

Lecture 6

The Character of the System of *Xuan* Principles: A Horizontal Discussion of the Vertical

Having discussed last time the character of the *xuan* [Dark, profound] principles of Daoism, we shall this time talk about the Daoist discipline of mental and spiritual cultivation so that we may further ascertain the meaning of *xuan* metaphysical principles. Moreover, we shall introduce a new term for the purpose of distinguishing the different modes among the various schools.

In the last lecture, we focused on understanding the three points of *wu* [Nothing, Non-Being], *you* [Being] and the relationship of *wu* and *you* to things [*wuh*]; as a result we said that Daoist metaphysics was a vision-based type/form of metaphysics. This is still an objective, formal understanding. Whenever we seek to understand a truth, the first step is always to arrive at an objective understanding, and since an objective understanding is always initially formal, it is also a formal understanding. The objective, formal understanding is pointed at the concepts brought out—for example such concepts as Nothing, Being, and Things brought out by Lao Zi—and understanding them exactly as the nature of the concepts themselves. But it is not enough merely to have this understanding. For example, the relationship between Dao and the myriad things being of course a procreative relationship: this is an initial objective understanding. Subsequently, however, we said that to apply the term “procreate” to Daoism is inappropriate, whereas it is appropriate to apply it to Confucianism, this requiring that we go a step further in understanding the relationship between Dao and things in Daoism.

The procreative relationship can be characterized as a vertical relationship. Dao has a double character, which can be approached from the two sides of Nothing [*wu*] and Being [*you*], *wu* and *you* uniting to become the *xuan*, and through the *xuan* we may understand Dao. Therefore the relationship between Dao and the myriad things is of course a vertical relationship. The *Dao De Jing* also says “procreates”, as in “Dao procreates it, virtue nurtures it, things form it, circumstances complete it .” (Chap. 51). And: “The myriad things under heaven are born of Being; Being is born of Nothing.”

(Chap. 40). From the word “procreate”, we can understand it as a vertical relationship, and from this can easily think of Dao as having a function of procreating [birthing] the myriad things. But on second thought, the word “create/procreate [*chuangsheng*]” is not quite right, for a deeper understanding of the character of the *xuan* principles of Daoism will reveal that it is different from Confucianism. If applied to Confucianism, the word create [*chuangzao*] is appropriate, but in Daoism the meaning of create has a different meaning than in Confucianism. Thus it is questionable whether the word create can be applied to Daoism, and this indicates that it is not appropriate to use create for Daoism. Therefore we must once again ascertain the meaning of “procreate”, and finally point out that the Daoist “procreate [*sheng*]” is in fact “the procreating that does not procreate [*bu sheng zhi sheng*]”. The vertical relationship expressed by “the procreating that does not procreate” then becomes a vision-based metaphysics, which is very different from the being-based metaphysics of the West, and is a major distinction.

The meaning of the vision-based type of metaphysics as determined by “the procreating that does not procreate” is not hard to grasp once it drops down to reality. Last time we gave some examples from practical life and from politics, explaining it as not controlling and gripping, not repressing the nature of Being, not blocking its source, and as taking a step aside. Thus so-called procreating means that when we take a step aside, the myriad things will of themselves arise, live and grow, of themselves reach completion. This is very high wisdom and spiritual cultivation. Daoist wisdom lies in taking a step aside and not repressing nature or blocking the source, and in this way opening up a road to life. This entails immense discipline. For otherwise even if things were born, they would not thrive. That is easier said than done. So-called *wu wei* [not doing; without artifice] must be understood from this perspective. Only by explaining it this way do we arrive at the Dao of Daoism, and not point objectively to a substance—a Being like God or like the “Heaven's command and Dao-substance” [*tianming daoti*] of Confucianism—that procreates the myriad things. To explain it as taking a step aside is of course subjective, where “Dao procreates” is a mental state, Dao residing in this state that is brought about by subjective practice. To explain “procreates” in this way gives us the negative meaning of the procreating that does not procreate. The extraordinary wisdom of this is most easily revealed in the present age [1978] with the contrasting

behavior of the Communists, who are past masters at repressing nature and blocking the source. Of course Daoism is not modern-day liberal democratic governance but a transcendental *xuan* principle which when applied to governance requires further work, and that is another matter. However, the doctrine of Daoism can serve as the transcendental principle, transcendental ground, of such governance, which contains the fundamental spirit of such free governance, and deserves to be highly valued. The example we raised last time was an expedient to help us reach understanding. Now that we wish to understand Daoism as a metaphysical system, then that kind of objective, formal understanding will not suffice, for we still have to understand Daoism itself as a self-discipline [*gongfu*].

