CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

道

Dao

All of classical Chinese philosophy arose in a dispute about the *dao*, the most important term in Chinese philosophy, most often translated as "way" or "path." There are six schools of classical Chinese philosophy and all of them arose during the *Warring States* period in ancient China. This was a period of several hundred years when China was divided by a number of states that were constantly at war, and which only came to and end with the victory of the state of *Qin* (pronounced *Chin*) in 221 BCE that led to the first unified Chinese empire. It was a time of constant warfare and thus great social distress. It should not be surprising that thinkers would emerge concerned with the disorder of the time to wonder how their society had lost its way and who might be concerned to understand how it might find a way out of such a time. Thus, there arose a dispute about the *dao*. Perhaps the most important thing to understand about this term is that, although there is one school called Daoism, all six schools had their own ideas about the *dao*, and thus there is not just one concept of *dao* in Chinese philosophy. Another important thing to understand about *dao* involves understanding something about Chinese language. In contrast to the noun-based Western languages like English that are part of the Indo-European family of languages, Chinese languages are more verbal and thus the character 道 expresses more of an action, rather than a static, unchanging thing. In terms of metaphysics, Chinese philosophy generally accepts that reality is constantly changing. Thus, although there are different interpretations of *dao* in Chinese philosophy, there is a general sense that *dao* is always emerging and developing. The character 道 is made up of two parts, the left part suggests a path and the right part pictures a head, and together the character 道 suggests keeping one's head on the path or following a way.

Advanced civilization in ancient China goes back at least as far as the beginning of recorded history in China during the Shang dynasty (ca. 1600–1046 BCE). As their artwork attests, the Shang dynasty civilization was quite advanced and sophisticated. The more powerful Zhou people conquered a vast part of ancient China, eventually overthrowing the Shang and establishing the Zhou dynasty in 1122 BCE. Several centuries of relative peace and prosperity followed, but when the Zhou king was overthrown in 770 BCE, the civilization of ancient China gradually devolved into the constant warfare of the *Warring States* period. There was thus a sense during this time that there were better days in the past when society seemed to be

following a better path. Chinese philosophy developed then, in a dispute over just how to get society back on track of the *dao*.

Classical Chinese philosophy begins with Confucius (551–479 BCE). A learned scholar and cultured gentleman, Confucius travelled around China teaching about the *dao*, trying to encourage the rulers of the warring States to be better rulers through understanding the *dao*. Eventually, the way of Confucius would be challenged by other thinkers, and thus during this period of the *Warring States* six schools of philosophy developed. In this course, we will focus on the two most famous, Confucianism and Daoism. These two schools, along with Buddhism, which arrived from India centuries later, would have a profound influence on all East Asian philosophy and culture.

Classical Chinese Philosophy

1. Confucianism
2. Daoism
3. Mohism
4. School of Names
5. Philosophy of Change
6. Legalism

Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate
from the *Compendium of Diagrams*,
1623 by Zhang Huang (1527-1608)

The scholarly Confucius was influenced by the Five Classics of earlier times:

<u>The Five Classics</u>

Classic of Poetry (*Shijing*)
Classic of History (*Shujing*)
Classic of Changes (*Yijing*)
Classic of Rites (*Lijing*)
Spring and Autumn Annals (*Chunqiu*)

Of particular interest in the development of Chinese philosophy is the *Yijing*, the *Book of Changes*. This book, the oldest Chinese philosophical text, influenced all the philosophies that would develop in China. Originally this was a book of divination used during the Shang and Zhou dynasties and eventually it became a way of understanding the processes of change. As John Koller explains, "by the end of the Zhou, understanding the changes (*yi*) had become a way of learning how the Way (*Dao*) of the universe functions through polarities of *yin* and *yang*" (Koller, 171). The image of the *Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate* shown above includes the well-known symbol of the *yinyang* polarities, with the *yin* the dark side and the *yang* the bright. Originally, the terms referred to the bright (*yang*) and shady (*yin*) sides of a hill, that would change throughout the day as the sun moved across the sky. Through the polarities of *yin* and *yang* the ancient Chinese sought to understand the process of change by which something comes into existence (*yang*) and then passes away (*yin*) changing into something else. According to the *Yijing*, the basic creative-energy stuff (*qi*) of the universe has two forms, the *yin* being "receptive, dark, hidden, passive, yielding, cool, soft, and feminine" and the *yang* being "creative, bright, active, aggressive, controlling, hot, hard, and masculine" (Koller, 183). The *Yijing* includes sixty-four hexagrams made up of alternating *yang* (unbroken) and *yin* (broken) lines. The hexagrams symbolized all the possible combinations of change from *yin* to *yang* and back to *yin*. The hexagrams and the commentary that followed would provide some guidance about the changes to come in the future.

