively. We have harness the good energies and avoid the bad.

What causes qi? Human beings. That's something for us to ponder! We are constantly exploiting Earth's resources and causing environmental damage. Don't forget that the Earth, as one of the planets in the solar system, will definitely impact others in the same system as well.

So we should start thinking about what we can contribute to Mother Nature rather than taking from her all the time.

Thought for the week: When we see men of a contrary character, we should turn inwards and examine ourselves – Confucius

Stop eroding kind earth energies

In 611 AD, China under the Sui dynasty was enjoying more than two decades of peace and prosperity after overthrowing the Chen dynasty in 589 AD. But in his quest to increase his power base, Emperor Yang made a fatal error.

To enable his military to advance and attack his enemies, he ordered rivers to be widened and mountains and forests to be destroyed. But in doing so he brought about his own downfall.

He was defeated not by his inability to fight but by his act of



destroying Mother Nature - because good feng shui always goes hand in hand with kind earth energies.

In the two recent big earthquakes in Sichuan, much was attributed to the building of the Three Gorges Dam and countless water reservoirs in its vicinity. The erosion in the reservoir induced by rising waters contributed to huge landslides and paved the way for the disastrous consequence of earthquakes. The earth energy could not be sustained, resulting in bad feng shui.

So it is with Hong Kong. The lack of harmony in the SAR can be partly attributed to land reclamation over the years.

More than 12 percent of our developed land area has been reclaimed from the sea. Reclamation creates various engineering, environmental and marine ecological problems in coastal areas.

Hong Kong's four pillar industries - financial services, trading and logistics, tourism, and producer and professional services - are slowly becoming insignificant in the international arena. China's economy is booming but Hong Kong is not getting bigger slices of the pie.

Shanghai and Qianhai are obvious threats to the SAR's role as a financial center. Hong Kong's once thriving logistics industry is also losing out to the mainland.

Are we going to wait until our two remaining pillars get eroded? Hong Kong will lose its shine if we keep chipping away at its earth energy.

Thought for the week: Take care with the end as you do with the beginning - Lao Zi

Violate heavenly law at your peril

A skillful feng shui practitioner should not only master the law of topography and gua but also adhere strictly to the heavenly law.

You can master feng shui principles and maneuver the setting of your house or orientate your tombstone according to the best direction to accommodate your needs and wants (for example, become rich and



famous), but that will not achieve anything if you violate the heavenly law. What is this heavenly law?

It is none other than our normal law and order.

Stealing, killing or sabotage are good examples of short-term gratification for long-term pain. The payment is long and painful. Triad and vice activities will lead you to the authorities hands' eventually.

A skillful and right-minded feng shui master will not aid or help a person who is engaged in illegal activities and uses feng shui for their gain. By doing so, both are offenders of the heavenly law. For instance, a robber who is experiencing a good luck pillar asks a master if he can go ahead and rob a bank - knowing the pillar will result in success. An astute master will advise him to avoid such activity and divert his attention to one that is legal for long-term gain. The same goes for a certain businessman who used feng shui for his ends then turned against it by calling it Satan's work when his fortunes began to turn against him.

Confucius' younger brother Yian Chu Ji was a robber, but Confucius' relentless teaching - using his inner values and attributes - turned him into a good person. This is an example of the principle of saying what you do and doing what you say.

Thought for the week: Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage - Lao Zi

Go with the flow

Water is a critical element in feng shui as it is said to govern wealth. It is associated with rivers and oceans (logistic), farming (agricultural produce) and a source of life for human beings.

The impact of mountains is more obvious as they govern health and help divert the flow of wind. But the importance of water cannot be overestimated - as seen in chapters 8 and 78 of Lao Zi's ancient scripture *Dao De Ching*.

Chapter 78 says: "Nothing in the world is as soft and yielding as



water."

A good feng shui setting is equipped with both water and mountain elements. Water goes hand in hand with earth (mountain) and signifies the parental role that has given birth to the formation of the physical world.

Feng shui takes this one step further by treating mountain and water as elements to harness kind energies and avoid unkind energies in the creation of both wealth and health.

Chapter 8 says: "The best of man is like water ... which flows in places others disdain." It teaches humans to be humble and at times to retreat and suffer - for a better future.

Bear this in mind and you will be equipped with better feng shui in your heart, because you have embraced the water element in you.

Feng shui is about seeking harmony with nature and true self enlightenment is achieved by seeking harmony within. To remind yourself of the importance and significance of water, place a cup of water in your vicinity.

Bruce Lee's famous quote: "Be like water making its way through cracks. Do not be assertive, but adjust to the object."