What kind of cultivation [*gongfu*, work, effort] does Daoism require in order to reach the state of being without artifice [*wu wei*], being natural [*ziran*, as self-thus, autonomous], or Zhuang Zi's state of being free to roam and non-dependent? For instance, Confucius speaks of “Learning below [the practise and discipline of *ren*] and thereby striving to reach [the Heavenly Way (Dao)] above [下學而上達]” and practicing the Dao of *ren* [humanity, humaneness], Mencius speaks of “Expanding and filling it [擴而充之],” *The Great Learning* and *The Doctrine of the Mean* speak of vigilance in solitude [慎獨], which all constitute the discipline of Confucian moral practice. The Daoist approach is not one of moral consciousness; hence its discipline is different from that of Confucianism, although it also includes the cultivation of Dao. If we can understand Daoist discipline, then we will be able to more firmly grasp the objective, formal approach of the last lecture. The objective, formal understanding is the nexus [*gang*], the warp, the vertical thread. The understanding of the spiritual effort and discipline [*gongfu*] is the tie, the woof [weft], the horizontal thread. The joining of warp and woof will enable us to grasp the character of the *xuan* principles of Daoism. The three doctrines of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism of China all lay great stress on discipline [*gongfu*]. Unlike Westerners, who use the speculative, theoretical method, the learning of the ancients of China starts from self-discipline and practice, through this presenting various concepts. Their descendants then sought to acquire an objective understanding of the concepts thus presented, and in contrast, often forgot about the woof, as a result of which the whole system then floated about without being grounded,

resulting in numerous pointless misinterpretations. Thus, after we have understood the warp, it behooves us to turn back and grasp the ground of self-discipline and practice—namely the woof.

The great doctrines of Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism and Christianity are all originally concerned with vertical relations. Only knowledge is horizontal, requiring the opposition of subject and object. Scientific knowledge is achieved through cognitive relations pertaining to the cognitive faculty, that is, through horizontal relations. Epistemology consists of reflecting on these relations and elucidating them. Everything that lies beyond the knowledge level, everything concerned with Dao, is vertical relations. That is why in the beginning we said that “The relationship between the Dao and heaven, earth, and the myriad things is a procreative relationship expressed by Daoist vertical relations.” That is a blanket explanation. The actual meaning of procreation is determined by the characteristics of different doctrinal paths, appearing in different modes. For example, Christianity teaches in the mode of the religionist and the myth; Plato teaches in the mode of the philosopher. The two are quite distinct. Christianity teaches Creation as God, Who based on nothing, creates being out of nothing, a creation *ex nihilo*. Plato’s Demiurge neither creates Idea nor matter, both originally existing. Christianity is otherwise, for if matter existed originally outside of God, then God would not be omnipotent. Thus God’s Creation is not one in which matter is broken down into two originally existing components, form and matter, and then joined together, but one in which being is created out of nothing. God is the creating entity, creating individual things, and we may not then ask what materials God used to create the myriad things. You may ask this of a carpenter because the carpenter is merely one who uses wood to make a table, wood coming from a tree and not created by the carpenter. Religious teachers who view God as a personal God, saying God’s creating is like a carpenter making a table, are wrong, for this can be applied to Plato but not to the Christian religion. The Dao-substance which Confucianism speaks of in “Heaven's command without end” [*tianming bu yi*天命不已] is one that procreates the myriad things; *The Doctrine of the Mean* and the *Yijing Commentaries* [*Yi Zhuan*] indicate the same. Some people, who base their understanding on the Christian religion, maintain that what Confucianism talks about is not creation, but actually it is also creation, and precisely

what creation in philosophy means. This is the Confucian mode, speaking of creation in terms of “wondrous operation”, which is why it says “The Dao of heaven and earth can be described in one sentence: Because its creating is profoundly pure, its procreation of things is unfathomable [天地之道，可一言而盡也，其為物不貳，則其生物不測。]” (*The Doctrine of the Mean*). This is to procreate, and is of course different from God’s being a personal God. Thus the Confucian “Heaven’s command without end” is not the personal God of the religionist but a metaphysical Dao-substance. In Daoism, we can initially understand procreation in broad terms through the “born of” of “Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things are born of Being; Being is born of Nothing”, and “Dao procreates it, virtue nurtures it.” But actually the meaning of creation is not prominent in Daoism, that is to say, creation applied to Daoism is inappropriate. Broadly speaking, however, they are all vertical relations.

Now let us go a step further and understand the vertical relations Daoism expresses through “procreate [*sheng*]”. The Daoist procreate is actually the procreating that does not procreate. The procreating that does not procreate then becomes a vision-based type of metaphysics. Confucianism is the being-based type pertaining to “wondrous function”. Christianity is the being-based type of the personal God, namely God who creates the myriad things out of Nothing. These differences are determined by different doctrinal paths. Daoism is not a being-type metaphysics, that is, one cannot objectively point to something called “Nothing” that procreates heaven, earth, and the myriad things. Although Daoism says “Nothing names [*wu ming*] the beginning of heaven and earth, Being names the mother of the myriad things” (Chap. 1), if we think as we are accustomed to of heaven, earth, and the myriad things in a backward direction, and finally end up with a Being called “the Nameless” [*wu minu*], then we are totally wrong. That is why we say that the Daoist Nothing is not an ontological concept, for an ontological concept can objectively point to a substantive something, can be obtained through analysis. The being-based type can, through objective analysis, ontologically point to an objective entity, whether it is God, atoms, or earth, water, wind, fire, etc., all objective entities. The Daoist Nothing is not an objective entity, but an idea presented completely through the subjective state of mental-spiritual cultivation. Thus it must be

understood from living practice. This implies a question of discipline, and its meaning is determined by the understanding of discipline [*gongfu*].