氣
Qi

Confucius, Ink on silk, Ming Dynasty

CONFUCIANISM

While Confucius was the first of the classical Chinese philosophers and the founder of this school of philosophy, there are other important philosophers that developed the basic philosophy of Confucius, and thus the school is also sometimes referred to as *Ruism*, "the school of the scholars (*Ru Jia*)". The most important books of this school are known as the Four Books:

Analects (*Lunyu*)
(The sayings of Confucius)

The Great Learning (*Daxue*)
(The teachings of Confucius)

Doctrine of the Mean (*Zhongyong*)
(Confucian teachings about harmony and balance in life)

The Mengzi
(teachings of Mengzi, an early follower of Confucius)

Confucianism might be generally described as a humanism since, for Confucius, the *dao* develops through human beings, through what is best in human culture. In contrast to Plato's philosophy, the source of values does not come from a transcendent realm, beyond the visible realm of earthly life, but rather from the development of human beings in society. Confucius looked back to an earlier golden age when wise rulers had a particular charismatic power or virtue (德 *de*) that enabled them to rule in a way that enabled society to flourish. It seemed to Confucius that the main problem with Chinese society during the time of the *Warring States* was that the rulers were only interested in their own self-interest instead of being concerned with the benefit of all the people. Thus, as illustrated in this passage from the *Analects*, Confucius emphasized the importance of understanding the *dao*:

德
De

> The Master said, "He has not lived in vain who dies the day he is told about the Way (道*dao*)" (*Analects*, IV/8).

The humanism of Confucius' thought is evident in another passage that emphasize that the *dao* emerges from human beings, from the best in human civilization:

> The Master said, "It is Man who is capable of broadening the Way (*dao*). It is not the Way that is capable of broadening Man" (*Analects*, XV/29).

The Way could be broadened and society flourish if the rulers could incorporate into their particular virtue or charismatic power (德 *de*) certain moral principles that would enable them to become role models (君子*junzi*) for the people to follow. This important term *junzi* is often translated as "gentleman" but would perhaps be better understood if one thinks of the *junzi* as an exemplary person or

君子
Junzi

role model. Confucius had a basically optimistic view of human nature. He thought if the people just had good role models as leaders, then the people would also develop the moral principles of the leaders. This view is illustrated very well in this passage in which Confucius is in a discussion with a ruler about government:

> Chi K'ang Tzu asked Confucius about government, saying, "What would you think if, in order to move closer to those who possess the Way (*dao*), I were to kill those who do not follow the Way?"
>
> Confucius answered, "In administering your government, what need is there for you to kill? Just desire the good yourself and the common people will be good. The virtue (*de*) of the gentleman (*junzi*) is like wind; the virtue of the small man is like grass. Let the wind blow over the grass and it will surely bend." (*Analects*, XII/19)

In this analogy, the ruler is to the people, like the wind over the grass. If the ruler incorporates moral principles into his *de* (德), then this charismatic power of the ruler will sway the people like the wind over the grass. The important thing in understanding Confucianism is thus to understand the moral principles that Confucius recommends.

The most important of these principles of Confucianism is benevolence or human-heartedness (仁 *ren*). As Koller explains, Confucius thought that *ren* is "what makes human beings uniquely human" and thus this is why "the Confucian way is essentially a way of *ren*" (Koller, 198). *Ren* has been translated many different ways, but Koller prefers "human-heartedness" because it "reveals the Chinese emphasis on the heart, rather than the head, as the central feature of human nature" (Koller, 198). This brings up another interesting feature of the Chinese language in that there really is no distinction between the heart and the mind in Chinese. The organ of thought is the heart-mind (心 *xin*). In this passage Confucius emphasizes that the exemplary person never abandons *ren*, that it is a crucially important part of the virtue or charisma (*de*) of the *junzi*, in even the most everyday, mundane aspects of his character, such as simply eating a meal:

