

# Study on the Thinking Paradigm of Laozi from the Perspective of Chinese Philosophy

Xian Wu

Huaqiao University, No. 668 Jimei Avenue, Jimei District, Xiamen, Fujian, 361021 China

## Abstract

In Lao Zi's thought, "Tao" is the most important concept of ideological and philosophical theory. In the past, the theoretical research on "Tao" in the academic circle has a completely opposite tendency to materialism and idealism. Like Western philosophy, traditional Chinese philosophy has put forward a mode of thinking characterized by intuitive comprehension, coordination and harmony, which embodies the characteristics of functional and generative thinking. It is of great ideological and practical significance for the innovative inheritance and creative promotion of Chinese traditional thought to interpret "Tao" with the Chinese thought paradigm and understand the spirit and limit of Laozi's thought.

## Keywords

Philosophy; Lao tzu; Thinking Paradigm.

## 1. Introduction

In Zhuangzi's philosophical thought, Tao is the most important philosophical concept. Although the research results of Lao Zi's "Tao" are numerous, differences have existed for a long time. On the one hand, because Lao Tzu thought is very deep and profound, the term is very easy to produce ambiguity; on the other hand, due to the professional background and academic thought of different researchers, it is easy to form different research horizons. Therefore, clear debate needs people to return to the primitive substance life activities of the Chinese nation to know Lao tze thought, the Chinese nation's unique ideological paradigm in the most basic material production process of the activities, and create spiritual products so that they understand the thoughts of Lao tzu "tao" can't leave the paradigm of Chinese traditional philosophy and study the dialectical relationship between them. It is of great significance to understand and master laozi's thought and wisdom [1].

## 2. Understanding "Tao" is the Key to Understanding Lao Zi's Philosophical Thoughts

There are three main views on the interpretation of "Tao": one is that "Tao" is material and Lao Zi is regarded as a materialist; the second is the idealist interpretation, which regards "Tao" as the category of human spiritual character. The third is to eliminate the dichotomy between material and spirit and the interpretation of the two completely opposite. These three concepts are in the different historical period, academic background, or formed in different academic thoughts. In the early 1950s, the Soviet textbooks' dominant period, materialism and idealism of contrary influence on academic investigation is fundamental; these scholars are opposite from the material and spirit in the different interpretations. In recent decades, with the correction of this concept, many researchers have deeply studied the characteristics of traditional Chinese philosophy from the unique national life world model of Chinese philosophy and put forward the idea that Laozi's thinking should be rooted in traditional Chinese thought. From the perspective of Chinese humanistic consciousness, these concepts will be more

meaningful to the economic and social development of contemporary China and will also bring enlightenment for people to further return to the reality of the most primitive Chinese national life and comprehend the ancient wisdom of China from the paradigm of traditional Chinese philosophy.