Let us now take a look at the practical discipline of Daoism, which is also very special. Confucianism is concerned with the practice of morality, Buddhism with the practice of release. Moral practice is the original meaning of what we normally call practice. For example, Kant's practical reason is concerned with morality. On the other hand, we cannot say that the Buddhist discipline of Chan [Zen] meditation is not practice, for all discipline is practice, including Daoism. Therefore in the broad sense all Eastern metaphysics is practical metaphysics. It is very difficult to use one expression to describe Daoist practice; it would have to be something like the term "release", but there is still a difference. Discipline is the woof, while the vertical relation is the warp. If we can understand the special meaning of Daoist discipline, and thereby understand the woof, then we may use a new expression to describe it: The vision-based metaphysics of Daoism is “the horizontal treatment of the vertical relation.” The Daoist relation between Dao and the myriad things is vertical. But if we approach the vertical procreating-that-does-not-procreate vision-based type of metaphysics by adding the woof, then we will be “explaining the vertical horizontally”, that is, using a horizontal method to express the vertical relation. This horizontal is not the horizontal mode of knowledge, of cognition, but a horizontal that lies on the woof of discipline.

Philosophically speaking, the vertical relation can be applied as a common pattern and will appear as different modes in different schools of thought. When this common pattern is applied to Daoism it is “the horizontal treatment of the vertical system”, an expression also applicable to Buddhism. In Buddhism there are also vertical relationships, but we cannot say the Great Nirvana Dharma-body [*dharmakaya*] achieved by the Three Virtues of wisdom, release, and Dharma-body of the Treasury of Profound Mysteries procreates the myriad things [dharmas]. This would not make sense. Consequently Buddhism also evinces “the horizontal treatment of the vertical system.” The *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* [*Dasheng-qixing-lun*, Skt. *Mahayanaśrad-dhotpāda-śāstra*] teaches “one mind opens two doors”, that all dharmas [laws, principles, things, events] are based on the Self-existent Pure Mind [*zixing qingjing xin*] of the *tathāgata-garbha* [Buddha-womb, Embryonic Buddha]. This looks like the “vertical

interpretation of the vertical system”. But that is not so, for we still cannot say that the Self-Existent Pure Mind of the *tathagata-garbha* procreates the myriad things, but can only say that the dharmas of life and death, and dharmas of return to nirvana are based on the Self-Existent Pure Mind of *tathagata-garbha*. The “one mind opens two doors” of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana* is a very special mode, one that I always stress is very significant and should be carefully understood. It is also a commonly shared paradigm, for in one sense, all vertical systems are one mind opening two doors. Even Kant’s distinction of noumena and phenomena is strictly speaking one mind opening two doors. But Kant is speaking under the constraint of the Christian tradition, and moreover his relating the two is not quite satisfactory; in other words, he cannot fully open the two doors. Although the contribution of the doctrinal paradigm of “one mind opens two doors” of the *Awakening of Faith* is immense, it has been generally overlooked, being seen as merely a system in Buddhism. We shall later explain in detail the significance of this paradigm. Even though the *Awakening of Faith* propounds one mind opening two doors, it is still a horizontal treatment of the vertical; in other words, we cannot say that the *tathagata-garbha* Pure Mind procreated the myriad dharmas.

Let us look again at Confucianism. In Confucianism, the Dao-substance of “Heaven's command without end [天命不已]” does procreate the myriad things. The *Yijing* says: “Great indeed is the *qian* creative principle [*qianyuan*]. The myriad things begin here and it rules heaven. ... In the changing and transforming of the Dao of *qian*, each thing maintains its correct destiny, thus preserving and uniting the great harmony. Thus it is advantageous and auspicious. [大哉乾元，萬物咨始，乃統天。。。。乾道變化，各正性命，保合太和，乃利貞.]” (*Yijing*, “Qian definition [*qian tuanda*]”). The creative principle [*qianyuan*] is the highest principle of creation. That is why Confucianism sees the Dao of heaven and earth in terms of “The Dao of heaven and earth can be described in one sentence: Because its creating is profoundly pure, its procreating of things is unfathomable [天地之道，可一言而盡之，其為物不貳，則其生物不測].” This is procreating the myriad things. Strictly speaking, the real meaning of creating as creating must be seen from the standpoint of morality. When Christianity explains Creation through God, it is, strictly speaking, also seeing it from morality. Thus the creating expressed by the Confucian Dao-substance of “Heaven's command without end [

天命不已.],” and the Dao of heaven and earth is called creativity-itself. The personal deity of Christianity—God—is strictly speaking creativity-itself, also called the principle of creativity. Creativity-itself is the essence of heaven, earth, and the myriad things; when personal it is God, when impersonal it is creativity-itself, or creative reality, an absolute substance. The Christian religion explains God creating this world through God willing this world. Why God’s will? Because He loves this world. Why love and then will? Because this is the best world. In this way, the principle of creativity is still good, still pertaining to morality. When the moral creativity-itself is personalized, it is God.