仁

Ren

> If the gentleman (*junzi*) forsakes benevolence (*ren*), in what way can he make a name for himself? The gentleman never deserts benevolence, not even for as long as it takes to eat a meal. (*Analects*, IV/5)

The character itself, (仁), provides some suggestion of the meaning of *ren* in that it is comprised of two parts, on the left the character for human being (人 *ren*) and on the right the character for the number "two." Thus, *ren* means being not self-centered, being not a person isolated, but a person plus two, a person whose concern extends to others. When asked about *ren* Confucius perhaps summed it up best when replied: "Love your fellow men" (Analects, XII/22).

Another important feature of Confucianism is the importance of the rites or rules of propriety (禮 *li*). Even if one's character has the quality of human-heartedness, there is still a need for guidance in understanding how to act in everyday activity. Thus, as Koller explains, there are "concrete guides to action" in the "rules of propriety (*li*) governing customs, ceremonies, and relationships established by human practice over the ages" (Koller, 199). This emphasis on rules of propriety that have developed in the traditions of the past has sometimes given the impression of Confucianism as a very conservative philosophy.

禮

Li

While it is true that Confucius did look back to the past, to the golden age of the wise rulers before the time of the *Warring States*, these rules of propriety were valuable not because they came through tradition, but because they were expressions of human-heartedness (*ren*). Thus, as Koller explains, "*li* refers to the ceremonial or ritual means by which the potential of humanity (*ren*) is realized"; they are thus "the means by which we tame our unruly impulses, transforming them into civilized expressions of human nature" (Koller, 199).

Confucius also put great emphasis on filiality (孝 *xiao*), the "virtue of reverence and respect for family" (Koller, 201). As Koller explains it is in the family that "the child learns to respect and love others, first parents, brothers and sisters, and relatives, and then, by gradual extension, all humankind" (Koller, 201). In extending outward from the family to one's local community, to the wider community of the state, and even to all humankind, this virtue of filiality shapes the Confucian sense of the human being as inherently a social being. This notion of the self as inherently social, contrasts sharply with the modern Western view that emphasizes a radical individualism. Much of the tension between Chinese society today and the West, with its emphasis on individual human rights, can be traced back to this fundamental difference in understanding what it means to be a human being. For Confucius the root of humanity lies in this reverence and respect for family:

孝
xiao

> The gentleman (*junzi*) devotes his efforts to the roots, for once the roots are established, the Way (*Dao*) will grow therefrom. Being good as a son (*xiao*) and obedient as a young man is, perhaps, the root of a man's character." (*Analects*, I/2)

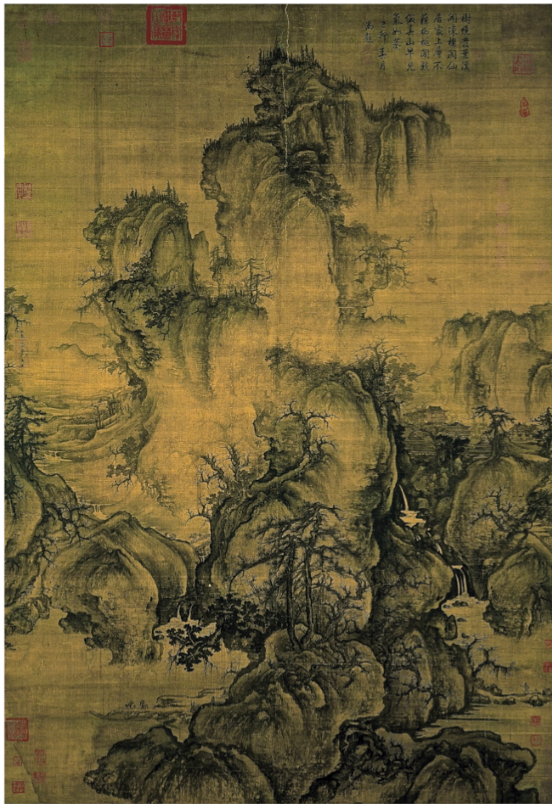
In addition to the importance of *ren*, *li*, and *xiao*, Confucius also emphasized *yi* (義), most often translated as "rightness." As Koller explains it is a "kind of moral sense or intuition" that gives one both "a moral disposition to do what is right and an ability to recognize what is right" (Koller, 201). There is an important reciprocal relationship between *li* and *yi* in Confucian thought. One can gain guidance in knowing what is right and thus how to act in any situation through attending to the rules of propriety, but these rules must also be developed through this moral intuition of what is right. If the rules of propriety are to develop along with the development of humanity, they must be guided by this sense of rightness.