When wisdom comes naturally

In the past, especially during the Han era (206 BC- 220AD), there was no such term as feng shui. What we now call feng shui was known as kan yu - kan being related to the sky, heaven or anything above ground, yu with the ground, hill, mountain or anything below.

Kan is linked to the study of astrology, yu with energies permeating or forming land and the living environment of humans.

The term feng shui surfaced only with Guo Pu in the Jin era (265-420 AD). Mystical as the term is, feng shui can also be termed the study of the environment in western scientific terms. There is no magic power or voodoo about it. The attempt to harness the best energies in the environment led to feng shui. For example, scientists will tell you



we only partly understand the human brain and that we understand only 4 percent of the cosmic world.

Parents always tell us to believe in ancient wisdom. At times, ancient wisdom can't be explained scientifically, but most of it is associated with the natural law, which is the law of Dao.

Certain traditional practices are not without valid reasons. For instance, during the Han era, it was written in scriptures that all tombs should face south, in a north-south direction.

The simple explanation is both logical and scientific: being located in the north protects the corpse from gusts and strong winds (natural science) while facing south is to harness the warm weather from the south (it is filial to show respect for the dead).

So you see, there is nothing superstitious about facing and setting orientation - it is natural science. Not till later did scientific scholars find that such orientation is coincidentally in line with the study of ancient astrology.

So, readers, be objective about this world, believe in religion, god, deities to keep our faith growing and going.

Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind, says Albert Einstein.

Thought for the week: Water is the softest thing, yet it can penetrate mountains and earth. This shows clearly the principle of softness overcoming hardness - Lao Zi.

Don't blame the tools

When you are given a hammer to hang a picture on the wall, you don't smash the picture or wall. If you are using a knife to cut vegetables, you will only cut your fingers if you are careless.

Similarly, if you are a police officer, you are trained to protect the community. You should not abuse your authority by harming others. All these are tools to help you.

If somehow the results are not in your favor, do not blame the



hammer, the knife or police authority.

Feng shui - or authentic feng shui to be exact - is ancient Chinese wisdom that has existed for thousands of years.

When things turn out bad, do not blame feng shui; it exists for the right reasons and for the right people.

Self-proclaimed feng shui master Tony Chan Chun-chuen recently claimed that he has found Jesus and denounced feng shui as fake. It does not take a genius to figure out what agenda he has in mind.

Changing your faith, religion or name without changing your inner values will not instantly make you a good person.

In many of my previous columns, I have emphasized that feng shui will only work at the right time and at the right place for the right people.

And I mean right people.

If you are on the wrong side, change your path. The only way to show you have truly changed is to make restitution for your previous misdeeds.

Should things not go your way, do not blame your religion, name, father, pastor, justice - or the hammer.

Thought of the week: "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them" - Albert Einstein

Founder of the great diagrams

Chen Tuan (871-989) was a legendary Daoist sage. His courtesy name was Tunan. In his writings, he used the pseudonyms Chen Xiyi, Master Xiyi or Fuyaozi.

According to certain Daoist schools which claim him as a founder, he lived a secluded life in the Nine Room Cave on Mount Wudang. Later at Mount Hua, one of the five sacred mountains of China, he is said to have created the kung fu system Liuhebafa (Six Harmonies and Eight Methods).



As a Daoist master in the late Tang dynasty, Five Dynasties and early Northern Song dynasty, Chen was astonishingly intelligent and erudite in his childhood. In 956, he was summoned to the Imperial Court to be bestowed the title of court official by the emperor, but he rejected it.

His master, Lu Dongbin, passed him the knowledge of Zi Wei Dou Shu (Purple Star Astrology). Chen was said to have lived until the age of 118 - in many ancient texts he is said to have practiced jigong (the art of breathing or meditation) while asleep.

An expert in face and palm reading, Chen wrote many books on Chinese metaphysics. His most important contribution to this field was the tai chi symbol, right.

This symbol later became an important icon for the study of I-ching, feng shui, astrology and Chinese metaphysics.

He also popularized the bagua (eight symbols) diagrams - a must for learning any form of Chinese metaphysics.

Some of Chen's famous quotes: If you value the inner sufficiency of your life energy, you will have no need for external expression or expansion. Quieten your mind; you will find great freedom in your heart.

Do not become entrapped by the small world around you.

Lao Zi says...

Many readers have sent me letters praising not my writing but my quotes. So for this column, I thought that I would focus on quotes by Lao Zi.

The sage is traditionally regarded as the founder of Daoism and is closely associated with "original," or "primordial," Daoism.