Why do we say “creativity-itself”? Because this creativity that is reality is not a function issuing from and belonging to a faculty or an organ, for otherwise there would have to be a postulate anterior to it, and then it would not be ultimate. But creativity-itself is ultimate, and its function is what Confucianism speaks of as the function of “Heaven's command, ah, profound without end! [維天之命，於穆不已.]” (The *Book of Poetry* [*Shi Jing*], Zhou Odes, “*Wei tian zhi ming*”), and not a function issuing from a faculty or organ. Even in Christianity, the relation of creativity and God is not a relation between function and faculty, for God Himself is this creativity and cannot be seen as an entity equivalent to a faculty out of which a creative function arises. God’s entire essence is creativity-itself, is love and does not issue from anywhere. As to willing, God’s entire essence consists of willing. As to understanding, we can also say that God’s entire essence consists of understanding; in God these are the same. Christianity is anthropomorphic, and so is theism. We are constrained to use our ideas of human love, will, and understanding to imagine that God has divine love, divine will, and divine understanding. But when we speak of God’s divine love, divine will, etc., their meaning is completely different from when we speak of human love and will. That is because God’s love and will do not issue from any faculty; instead God’s entire essence is love and will, and furthermore love, will, etc. in God are no longer different concepts or functions, but are inter-penetrating, as in a glass crystal when there are no longer any different angles, the entire substance being visible from any point. In man, however, love and will have definite meanings and are not interchangeable. In God, they are interchangeable. This is what is meant by creativity-itself. The Dao-substance Confucianism speaks of when it says "heaven's command without end" also has this

meaning. The literary creativity and artistic creativity that we ordinarily speak of are strictly speaking not really creativity. Even if we consider them as creativity, they are not creativity-itself, in other words, they cannot be the essence. That is because the writer's creativity issues from the intensity of his life, in other words, from a faculty, and hence is finite in time. The creativity of a God or Dao-substance does not issue from a faculty, but is Itself ultimate and infinite. So the real meaning of creativity must be seen through morality.

Creativity-itself refers to the Dao-substance. From the perspective of daily life, it is moral creation. Why do we look at creation through morality? Because morality issues from the will, being a function of will, and will is a creative ability. No one explains creation through the understanding. The will can determine what ought to be, for if Being does not exist in reality, once it is actualized will it not exist? Not only this, but what already exists may be removed, what we call "Removing the old and producing the new." The ability to turn the existent [*you*] into the non-existent [*wu*], to turn the non-existent into the existent is creation. The meaning of creation must be expressed through the will, which is why Kant had to bring out free will when he explained practical reason. As for the Chinese, they spoke of *liangzhi* [good knowing; one's moral capacity]. This then is the wellspring of creation. Thus, strictly speaking, if we explain creation without adopting the religionist's mode of speaking in fables, then we must adopt the Confucian mode. Actually, even in the case of the religionist's fables, they must be based on morality before we can really understand divine creation. Because Daoism does not belong to this mode, the word creation is inappropriate for it.

Therefore if we want to really arrive at the proper meaning of creation, it must be the vertical interpretation of the vertical system. This is what Confucianism does, explaining the vertical vertically and the horizontal horizontally. To explain the vertical vertically, and the horizontal horizontally—for example, when knowledge is horizontal it must be explained horizontally, precisely and without confusion—is the best mode. Kant also belongs to this mode, *Practical Reason* explaining creation vertically. Thus Kant also speaks of causality of the will, a special causality, for the purpose of creating a thing. But when causality pertains to understanding and becomes a category, then through it there is understanding of a thing but not creation of a thing. This is explaining the

vertical vertically and the horizontal horizontally. That is why down the centuries Confucianism has been described as a doctrine that is “great, centered, and most straight” [*da zhong zhi zheng*大中至正], and this is what is meant by “centered” and most straight. Mr. Tang Junyi [1909-78] also expressed this when he said that Buddha and Lao Zi are slanted sages.

As regards the internal conditions of Buddhism, the Perfect Teaching of the Tiantai school is already the most perfect and most centered and straight. But when it is compared with other great doctrines under a common paradigm, its teaching can still be critiqued and classified [*panjiao*]. Daoism is a mode of interpreting the vertical horizontally which cannot express the meaning of creation. Buddhism likewise explains the vertical horizontally, which is also not proper for speaking about creation. Whenever it is improper to speak about creativity-itself or the principle of creativity, the vertical system is interpreted horizontally, and this is where we find the two modes of Daoism and Buddhism. Because it is vertical, Buddhism can also have ontology, but Buddhistic ontology can only be thoroughly expressed with the Perfect Teaching of the Tiantai school, which means that only with Perfect Teaching is intellectual intuition thoroughly revealed. In God, intellectual intuition is creative intuition, which consists not only of cognitively intuiting a thing, but by intuiting creating it. This is not so with man. Kant time and again stresses that man has only sensible intuition, and sensible intuition can only give an object but cannot create an object. In Buddhism, when Perfect Teaching is reached, intellectual intuition will present itself without fail; *prajñā* wisdom is simply intellectual intuition, simply infinite mind. Intellectual intuition must be explained close to the infinite mind; *prajñā* is infinite mind and so is the Dao-mind.