義
Yi

Finally, two other important Confucian moral principles are "deference" or "reciprocity" (恕 *shu*) and loyalty or doing one's best (忠 *zhong*) are explained by Confucius to be wound together as one single thread that binds his *dao* together:

> The Master said, "Ts'an! There is one single thread binding my way together."
> Tseng Tzu assented.
> After the Master had gone out, the disciples asked, "What did he mean?"
> Tseng Tzu said, "The Way (*dao*) of the Master consists in doing one's best (*zhong*) and in using oneself as a measure to gauge others (*shu*). That is all." (IV/15)

The explanation Confucius gave to describe this notion of reciprocity, *shu*, has led many to understand it as the Confucian version of the golden rule: "Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire." (XV/24). For Confucius, if only the rulers could express these virtues in their charismatic power (*de*), then the people would follow and society would flourish. This is the *dao* of Confucius.


Early Spring, Guo Xi, 1072

DAOISM

The painting, *Early Spring*, by Guo Xi is one of the most famous and important works of art from China and it brilliantly suggests the way, *dao* 道, of the Daoist philosophers. Just as Confucian philosophy might be described as a 'humanism', Daoism may be considered a 'naturalism.' For Confucius the *dao* emerges from human beings, from the capacity of human beings to develop human virtues; but for the Daoist philosophers, this perspective is too narrow. They suggest that human beings need to get a much wider perspective and see human beings within the vastness of 'heaven and earth,' *tiandi* 天地. What this meant for the ancient Chinese might best be rendered as "nature" or "the cosmos," for *tian* 天 did not mean "heaven" in an otherworldly sense, but rather simply, the sky above, especially the night sky, in which the vastness of the universe is opened up. Even within Earth, *di* 地, the human being, *ren* 人, is very small, barely a recognizable speck in the image of the painting here. Whereas the Confucians look for the *dao* in human civilization, the Daoists recommend attending to nature and its patterns, and trying as best as possible to see what is human in the perspective of the vast, *da* 大.

Like all classical Chinese philosophy, Daoism emerged during the time of the Warring States, when ancient China was divided into states that were constantly at war leading to much death and destruction. The Daoists were concerned to find a way that would allow for a better life. Although they emphasized an acceptance of the inevitability of death, they valued longevity, and thus they recommended a way that would make possible a long and flourishing life. To this end they recommended simplicity, living a life of modest desires, interfering the least with the natural world, and thus living in harmony with the rhythm of 'heaven and earth'.

In the *Yijing*, the ancient *Book of Changes* that influenced the Daoist philosophers, this rhythm involved the oscillation of the polarities of *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽. All things, according to this view, are not made of unchanging substances, but rather a vital creative energy-stuff, *qi* (氣), that is always in the process of change from *yin* and *yang* and *yang* back to *yin*. The polarities of *yin* and *yang* are thus phases in the transition of the *qi*. While a balance of *yin* and *yang* seems to describe the *dao* of nature in the *Yijing*, one of the most interesting features of Daoism is a striking emphasis on *yin*—on the feminine, dark, empty, passive, yielding phase over the yang, the aggressive, controlling, bright, full and masculine. This emphasis on the *yin* is suggested in in this painting, where, in stark contrast to Western landscape painting, the landscape emerges out of the emptiness in the background. The *dao* is also suggested to be like flowing water, perhaps especially like the cool mountain streams that make their way downward, softly working their way through the hardness of the rocks on their way down to the sea.

The Daodejing

There are three important texts of ancient Daoist philosophy, sometimes referred to simply by the name of the supposed authors, the *Laozi*, the *Zhuangzi*, and the *Liezi*. The first book, the beginning of Daoism, is sometimes called the *Daodejing*, the *Book of the Way* (*dao* 道) *and its Power* (*de* 德). The *Laozi*, or *Daodejing*, puts forth a conception of the *dao* very different from the *dao* of Confucius; and yet it begins with a most puzzling, paradoxical, enigmatic line—the most famous line in all of Chinese philosophy:

"the *dao* that can be put into words is not really the *dao*."