Lao Zi's "Tao" is mysterious and unfathomable, so it is regarded by some philosophers as a cultural and spiritual existence. From the book Lao Zi, we know, "Seeing the invisible, is called yi; Listen not to smell, called xi; Stroke impossibility, called "micro", is indistinct lapses, and intangible lapses. If you do not see its head, you will not see its back. Holding the ancient way, to royal today, can know the ancient beginning, is called "Tao Ji" (Lao Zi 14 chapter). All things in heaven and earth are born into being, and all things are born into nothing (Lao Zi chapter 40). "Tao" is neither a physical nor linguistic color. It goes beyond the knowledge society but controls and decides the society, so it is a wonderful spiritual realm. Therefore, "Tao cannot be heard, nor heard; Tao cannot be seen, seen but not seen; Tao can not say, the words are not also! Knowing the shape and not the shape! Dao is not a proper name" (Chuang Tzu's Journey to the North). Scholars who believe that "Tao" is the appearance of objective things also have their own textual basis, such as "the mixture of things, born from a priori. Lonely! Independent without change, weekly without danger, can be the mother of the world. I do not know the person, the strong word is called dao also (Lao Zi 25). Here, "Tao" is a mixture of primordial things, "in which the Tao is incoherent. In those things there is an image. There is something in it. Here is a constancy of constancy. Its essence is true, and its faith is also" (Lao Zi 21). The Tao, although indistinct, has traces in it, physical essence in it, an objective physical being rather than a spiritual being. Objectively speaking, these views can be explained from the perspective of material and spiritual opposition to Laozi. In The book Laozi, Lao Zi's expression of "Tao" is indeed sometimes reflected in the material and sometimes seems to be a double expression of spiritual character. From the superficial analysis of the debate, if both sides have different opinions, I am afraid that it is impossible to distinguish right from wrong only from the perspective of argumentation. When a language is a classic text once identified, it is subject to the stability of the language text and produces ambiguity, so a more reasonable approach is to the right understanding of the language text, depending on the writers and eliminating readers themselves survival thoughts as much as possible, so he could be closer to the classical language. If Laozi himself does not have his own problems, then it is not his mainstream ideological paradigm to call it the problem between material and spirit, materialism and idealism. In fact, not only in philosophy in China, even in Western Europe, materialism and idealism are sharply divided between epistemological changes in modern Western philosophy, just as the main focus of philosophical discussion but also the most brilliant period in ancient Greek civilization. The conflict between materialism and idealism concerns the thought of Western philosophy. However, due to the obvious differences between traditional Chinese culture and the thinking paradigm of Western thought, Lao Zi's thought cannot be fully interpreted with the dichotomy of French thought of the political administration of subjects and objects in modern Western philosophy. Under the background of the history of social activities, Western thought focuses on logical research. The concept of reasoning different conventional ways of thinking and ideas that appear in China are characterized by intuitive feelings, balance and new modes of thinking and embodied in the way of thinking in traditional thought characteristics of integrity and sex. Thus, the influence of the philosophical thinking mode of the chuang tzu thought in our country, the influence of Zhuangzi's thought and Zhuangzi's thought on the original philosophical thought model of our country, is a topic to be further studied. Clarifying this problem is of great significance for further understanding the wisdom of our original thought [2].

### 3. The Theoretical Concept Thought System of Lao Zi's Philosophy

Objectively speaking, today's people in the study or to discuss Chinese traditional philosophy, largely on the theoretical concept thinking system, are based on the idea of the Western traditional philosophy paradigm, such as ontology. The theory of materialism and idealism and metaphysics are generated by Western traditional philosophy concepts such as system. It is not realistic to deeply study traditional Chinese philosophy and completely eliminate this ideological paradigm because, after all, we are in a historical stage of interaction and dialog between Eastern and Western civilizations, and people have more or less borrowed from some ways of thinking of Western civilization. However, explaining the traditional cultural philosophy of Our country purely by the ideological paradigm of traditional Western philosophy will not actually affect people's understanding of the excellent traditional civilization of our country, which requires people to explore the ideological paradigm of the traditional cultural philosophy of our country and explore the classics according to this and inherit the essence of traditional civilization. The definition of normative is clearly proposed by Thomas Kuhn, a great American thinker of science and technology, in *The Basic Structure of Scientific and Technological Revolution*. It generally refers to the collection of common beliefs, spiritual and social values and skills among the members of a scientific and technological social community. However, Kuhn's normative definition has gradually become a common term in Chinese humanities and social sciences. Through examples, people can grasp the heterogeneity between Chinese traditional philosophy and other civilizations in the world and then understand the wisdom, spiritual and social value and limits of Chinese traditional thought.