We have previously explained that we cannot say that the Great Nirvana Dharma-body, produced by the Three Virtues, *prajñā*-wisdom, release [*mukti*], and Dharma-body of the Treasury of Profound Mysteries, procreates the myriad dharmas [things]. Then why is it that we can say “Buddhistic ontology”? We especially add “Buddhistic” to indicate that it is different from ordinary ontology and must be regarded differently and understood carefully. When it reaches the stage of Tiantai Perfect Teaching, it can be regarded as ontology because it can sustain the existence of all dharmas. In Perfect Teaching attaining Buddhahood is through identity with the Nine Dharma-realms.

Wisdom is attained by identity with all dharmas [*sarvadharma*, all things]; likewise with release and the Dharma-body. All-dharmas are simply the Ten Dharma-realms composed of the Nine Dharma-realms and the realm of Buddhadharmas, simply “in one thought-instant three thousand worlds [一念三千]”, containing therein the dharmas of three thousand worlds. To become Buddha requires that one be bonded to all dharmas; consequently, during the process of becoming a Buddha, all dharmas must exist, and it is in the body of Buddhadharmas itself that the necessity of all dharmas is assured. Since becoming a Buddha is attained by identity with [*ji*, 即] the Nine Dharma-realms, not a single one of the dharmas of three thousand worlds may be removed. The common belief is that Buddhism preaches Emptiness, Nothing, and extinction, as if it has no use for this world. That, however, is not Perfect Teaching. In Tiantai Perfect Teaching, not a single dharma may be discarded. Even dharmas such as hell-dwellers, hungry spirits, and animals may not be discarded. Only by reaching this highest level of Perfect Teaching can the existence of all dharmas be sustained. They are sustained and not accidental but necessary, for there is necessity in becoming a Buddha. Once there is necessity in the existence of dharmas, then it is ontology, and this is “Buddhistic ontology.”

When the Dharma-body along with all dharmas becomes a Buddha, it guarantees the existence of all dharmas. But we cannot say that the Dharma-body creates all dharmas. Instead, it is through the presentation of intellectual intuition that the existence of dharmas are sustained. *Prajñā* is also one mode of intellectual intuition, but not as Kant explained it, that God’s intuition is simply creation. Therefore I describe it as “presentation as one body [*yiti chengxian*—一體呈現].” Presentation as one body without a single dharma being excluded—this is a sufficient way of sustaining. This is the mode of interpreting the vertical horizontally, one to which Daoism belongs. “Interpreting horizontally” does not mean to insert the horizontal style of knowledge, but means not to explain through vertical creation but through “presentation as one body”. Since it is through presentation as one body, when the Dharma-body is presented the totality of all dharmas are presented with it and nothing may be removed. When *prajñā* is presented, all dharmas are within *prajñā*, are presented together with *prajñā*. In this way, does not *prajñā* turn around and sustain the existence of all dharmas? For all dharmas are simply the content of the *prajñā* Dharma-body. Release [deliverance] is also effected in identity

with all dharmas. Release means removing a malady, what the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra* calls “Removing the malady without removing the dharma”, for what should be removed is the malady not the dharma. Release must cut off greed, anger, and attachment, for these are maladies; but simultaneously they are dharmas, and regarded as dharmas will never be removed. For example, anger is not always bad; sometimes it is good and needed, as when “King Wu [founder of the Zhou dynasty] in one fit of anger brought peace to the empire.” Even the bodhisattva was not always a bodhisattva with eyes downcast, for there is also the Angry-Eyed Thunderbolt [*jingang*金剛, Vajra], which is the highest wisdom. Immanent presentation as one body and sustaining the existence of all dharmas are simply what is meant by the phrase “Buddhistic ontology.” Putting it more concretely, it is the meaning of the phrase “interpreting the vertical horizontally.” Daoism also has this flavor. It behooves us all to understand these phrases thoroughly.

Confucianism sustains the meaning of creation by explaining the vertical vertically, for the discipline of moral practice seeks to restore one’s original nature of moral creativity. The wisdom of Confucianism may be completely expressed in that poem that sings the praise of King Wen [father of King Wu] (*Book of Poetry*, Zhou Odes, “Heaven’s command [Wei tian zhi ming 維天之命]). Objectively speaking, it is the concept of “Heaven’s command, ah, profound without end” or “Heaven’s command is without end”. Subjectively speaking, it is “the purity also without end” of *The Doctrine of the Mean’s* encomium, “Oh how illustrious, the purity of the virtue of King Wen [於乎不顯，文王之德之純]”. Moral creation is simply the purity also without end of moral conduct. With one turn this statement becomes “Heaven moves ceaselessly. The noble man strengthens himself without pause [天行健，君子以自強不息]”. (*Yijing*, *qian* hexagram). Confucianism everywhere teaches vigilance-in-solitude, extending it to the discipline of reaching the ultimate of *liangzhi*, all of which requires restoring creativity, restoring the purity-also-without-end of moral conduct.