He is the author of *Dao De Ching*, which dates back to the late fourth-century BC and





remains the most printed scripture - even more than the Bible.

Its 81 chapters have been translated into many foreign languages and distributed in over 140 countries worldwide.

Some of Lao Zi's famous quotes:

The Dao that can be told is not the eternal Dao.

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

Words count less than the silent balance between yin and yang.

To see things in the seed, that is genius.

Great acts are made up of small deeds.

With few there is attainment. With much there is confusion.

The wise man is one who knows what he does not know.

Mastering others is strength; mastering self makes you fearless.

Some lose yet gain, others gain and yet lose.

An oversharpened sword cannot last long.

Spring comes, and the grass grows by itself.

Boasting of wealth and virtue brings your demise.

He who knows that enough is enough will always have enough.

Those who know do not speak, those who speak do not know.

A good traveler is not intent on arriving.

When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be.

A man with outward courage dares to die; a man with inner courage dares to live.

Five elements of inner peace

Want to improve the fung shui of your home for 2013? Of course you do! So please read on.

Di Zi Gui or Standards for Being a Good Student and Child is a book of teachings by ancient Chinese saints and sages. The book teaches how to be dutiful to our parents and respectful and loving to our siblings. So what has it got to do with fung shui? A lot, I say.

Fung shui has always been the means and not the end to creating a harmonious environment - it is an external factor.



The intrinsic values of the individual still constitute the most powerful internal environment to tap into the best of fung shui energies. This is the main catalyst to boost your happiness and fortune. We are living in a tumultuous world, with relationships disintegrating among people, between people and the government - and their environment, parents and children, husband and wives, and employers and staff. Peace within and without is the key to achieving the best fung shui results.

Chinese metaphysics emphasizes following the right path. The five- element theory says the right path creates the element that leads to a harmonious state of being. So it follows that the destruction of the five elements will create havoc in life.

The ancient Chinese said that a person's conduct must be governed by wu chang, or the five moral virtues, if he or she wants a better life. These correspond to the five-element theory of creation: kindness (wood), duties and obligation (metal), etiquette (fire), wisdom (water) and trustworthiness (earth).

Follow these virtues and inner peace will result. Only then can fung shui act as catalyst to bring you fame and fortune.

Thought for the week: Change yourself; you are in control - Mahatma Gandhi

Study to create good energy in your home

In my previous column I mentioned the importance of the book Di Zi Gui, or Standards for Being a Good Student, in aiding fung shui energies.

Let me now summarize the essential portions of each chapter to show how it helps bring out the best fung shui energies in your house.

Chapter 1: Be dutiful to parents at home

This chapter indirectly helps to improve fung shui, especially with regards to family harmony. Chinese festive seasons - such as the



Lunar New Year reunion dinner and the Ching Ming Festival, where prayers and respect are offered to ancestors - are important occasions to observe if you want to improve both yin and yang fung shui.

Chapter 2: Standards for a younger brother when away from home

The focal point of this chapter deals with the duties of the elder and younger brothers. The elder brother has to take care of the younger while the younger brother should respect the older one. This not only improves the harmony among siblings but extends to the community at large.

Chapter 3: Be cautious in daily life

Wearing proper or appropriate attire is preached in this chapter. Personal image and attributes are important factors to attract the right kind of energy and hence improve the fung shui in relationships.

Chapter 4: Be trustworthy

Deceit and lies must not be tolerated. On the other hand, heavy and unwarranted criticisms are destructive in nature. So cultivate good deeds, as fung shui is always attracted by good dharma or karmic deeds.

Chapter 5: Love all equally

This chapter is broad in context in that it teaches us to love all humans regardless of nationality, race or religion. This certainly improves the fung shui in a community or a country.

Chapter 6: Learn from virtuous and compassionate people

Doing things correctly is the important message in this chapter. Good fung shui will only work for the right people.



Chapter 7: Above all, study further and learn literature and art to improve cultural and spiritual life

This chapter deals with our higher selves and teaches us how to improve not only our physical fung shui but also our mental and spiritual fung shui.

Chinese versions of this book are available in Hong Kong. Send your request to amtbhk1@budaedu.org.hk.

Thought for the week: Nobody can hurt me without my permission - Mahatma Gandhi



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LU JU ON DAO 呂祖論道

Humanly Path straying away from Heavenly Path!



*The Three teachings of Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism
with the incorporation of Chinese metaphysics.*



Lu Ju Said

*“To save our souls eternally, it is essential to practice Dao and
to practice Dao is to live up to Dao’s principles.”*

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