It is a simple line, but it has been translated many different ways leading to various interpretations of Daoism. Sometimes it is rendered: "the *dao* that can be told, or spoken of, is not the eternal, or constant, *dao*." A common interpretation suggests that Daoism is some kind of mysticism. The book tells of a *dao* that is beyond words, ineffable, and thus knowable, not by the rational intellect, but rather only through intuition. A more pragmatic interpretation suggests that the opening line is perhaps just a warning. Whereas Confucius was quite confident that the *dao* could be put into words, greatly emphasizing the importance of correct terminology or proper naming, *zhengming* 正名, the next line of the *Laozi* says "the name that can be named is not really the name" and the line after that says "the nameless, *wuming* 無名, is the beginning of heaven and earth, *tiandi* 天地." The obvious question raised by the opening line of the text is that if, indeed, the *dao* cannot be put into words, why then did Laozi go on to write the book? Perhaps the book is an attempt to suggest or point to the *dao* in words, and the opening line is just a caution not to take the words that follow as the fixed and final words that forever capture the *dao*.

無名
Wuming

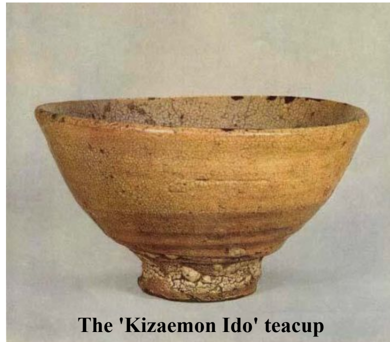
The yin emphasis of the text is suggested in the imagery of water, the feminine, and the emptiness of a clay vessel, and also in a number of words or concepts, such as the "nameless, *wuming* 無名," which feature the character *wu* 無. By itself, *wu* can mean 'empty', but in conjunction with another character it can express negation, such as in perhaps the most important of these terms, *wuwei* 無為, which is often translated simply as "no action" or "non-action." Thus, there is also *wuyu* 無欲, meaning 'no desire' or 'without desire', *wuzhi* 無知, meaning 'no knowledge' or 'without cleverness', *wuyong* 無用, meaning 'no use' or 'useless'. Each of these terms require careful attention to the context of the passages in which they occur as well as to the sense of the text as a whole if one does not want to misunderstand what is said in sticking to a too literal translation. Thus *wuwei* is thought not to literally mean 'no action' but to suggest rather a certain kind of action, action that is not forced, forceful or contrived, but natural and spontaneous. A famous verse at the end of chapter 25 reads: "Human beings emulate the earth, the earth emulates the heavens, the heavens emulate the *dao*, and the *dao* emulates what is spontaneously so, *ziran* 自然." The implication of this verse suggests that in order to live more in harmony or in tune with the *dao*, it is necessary to act spontaneously.

無為
Wuwei

自然
Ziran

As the title *Daodejing* suggests, Laozi's text also is about *de* (德), the particular 'power' or 'potency' each person expresses in how he or she lives. The intriguing paradox of the *Daodejing* is that it suggests that the most powerful potency or charisma is not the aggressive, male *yang*

force, but the passive, female, *yin*. A verse in chapter 28 recommends that one "know the male, but keep to the role of the female." It goes on to suggest that the most powerful *de* comes from being like a "river gorge." This may not make sense unless one considers a verse in chapter 78 that says "there is nothing more soft and weak (*yin* qualities) as water" and yet "nothing more effective in attacking what is hard and strong." This is how the water of the river cuts through the hardness of rock to form a gorge. In chapter 28 Laozi goes on to suggest that in being more *yin*, following the female, and thus being like a river gorge, one returns to a state of a newborn babe or, in another important image, the state of an uncarved or unworked block of wood, *pu* 樸. Both of these images suggest a sense of naturalness, as in a newborn babe that has yet to lose its natural tendencies through cultural conditioning, or the natural simplicity of the uncarved wood. This notion of natural simplicity, *pu* 樸, has had a profound influence on East Asian aesthetics, a nice example of which is a simple teacup, the 'Kizaemon Ido,' that is one of the national treasures of Japan. This cup is not overworked like the baroque teacups of Europe, but instead is made with the slightest touch of the potter's hands, preserving the natural simplicity of a simple clay vessel.