Daoism also has Daoistic ontology, which is a vision-based ontology. Its metaphysics is a vision-based type/mode of metaphysics. The vision-based type is one that explains the vertical horizontally, the horizontal aspect residing in mental-spiritual self-discipline, where discipline is the woof thread. Daoism does not explain the vertical

vertically because what it calls procreation is a vision-based state, a negatively defined procreation, namely a procreating that does not procreate. Daoism stresses viewing, reflection and *xuan* contemplation; this is static and is rich in artistic flavor, thus opening the Chinese artistic realm. The artistic realm is a static, contemplative realm. Explaining the vertical vertically is dynamic. Through contrast, the meaning of “explaining horizontally” will be revealed. This is the *xuan* thought of Daoism, which can engender wisdom in human beings. It is not shallow, nor is it that which Buddhism calls conceptual play [*xilun*]. Instead it seeks to make our lives collect inward step by step, which requires discipline as well as a proper understanding.

What the *Dao De Jing* calls “Reaching the void ultimate [*zhi xuji*致虛極], guarding calm carefully [*shou jin du* 守靜篤]” (Chap. 16) represents Daoist mental cultivation. Of course there are many terms to describe the discipline, but they may all be consolidated in these two terms. *Ji* 極 is *zhi* 至 “ultimate, extreme”. *Zhi xuji* means reaching the Absolute Void.

The discipline of guarding calm must be accomplished solidly and thoroughly, hence “guarding calm carefully” [*shou jing du* 守靜篤]. This is the discipline of “void, one, and calm [*xu yi er jing* 虛一而靜]”. Only under the discipline of calm can there be contemplation of return [*guan fu* 觀復]. Through the discipline of void, one, and calm, our life can be emptied and alert, pure, unified, without distraction, and not restless. Only then will the subjective mental state present the function of the unlimited mind, and when the infinite mind is presented then we can “contemplate the return”, which is what is meant by: “The many things flourishing, all returning to their roots. Returning to their roots is called calm. This is called returning to their mandates [夫物芸芸，各復歸其根，歸根曰靜，是謂復命].” (Chap. 16). These are all statements related to the static. Once the subjective state becomes calm, heaven, earth, and the myriad things will become calm and all will be able to return to their roots and revert to their [heavenly] mandates, each restoring its proper mandate [*ming*, decree, destiny]. Inability to return to the root and revert to the mandate will lead to “foolish action, evil” [*wangzuo, xiong* 妄作凶]. All things returning to their roots and reverting to their mandates contains the state of being free to roam that is so much desired by Zhuang Zi. The roaming and

equalization of things, and so forth, desired by Zhuang Zi were already implicit in Lao Zi's basic teaching, being merely developed and made explicit by Zhuang Zi. When the subjective state of being void, one, and calm is brought to light, then the great earth becomes serene and silent, the myriad things each in its place, each following its nature, each pursuing its life, each righting itself to its rightness. This then is the state of being free to roam and the evening out [equalizing] of things. This kind of being of the myriad things is in Kant's language "being-in-itself"; and so-called "roaming", "contented", and "self-sufficient [*wu dai*]", are simply "being-in-itself." Only thus can the myriad things sustain themselves, can there truly be existence. This can only be presented under the contemplation and reflection [*guanzhao*觀照] of the infinite mind (Dao-mind). The contemplation and *xuan* gaze of the infinite mind is also a kind of intellectual intuition, but this intellectual intuition does not create; instead it is a procreating that does not procreate and is presented as one body with all things. Thus it is still a horizontal treatment of the vertical, an attitude of calm contemplation. Cheng Mingdao[1032-85]'s statement that "The myriad things contemplating quietly are all contented [萬物靜觀皆自得]" has a certain Daoist flavor and is also a horizontal explanation of the vertical. If the subjective is restless then it is not self-contented, and then the myriad things would not be self-contented. Then the categories, time and space and so on are all added in, resulting in phenomena, which then is not the things-in-themselves.