Zhuangzi's "Tao" has different meanings in different chapters and sentences, and many scholars have conducted comprehensive and meticulous research on it. Chen Guying believed: "In some areas, 'Tao' is a metaphysical reality; Sometimes 'Tao' refers to a rule; In some places, 'Tao' refers to a principle, indicator, or model of life." If we interpret "Tao" with Western logical concept thinking, especially treating Laozi with the opposition of materialism and idealism, we will fall into endless disputes and not help solve the problem. The different meanings of "Tao" explained by Lao Tzu in different chapters and sentences indicate that "Tao" is not a constant contradictory concept but a systematic, generative and functional concept in the philosophical thinking of traditional Chinese culture. It is both opposite and unified, which is very clearly reflected in Lao Tzu's thinking. In the book *Lao Zi*, he put forward: "Tao can be tao, extremely Tao. A name is worthy, a great name." That is, in Lao Zi's thinking world, the eternal "Tao" is unspeakable, and unspeakable is hard to be thought about. Without ideas, how can people grasp the unspeakable? For the convenience of understanding can only "strong word said 'tao'". However, how can the eternal "Tao" in the noumenal world be recognized by people in the phenomenal world? Lao Tzu explained this with the traditional Chinese philosophical thinking paradigm, "Tao" is a process of transformation, which is the transformation of the invisible and nameless physical objects forming the world to the tangible and famous body, that is, "being and being grow together" (Lao Tzu 2 chapter), "nothing, the beginning of the world; Have, name the mother of all things this two, with a different name, with the xuan. "The door to all mysteries" (Chapter 1 of Lao Zi).

As the basis for human beings to create everything in the world, "Tao" is metaphysical, but as long as it is not related to human development, it is an empty and meaningless concept detached from reality. Therefore, the Tao, although appearing forever, is not static but in a continuous flow of movement. In the history of philosophy in China, compared with the "tao" in the theory of Confucius, Lao tzu's "tao" is the ontological philosophical level, and the important classic of Chinese traditional philosophy of the Zhouyi, Lao tzu's "tao" is more across the plain understanding of theory of heaven and earth, and combines the ontology thought and the rich connotation of democratic ideology. This is not only the basis of the world of human creation

and evolution but also the fundamental driving force of the world of human creation and evolution. Based on "tao" has been so, "Lao tze philosophy system itself, not just for the world we put forward a detailed picture of things the generation and development, and according to such a basis and its own social value principle, proposed to explain things that" heaven "and" authentic "and" humanitarian ", expounds his social life reality and problems of the present world, to reveal a reasonable world, social life and human nature schema to mankind [3].

#### **4. Third, Laozi's Philosophical Thoughts from the Perspective of Chinese Philosophy**

Chinese traditional philosophy was born in a strong and advanced agricultural civilization, and long ago, the Chinese nation thought on material production and Greece is the origin of western civilization thought there is a huge difference, and the gap is caused us to the philosophy of the Chinese nation with Greece as the source of the western philosophy has a huge difference." Because of this difference in physical conditions, the peoples of the two hemispheres have since followed their own peculiar course of development." For a civilization, the phenomenon of people's ideological activities is always related to the social environment in which they grow and the human activities that transform the world. In the early development of Chinese civilization, the Chinese nation had superior natural production conditions for agricultural cultivation due to its vast territory and abundant soil and water. The ancient Greek civilization was born in a barren natural environment with more mountains and less land, so continuous emigration, sailing and industrial and commercial transactions became the normal state of its existence. Advanced farming civilization, make our nation in the text, have long been adept in such aspects as practical and rational, but do not like to less people more ancient city threatened by external environment, under the condition of relatively comfortable living, abstract and concrete in the thinking activities are not separated for a long time, which are embodied in the characteristics of abstract of judah and in the concrete, As a result, the Chinese nation is better at figurative ideological activities, which is also clearly reflected in Zhouyi, Laozi, Yin-yang and the five elements, such as "Tao gives birth to one, life is two, two gives birth to three, and three gives birth to all things. All things negative Yin to embrace Yang, and impulse and "(Lao Tzu 42 chapter). Gossip columns, as in the "( under easy copulative)", the Chinese ancestors through the Numbers for which the "meaning", so "stand like to dao" ("the easy copulative "), also have certain reflect this kind of thought in Chinese philosophy, and gradually developed a basic thinking pattern in ancient China, such as integrated thinking, comparative thinking, dialectical thinking, At the same time, it has systematized, functional and generative characteristics. When abstract thinking cannot be independent and concrete, many contents in China's thoughts cannot be treated simply in isolation but must be treated with the holistic concept of isolation, wholeness and complementarity [4]. As mentioned above, Zhuangzi's "Tao" has gone beyond the level of world generation theory, but it still conforms to the Mode of Chinese philosophical thought. It belongs to a systematic concept and cannot be simply expressed as material spirit. In contrast, as a far-reaching philosophical classic, the philosophical thoughts expounded in Laozi play an important role in consolidating and developing the traditional philosophical thinking paradigm of Our country and cultivating the great cultural thoughts of the Chinese nation. The charge of Chinese traditional culture of the preqin period, for the further development of the wisdom of the Chinese nation culture, has played a fundamental meaning. In the minds of Chinese society, traditional Chinese thought embodies the world view of "harmony of man with nature", in the interpersonal aspects of the value concept embodied in "golden mean", on the moral values embodied in the direct influence of the thought of "unity", so that the focus on practice has formed the typical characteristics of China's ideology and morality. As Zhang Dainian said, "Many terms and theories in Chinese