The 'Kizaemon Ido' teacup

樸
Pu

One of the most interesting questions regarding Daoist philosophy concerns just why there is such an emphasis on *yin*. Perhaps the *yin* phase of the changes, the movement toward rest, toward passivity and non-action, is more primordial. Perhaps also, the *yin* emphasis of the *Daodejing* and the later development of Daoism, might be understood as a response to the time of the *Warring States*. In Chinese medicine all illness can be understood as due to an excess of *yang* or *yin*, when the balance between the two is lost. Thus, if the condition is too *yin*, a *yang* remedy will be prescribed, whereas if the condition is too *yang*, a *yin* remedy is used. Thus, perhaps Daoism may be understood as a *yin* remedy to a time that was out of joint due to an excess of *yang*, which the period of the *Warring States* surely must have been.

The Zhuangzi

The second great text of Daoist philosophy is the *Zhuangzi*, a literary masterpiece attributed to Zhuangzi (ca. 369-286 BCE), a philosopher who lived several centuries after the composition of the *Daodejing*. The *Zhuangzi* is a very playful text, one of the few texts in the history of philosophy that abounds with a sense of humor. There are delightful narratives telling stories about mythical creatures such as great fish named Kun that changes into a giant bird named Peng, a fable about a cook who understands the secret of life, numerous characters who have suffered some misfortune but have not let that destroy their character. One of the most humorous stories tells of a guy who, even though he is the ugliest man in the world, somehow has the charisma (*de*) that women flock to him. The most famous passage from the text playfully portrays Zhuangzi dreaming that he was a butterfly and then awakening, only to realize that he doesn't know if he is Zhuangzi dreaming he is a butterfly or a butterfly dreaming he is Zhuangzi. As Burton Watson, the translator of our selections explains in his introduction to the text, the "central theme of the *Zhuangzi* may be summed up in a single word: freedom" (Watson, 3). Whereas all the other philosophers from the other schools took on the serious task of molding the proper character of the individual, reforming society, and giving advice to rulers, as even Laozi

is often doing in the *Daodejing*, Zhuangzi recommends withdrawing from the world and freeing oneself from the traditional conventions of society. Another major theme of the text emphasizes the importance of accepting the circumstance or fate (命 *ming*) one finds oneself in. Sometimes this circumstance, fate, or destiny is expressed as 天命 (*tian ming*), sometimes translated as the "mandate of heaven", but perhaps is best understood as the circumstance decreed by the cosmos or the nature of things. Sometimes Zhuangzi puts Confucius in his stories, either being shown up by cripples who are wiser than he in accepting the workings of fate, or, as in the case of the ugliest man, portraying Confucius as saying very Daoist things. In that story it is Confucius who explains the secret of the ugliest man:

天命
Tian Ming

> Confucius said, "Life, death, preservation, loss, failure, success, poverty, riches, worthiness, unworthiness, slander, fame, hunger, thirst, cold, heat—these are the alterations of the world, the workings of fate (命 *ming*). Day and night they change place before us and wisdom cannot spy out their source. Therefore, they should not be enough to destroy your harmony; they should not be allowed to enter the storehouse of spirit. If you can harmonize and delight in them, master them and never be at a loss for joy, if you can do this day and night without break and make it be spring with everything, mingling with all and creating the moment within your own mind—this is what I call being whole in power (德 *de*)." (*Zhuangzi*, Section 5)

Another theme of the text, brought out in the story about the fish named Kun in the opening chapter, is about recognizing different perspectives on life and emphasizing the value of taking in the long-term perspective. Whereas the morning mushroom and summer cicada are short-lived and thus only see a short-term perspective, there is a great rose of Sharon that counts eight thousand years as one spring and eight thousand years as one autumn. The text seems to place a higher value on the long-term perspective, making fun of those who praise a great sage who has only lived a few centuries.

The story of Cook Ding in chapter three emphasizes the importance of the familiar Daoist themes of *wuwei* (無為) and *ziran* (自然). It is because he has learned the art of acting effortlessly and spontaneously that Cook Ding is able to cut up thousands of oxen without ever needing to sharpen his blade.