Under such principles of discipline [*gongfu*], there are some fundamental concepts. First of all, there are distinctions between cultivating Dao and pursuing knowledge [*weixue*為學]: "In the pursuit of knowledge there is daily growth. In the cultivation of Dao there is daily loss [為道日益，為學日損]." (Chap. 48). Here there are two sets of discipline. "Cultivation of learning" refers to empirical knowledge, which must daily accumulate and increase. But the learning of Dao cannot be achieved by means of the methods of empirical knowledge or scientific knowledge. Here the direction is exactly the opposite, for it requires that all such knowledge be dissolved and removed, hence "daily loss". This dissolution finally becomes "Loss upon loss, until there is doing nothing, and in doing nothing nothing is not done [損之又損，以至於無為，無為而無不為]." (Chap. 48). This is surely a most basic statement and one rich in fundamental

principles. That which is to be lost is the previously mentioned physical desires, psychological moods, the contrivance of thoughts, and so on. Only thus can we be void, one, and calm, can the infinite mind present itself; and the marvelous uses of the infinite mind is simply intellectual intuition. Cultivation of Dao requires daily loss, and hence the additional statement “The farther he reaches, the less his knowledge [.]” (Chap. 47). People generally put great store in “Reading ten thousand volumes, traveling ten thousand miles”, which is actually only the mundane way of cultivating learning. From the perspective of cultivating learning it is obvious that “The farther he reaches, the greater his knowledge [其出彌遠，其知彌多].” But Dao is not to be seen on this road, hence the statement: “Without looking out the window, one sees the heavenly Dao. The farther one goes out, the less one knows [不窺牖見天道，其出彌遠，其知彌少].” The farther he goes, the less is his knowledge of Dao. These are all basic concepts contained in the Daoist system of discipline. Through these principles two kinds of knowledge may be distinguished which still apply today. “In cultivating learning there is daily growth” belongs to empirical knowledge, all of scientific knowledge belonging to the sphere of “cultivating learning”. Cultivating Dao is the opposite, the ancients in their teaching particularly stressing the aspect of cultivating Dao. This kind of demarcation also resonates with the first chapter of the *Dao De Jing*, which says: “The Dao that can be taught [*dao*] is not the constant/eternal teaching. The name that can be named is not the constant/eternal name [道可道，非常道。名可名，非常名].” Here knowledge is also divided into two spheres. There are really two spheres, the ancients making the demarcation very clear. Plato also distinguished the two worlds of the sensible world and the intelligible world. When it came to Kant, there was still the distinction between noumena and phenomena. These are not arbitrary divisions, but are essential. Lao Zi also made such distinctions, placing the emphasis on Dao, toward which he directed all his efforts.

Although it would seem then that Daoism belittles knowledge, it in fact did not really efface knowledge. Rather its value-emphasis was different. Since increase in empirical knowledge did not enhance the cultivation of Dao, then if the emphasis was on Dao, the attitude of cultivating knowledge would not correspond to it. People generally regard Daoism as having an anti-knowledge attitude, as for example when they say that

Zhuang Zi's "On Equalizing Things [Qi Wu Lun]" opposed knowledge as belonging to the sphere of the relative. In fact, Zhuang Zi demolished knowledge only because he wanted to transcend the relative in order to reach the absolute. His aim was to reach upward, not necessarily to negate knowledge. Of course he did not directly elaborate on knowledge. Thus his attitude is a negative one and can easily lead to misapprehension. Strictly speaking it is of no harm, but we should know that these are two different spheres. Relative knowledge is also needed, and moreover can be transcended and transformed, the emphasis on the transformability.

From where do we say that Lao Zi does not really negate the knowledge of the phenomenal world? Buddhism treats this world and leaving this world as of a piece, this world being also leaving this world, except that the emphasis is on leaving this world, although one cannot leave this world by separating from it. Daoism is likewise, although such statements are not frequent. Lao Zi says: "Blunt its sharpness, dissolve its conflict, harmonize its light, blend with its dust, [挫其銳，解其紛，和其光，同其塵]." (Chap. 4), which shows us that Daoism does not leave the knowledge of the phenomenal world. If we are unaware of the direction of Dao and sink completely into worldly knowledge, then that would be harmful. Once we understand this, then there will be no harm. This then is Perfect Teaching [*yuanjiao*, Perfect Doctrine]. Although all the clauses in "Blunt its sharpness, dissolve its conflict, harmonize its light, blend with its dust" have a similar structure, the statement is not easy to explicate. "It" refers to Dao, namely the Dao-mind. Analyzing the statement, the Dao-mind of course represents light, but if a light is hanging alone, or one is cultivating Dao in the deep mountains, it would not be a very high state. "Harmonize its light" means to dull or soften the light a little, in other words, admonishing one not to be too outstanding. "Dull its sharpness" also means not to be too conspicuous. That is why the ancients liked to "Sheathe the light and nourish the dark", admonishing one not to stand out and reveal one's brilliance. This is cultivation. Consequently material force [*qi* vital energy] is stressed, but one should not *shi qi*使氣, give rein to vital energy; rather one should *yang qi*養氣, nurture vital energy. Talent is stressed but it should not be over-exposed. These are the old admonitions common to all the Three Teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. It is this cultivation that has enabled the Chinese people to be a long-lived people, for cultural training of this sort

turns the direction of the mind from the physical life back upward and moreover adjusts and harmonizes the physical life, as a result of which the physical life can continue to flourish and endure.