philosophy have their practical meanings. If divorced from reality, it is meaningless. To understand its meaning, we need to do time in the practical level and in the actual life of the heart. The term and concept refer to a specific realm of practice [5].

## 5. Conclusion

Returning to the historical background of Lao Zi's life, it is of great significance to understand Lao Zi's "Tao" from the perspective of the traditional philosophical thought paradigm in China, which is helpful for people to break the endless philosophical debate and absorb Lao Zi's thought wisdom. Lao tze to the idea of "tao" as the center point of view of the system and system represented by Confucius's method of benevolence, represented by Confucianism of Chinese traditional civilization, is the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation's cultural psychology cornerstone, for the transformation of the Chinese traditional culture of innovative and creative play, first of all to truly dig out the value of the Chinese traditional culture connotation. If it breaks away from the ideological paradigm of traditional Chinese philosophy, and "Ezekiel Middle" only allows people to acquire a kind of soulless fragment, it will be even more harmful to the promotion of Chinese culture. With the advent of globalization, on the basis of the capitalist mode of production, there has been a great promotion of social material civilization, but in the world environment, people's life form and psychological world have a significant impact, and Lao tzu's philosophy to solve the people's alienation against materialism has an enlightenment function. Western scholars focus on laozi philosophy from a certain side, which also explains the problem. Although I thought does not like Western philosophy, from developing the concept of abstract logic thinking, the outstanding achievements of dialectics thoughts are an important wealth of the development of human civilization. In today's China, the development of the science and technology revolution type model, Lao tzu's "tao" theory, to fill the void of the nonrational thinking method in the development of Chinese science, also has extremely vital significance. The emergence of the modern philosophy of science and technology also shows that the important development of modern science and technology requires the effective integration of the logical thinking method and the nonlogical thinking method. From one point of view, laozi's natural philosophy is so close to today's human self-organization theory that it can't help but be amazing. However, Lao Zi's "Tao" thought did not become a tradition but made a new contribution to contemporary society.

## References

- [1] Anaphors or Cataphors? A Discussion of the Two Qi Graphs in the First Chapter of the Daodejing[J] . Yoav, Ariel, Gil. Raz. *Philosophy East and West* . 2010 (3).
- [2] "Embracing the One" in the Daodejing[J] . James. Behuniak. *Philosophy East and West* . 2009 (3).
- [3] An Approach to Emerson's Writing Style from a Daoist Perspective[J] . Leng Wang. *Dao* . 2008 (3).
- [4] The Ways of Interpreting Dao[J] . Ruiqi Ma. *Philosophy East and West* . 2006 (3).
- [5] The Victorian Translation of China: James Legge's Oriental Pilgrimage (review)[J]. Roger. Corless. *Buddhist-Christian Studies* . 2004 (1).