The most challenging and perhaps the most philosophically interesting chapter is the second which picks up the problem of language introduced in the first line of the *Daodejing*. Here we find Zhuangzi puzzling over the dispute about the *dao* that has preoccupied all the other philosophers. Zhuangzi brings up the problem of language, and in an insight that seems perhaps very prescient of contemporary philosophical views concerning language and texts, suggests this about the nature of words:

> Words are not just wind. Words have something to say. But if what they have to say is not fixed, then do they really say something? Or do they say nothing? People suppose that words are different from the peeps of baby birds, but is there any difference, or isn't there? What does the Way rely upon, that we have true and false? What do words rely upon, that we have right and wrong? (*Zhuangzi*, Section 2)

A little later in the same chapter Zhuangzi brings up the familiar philosophical theme about the difference between dreaming and waking life. Whereas Plato gives us the idea in the myth of the cave, so influential in the history of Western philosophy, that the whole point of philosophy is to wake up from the dream and discover the truth of waking life, Zhuangzi turns this around, suggesting that it is foolish or stupid to believe that one is awake.

> He who dreams of drinking wine may weep when morning comes; he who dreams of weeping may in the morning go off to hunt. While he is dreaming he does not know it is a dream, and in his dream he may even try to interpret a dream. Only after he wakes does he know it was a dream. And someday there will be a great awakening when we know that this is all a great dream. Yet the stupid believe that they are awake, busily and brightly assuming they understand things, calling this man ruler, that one herdsman—how dense! Confucius and you are both dreaming! And when I say you are dreaming, I am dreaming, too. Words like these will be labeled the Supreme Swindle. Yet, after ten thousand generations, a great sage may appear who will know their meaning, and it will still be as though he appeared with astonishing speed. (*Zhuangzi*, Section 2)

Zhuangzi seems to be suggesting here that the wise philosopher is the one who is modest enough not to think that he has awoken and discovered the truth of waking reality, but rather the one who is aware that he is dreaming. Instead of awakening from the dream, Zhuangzi seems to suggest a metaphor for philosophy might be the lucid dream.

In the *Daodejing*, Laozi often emphasizes the secret to living out one's years and thus preserving life; but in emphasizing the acceptance of fate or circumstance (命 *ming*) Zhuangzi is emphasizing living life to the fullest, accepting life as it comes in each moment, and thus also accepting the inevitability of death. In the sixth chapter, Zhuangzi tells a story of several friends who grow old experiencing sickness and death. There is no hint of fear and avoidance of the changes that life brings. Instead, one of the men expresses a calm acceptance of death:

> The Great Clod burdens me with form, labors me with life, eases me in old age, and rests me in death. So if I think well of my life, for the same reason I must think well of my death. (*Zhuangzi*, Section 6)

This acceptance of death in good cheer is expressed by Zhuangzi in reacting to the death of his wife. When a friend came to offer condolences, he found Zhuangzi singing and pounding on a tub. This would surely have been thought of as outrageous behavior by Zhuangzi contemporaries, but Zhuangzi celebrates his wife's life and accepts her death just as he accepts the changing of the seasons.

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It is interesting to reflect on the possible relevance of Chinese philosophy in our time. Is there any relevance of the Confucian view that our leaders should be role models, exemplary human beings whose charismatic power expresses human-heartedness? Is it perhaps important to consider the human being as inherently a social being? Is it important to consider the Daoist perspective of seeing the human being as part of nature rather than separate from the natural world? Are the Daoists on to something in pointing out the importance of the *yin*? Considering the propensity for war and violence in the world today, perhaps our society too suffers from an excess of *yang*. The environmental crisis and the problem of climate change are obviously also due to too much human activity, polluting the waters, the land, and the air we breathe, and burning so much fossil fuel that the Earth's fragile climate system is being thrown out of balance. In responding to the crisis of their time, the Daoist philosophers sought to understand the difference between nature, or 'heaven and earth,' *tiandi* 天地, and human beings *ren* 人.