Since sharpness and light are both attributes of Dao itself, these two clauses are relatively easy to understand. But how are we to understand “dissolve its conflict”, “blend with its dust”? The crux lies in the ambiguity of “its”. For example “my” in “my hair” and “my book” has different meanings. What dust does Dao have? Therefore dust refers to earth and dust, meaning this earthly world. What conflict does Dao have? Dao’s conflict refers to heaven, earth, and the myriad things. Dao leaves neither the world, nor heaven, earth, and the myriad things, therefore “its” is applicable to both but the meaning is different from the meaning of “its” in “Dull its sharpness, harmonize its light”, where “it” refers to Dao itself. “Dissolve its conflict” means to dissolve away the conflict of the myriad things so that Dao may remain pure, tranquil, and unperturbed. “Blend with its dust” means that Dao mixes with heaven, earth, and the myriad things. These two clauses both indicate that cultivation of Dao should not entail leaving the world and being solitary, and furthermore that cultivation of Dao must not entail leaving practical life. This means that the Daoist discipline of cultivating Dao does not really negate empirical knowledge. At the same time, this is also Daoist Perfect Teaching.

The preceding discussion uses the mode of explaining the vertical horizontally to look at the discipline contained in Daoism. Daoism is static, emphasizing contemplative reflection [*guan zhao*] and the *xuan* vision [*xuan lan* 玄覽]. Contemplative reflection pertains to the infinite mind. The Dao-mind is simply the infinite mind, the infinite mind being intellectual intuition, and that which intellectual intuition contemplates and reflects on is the myriad things that are myriad-things-in-themselves. But here what is brought out is not the meaning of creation but immanent presentation as one body. God creating through His intellectual intuition may also be explained as immanent presentation as one body, presenting creatively. Confucianism from Mencius down to Lu [Xiangshan, 1139-1193] and Wang [Yangming, 1472-1528] teaches mind, *liangzhi* [intellectual intuition, moral sense], and discusses the myriad things in terms of “being affected and responding in clear awareness [*mingjue zhi ganying* 明覺之感應]”, whereby the meaning of creation and the meaning of immanent presentation as one body are completely and instantly

dissolved into one and no longer discussed separately as *liangzhi* procreating and the myriad things being procreated. Thus Confucianism involves both the transcendent and the immanent, preserving and retaining the meaning of creation, because *liangzhi* is the creating substance, and clear awareness is *liangzhi* being clear and aware, the knowing-substance [i.e., *liangzhi*, good-knowing] being clear and aware. Thus there is the statement that “Being affected and responding in clear awareness make things [*mingjue zhi ganying wei wu* 明覺之感應為物]”. Although there is the meaning of immanent presentation as one body in Confucianism, it is not a Buddhistic nor a Daoistic immanent presentation as one body but retains a meaning of creation. So it is a vertical explanation of the vertical. “Being affected and responding in clear awareness make things” is not merely contemplating, or reflecting on, things. Confucianism teaches silently being affected, as in “because silently not moving, being affected and then interpenetrating with all-under-heaven [*jiran budong, gan er sui tong tianxia zhi gu* 寂然不動，感而遂通天下之故].” (*Yijing*, “Xici shang [Appended Statements A]”). Daoism teaches silent reflection [*jizhao* 寂照], Buddhism teaches calming-and-contemplation [*zhiguan* 止觀, Skt. *samatha-vipasyana*], showing the different modes. *Jigan*, silently being affected, refers to the Confucian mind and spirit. The *xian* 咸 hexagram in the *Yijing* is very important. The *xian* definition [*xiantuan*] says: “*Xian* 咸 is *gan* 感 [affect, influence].... Watch that which is affected, and the state of the myriad things of the world will be visible [*Xian is gan.... guan qi suo gan, er tiandi wanwu zhi qing ke jian yi* 咸，感也.... 觀其所感，而天地萬物之情可見矣].” Thus it does not through *liangzhi* speak of contemplating and reflecting on things in clear awareness but says “Being affected and responding in clear awareness makes things [*mingjue zhi ganying wei wu* 明覺之感應為物].” Being affected [*gan*] pertains to ontology and contains the meaning of creation. To say “silently reflecting [*jizhao*]” and even “contemplation and reflection” has a cognitive flavor; hence this is horizontal. This of course is not the “consciousness-knowing [*shizhi* 識知]” of epistemology and scientific knowledge, but wisdom-knowing [*zhizhi* 智知，intellectual intuition]. Wisdom-knowing is without-knowing and nothing not known, but all the same it has some cognitive horizontal flavor, so it is ultimately the horizontal

treatment of the vertical, which is to say, just presentation as one body. From this we may see the differences in character of the respective doctrinal systems.

Next time we will discuss the influence of Daoist wisdom on the intellectual history of China, and examine which aspect of Daoism was later regarded as taboo from the Confucian point of view. In fact, Confucianism cannot really regard it as taboo, for it is essential, the *xuan* principles of Daoism being especially characteristic of this aspect and calling for a careful understanding of their significance. These three lectures will enable us to arrive at a complete determination of the character of the *xuan* principles of Daoism.

Transcribed by Yi-hsien Hu 胡以嫻

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