I. INTRODUCTION

Taoism is divided into two groups: philosophical and religious Taoism.

Two figures who represent philosophical Taoism, are Laozi and Zhuangzi. They are the key figures represent philosophical Taoism. Laozi is the author of the classical book of ”dao de jing” and Chuangzi wrote a book simply named after him ”Chuangzi”

According to Chinese tradition, he was someone who worked officially in the loyal court for local ruler, and keeper of books in the library.

He is famous as a sage/wise man. And Confucius even visited him once. At that time, Confucious is a very young man, and he is very old man.
When he is 100 years old, he was boring with the corruption arrounding him in the court. So he left society, withdrew the society.

He is heading west, totally abandoned and go who knows where. As he leaves China, he has to pass throught a gate, and people guarded the gate recognized he is Laozi, such reputation as wisdom.

The gate keeper beg him. Before he goes, he would write his wisdom all down on a book. Laozi write down the essence of his view point, the philosophy of life in a little book. –Daodejing (Jing means the classical book, the book has classical text on the Dao, which is also translated into the Way)

The book on the way + its power & virtue.
So this is the very beginning of Taoism.
So later, Chuangzi write down similar thoughts.

The primary concept here is the Dao (which is often translated into the way),

It’s very difficult to definte. Basically, it is reality, nature itself, all that which constitute the ultimate reality, which is the absolute. Which many religion calls God, but here you don’t call the God. It’s not a personified being. It’s nature itself, reality itself. The one all that is. And the one manifest the ”Beingness” and ”non-beingness”.

Non being and being, it’s the source, the non-being is the source of being. The Dao is always in movement. Not static, always changing, constant flow of movements. The reality is such, from non-being to being, and from being back to non-being. It’s constant movement.

In terms of non-being, here the Dao is Chaos, undifferentiated potential.
Like cosmic soup, the chaos soup of universe. Withour other kinds of form of differentiation.
When Dao manifest into being. It's the realm of order, and differentiation. Everything is existing. There is a potential to actualize to get a form.

The Dao is moving from non-being, chaos to actual forms and order, and get actualized, and then return to non-being and chaos. This is constant movement.

How does the Dao work through? When things come into order, differentiated form, get actualized, the Dao works as the principal of Yin and Yang.

Everything that exists interplays between the principal of Yin and Yang. Everything in the realm of order involve interaction/inter play between Yin and Yang.

Yin represents the feminine (???), darkness, water, night, winter, that is soft/contract/flexible/passive/
wet/cold. All these elements are Yin forces. The Yang represents the opposite that is masculine, light, summer (vs. winter), hard, metal, rock, expand (vs. contract), heart. This is Yang energy.

Everything is kind of interplay between Yin and Yang.

For example, Yang is a sort of life, Yin is death. A baby is full of Yang energy, loaded with Yang. As he grows older, Yang shrink, and Yin becomes stronger and stronger, and Yin is dominant. So the movement is from Yang to Yin. The season, the Summer is the full manifestation of Yang, but after the longest day in the year, that’s the turning point, and day is getting shorter, the season is moving towards winter. So Yin is like a little seed and potential always there, and Yang is starting shrinking as Yin grows. And Yin fully manifest the Winter force. Yang is shrinked to a point. When Yin is dominant, Yang begins to grow and expand, and Yin is going to shrink. The realm of created order constant changing and moving is happening.

The Dao is working through these principal of Yin and Yang. This is the reality here. Dao is constant moving and change. Nothing is pessetic. Just like the doctrine of Buddhism: impermanent (is constantly changing). Dao is non purpose of going this way or that way, it’s just reality it is, nature as it is. No will involved in persona of particular being. No direction in mind, no purpose in mind. It’s non-purpose. It’s nature.

It’s no sense to talk about this is good, that is bad. Death is part of life. The life is a part of nature. You grow old, he dies. And constant movement of the seasons. This is the reality. This is nature way of things.

Just because Yin is associated with darkness or night, winter, even death. It doesn’t mean it’s bad. Not bad, just the way is, just nature.

As the result of nature of Dao, and constant movement from non-being to being, from night to day, from life to death. The Dao compose the all. So, it comes the second key idea, the relativity of opposite. The symbol of Dao represents here.