To think about this issue consider a difference between whales and human beings. Marine biologists have come to understand how, just without even trying, by spontaneously doing what they do without even thinking about it, that whales help maintain the health of the oceans and even positively affect the Earth's climate. It turns out that whales fertilize the upper "sunlight" zone of the ocean. Their waste emissions feed the plankton in the "sunlight" zone and this leads to more sea life. Since plankton absorb carbon from the atmosphere, whales actually have a positive impact on the climate. Scientists now think that impact was significant at the height of the whale population. Human beings, in contrast, hunted the whales for food to eat and oil to burn for light resulting in a dramatic decline in whale populations. Most human waste cannot be recycled and absorbed back into the biosphere and this leads to the problem of pollution. There is a very strong consensus, about 97% of climate scientists agree, that human activity is causing the average global temperature to dramatically rise. It is now understood that the Earth's climate is fragile and that a rise in average global temperature of only a few degrees centigrade can lead to a 'tipping point' beyond which there is no return to a stable climate that has enabled the evolution of life on Earth. Scientists are in agreement that we have a problem and that human activity is the cause of the problem, but they still debate just how close we are to the 'tipping point.' It is becoming abundantly clear, however, that human civilization is driving the planet toward extinction. If there is going to be a foreseeable future for human beings and most of life on Earth, it is becoming more and more obvious that modern human civilization must change. Human beings must become more like the whales. Is it possible for human beings to live in a way that will not have a destructive impact on the environment and the climate?

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Key Terms in Chinese Philosophy

One of the difficulties in studying Chinese philosophy is that there are two ways that Chinese characters have been converted into the Roman alphabet. These terms are presented with the contemporary standard Pinyin method of romanization, which has been used in this text, with the older Wade-Giles romanization given in parentheses if it differs from the Pinyin. Thus, to be clear, the older Wade-Giles romanization of the Chinese character 道was *Tao*, but now the preferred Pinyin is *Dao*.

General Terms in Chinese Thought

道	*Dao* (*Tao*)	Way, road, path, method, to put into words
德	*De* (*Te*)	power, virtue, potency, excellence, efficacy
命	*Ming*	destiny, fate, life, circumstance
人	*Ren* (*Jen*)	human being
天	*Tian* (*T'ien*)	nature, cosmos, heaven
天地	*Tiandi* (*T'ien Ti*)	heaven and earth
天命	*Tianming* (*T'ien ming*)	circumstance brought about by the cosmos
氣	*Qi* (*Ch'i*)	energy, stuff, breath, spirit
心	*Xin* (*Hsin*)	heart-mind

Important Confucian Terms

君子	*Junzi* (*Chün-tzu*)	noble person, gentleman, role model
仁	*Ren* (*Jen*)	humanity, benevolence
禮	*Li*	rites, ceremonial significance, propriety
孝	*Xiao* (*Hsiao*)	filiality, family relationship
義	*Yi*	rightness, duty, appropriateness
恕	*Shu*	reciprocity, deference, empathy
忠	*Zhong* (*Chung*)	loyality, especially to those above us
正名	*Zhengming* (*Cheng ming*)	correctness of terminology

Important Daoist Terms

大	*da*	vast
梦	*Meng*	dreaming
樸	*pu* (*p'u*)	Natural simplicity, unworked wood, rough
無名	*wuming* (*wu ming*)	Nameless
無為	*wuwei* (*wu wei*)	Non interference, non-coercive action
無用	*wuyong* (*wu yung*)	Useless
無欲	*wuyu* (*wu yu*)	Desireless, without desire, objectless desire
無知	*wuzhi* (*wu chih*)	without cleverness
自然	*ziran* (*tzu jan*)	Naturalness, spontaneity

Questions

1. What did Confucius mean by the *dao* (道) and what was his recommendation for attuning society to it? Why might Confucianism be regarded as a "humanism"?

2. What did Confucius mean by the *junzi* (君子)? Why might *ren* (仁) be considered the heart of Confucianism? What are the virtues of *li* (禮), *xiao* (孝) and *yi* (義) and how are these related to the way of *ren* (仁)?

3. How does the Daoist understanding of *dao* (道) differ from the Confucian view?

4. What is the significance of the famous opening line of the *Daodejing*?

5. How is the emphasis on the *yin* expressed in the *Daodejing* and why might the yin be so emphasized by Laozi?

6. What is meant by the important Daoist notion of *wuwei* (無為)?

7. Why is the notion of fate or circumstance (命 *ming*) so important for Zhuangzi?

8. Why might the metaphor of lucid dreaming be important in understanding the philosophy of Zhuangzi?