This is all black, and has a little white circle, this half is all which and has a little black circle. This white with black circle is Yang side of Dao, This part of black with white circle is Yin side of Dao. Because the darkness here is dormant.

But here includes the opposition, even it’s highly loaded with Yang, there is seed of Yin. Overtime, the seed is growing, grow grow grow, and Yin is dormant. When Yin is dormant, there is a seed of Yang, then shift back over. Yang is going to be dormant.

Dao is constant moving from one to the other. So manifest day and night, life and death.
There is no good, bad, you should get rid of it. That means you’re against the Dao, against the nature movement of Dao.

From the doctroine of relativity of opposite, comes the human dilemma, the reason why there is problem in society, is society set up rules of absolute, they always polarize things into opposite. And call one thing good, the other thing is bad. In society, through social conditioning, you’re taught that it’s good to powerful, wealth, beautiful. It’s bad to be ugly, poor, to be powerless. You’re polarized to the opposite and moralize them, this is good, this is what you want. This is evil, this is what you don’t want.

Then, you pursue the one no matter what, you define is good. In doing that, you automatically go against the Dao. You will not be harmony with the Dao, and create all kind of problems.

The idea is compatible with Zen of empty. The purity of child represents the idea of Daoism. Daoism influence Zen quite a lot.

The idea is the baby, to know who you really are, you need to return to your original nature as a baby, the baby is naturally in harmony with the Dao.

The baby has no ambition or desire. They don’t care about beauty, power, wealth. They don’t have desire goal, no interested in such ambition. They are simple, innocent and pure then happy.

Then, they are corrupted through the social conditioning. The parent starts to tell them, you can’t do this, you can’t do that, you have look certain way, you have to do certain of things. You have to get Ph.d degree, make a lot of money, retire early, buy fancy house, have all these ambition. They condition you. You have to strive all those objective. I can’t be happy until I obtain them. I have to get them, even I cheat on my exam. And competition with others. Not kind to my competitors, step on other people, so leads them corruption in so many ways.

To be in harmony with the Dao. It’s almost impossible to be truly in harmony with the Dao when one live in civilization, it’s impossible to do in urban society. You need to withdraw from society. Literally means to live close to nature, and in harmony with nature itself. To live the natural way. How can one come fully harmony with the Dao?

You should return your original nature. Your original nature which is in harmony with the Dao is the baby, to return to the state of un-carved wood block.

The beautiful green wood is harmony with the Dao, then social conditioning carved you up, and shave you, modify you. you gotta be like this, you gotta think like this, feel like this, do that, do this. You get all carved up.
And you are no longer be your original nature. You’re not what’s you really born. The goal is to return to that original nature. Return to the state of un-carved wood block. You should get rid of all of the social conditioning.

Undo that carving. You drop from society, and practise meditation. This is called “sitting in forgetfulness” Forget all what you’ve been told, forget all that put into you. Just sitting and empty your mind.

You wanna engage and embrace the principle of no knowledge and imbrace the practice of actionless action.

There knowledge : human knowledge comes from social conditioning wisdom : knowldege comes from being in harmony with the Dao, without any efforts. Different types of knowledge. The way of no knowledge means the knowlege not come from human reason/analysis, it comes from wisdom that is in perfect harmony with the Dao, no force, no self, no ego, have few desires. This is also the way to be truly free. True freedom, by obtaining the way of no knowledge, become one with Dao, guided by the Dao.

If you’re fully harmony with the Dao, you then transcend the limitation of physical realm. You transcend the ego, and perhaps to obtain eternal Then, you can possess magical power.

Confucius very emphasize the education, you need have the knowledge. Dao abandon that knowledge. Then people naturally return to be love and virtue if they do so. Abandon the skill, then there is no robbers, simplity of being self, no ego, no ambition, few desire.

Some empire emphasize no activities, the less you actually rule, the powerful you will rule; the more ambition, there are in the world, the more you cannot do, then the poorer people will be; the more weapon that get developed, the more troubles the people will be; the more cunning skill a man posses, then more theft will be. Therefore, a sage, (am empire should be a sage), should say this ” I take no action, then the people themself transformed; I love peace and tranquility, then people themself become correct; I engage no activity, people themself become prosperous; I have no desire, pleople themself also become very simple. The minimum construction to rule the society.