

Laozi's Daodejing

The English & Chinese Translations

Based on Laozi's Original Daoism

From the Chinese Hermeneutical and the Western Philosophical Perspectives

老子的道德经
中英白话句解与老学研究



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CHEN LEE SUN

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From Philosophical and Hermeneutical
Perspectives

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on Laozi's Original Daoism*

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CHEN LEE SUN
陈丽生

iUniverse, Inc.
Bloomington

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The English and Chinese Translations Based on Laozi's Original Daoism

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Contents

Introductory Remarks	xi
Prologue—The Inspirations and Philosophical Background of this Translation	xvii
Chern 陳省身, Mathematics and Philosophy.....	xx
Popper 波普尔, the Greek Philosophy and Laozi	xxxiii
Ayer 艾耶尔, Empiricism, Logical Positivism and Pragmatism (Language, Truth and Logic)	xliii
Needham the Greatest Sinologist-Microbiologist and Daoism.....	lxviii
My Father	lxix
Methods Used in This Translation of Laozi’s Work.....	lxxii
This Book is Consisted with Three Parts	lxxvii
Part One Introduction.....	1
Introduction to Laozi’s Daoism & His Book known as Daodejing.....	1
Section A <i>The Book Laozi—Daodejing</i> <i>(aka Tao Te Ching)</i>.....	3
Chapter I Laozi’s influence on Daoism & Confucianism.....	5
Chapter II A Biographical Sketch of “The Old Master—The Philosopher”	26
Chapter III Buddhism, Christianity & Laozi	35
Chapter IV The Relation of Confucius to Laozi.....	48
Chapter V About the Philosophy of Laozi—Laoism & Its Relation to Daoism	58

Section B *The Truth about Laozi: The Original Philosopher of Daoism*69

Chapter VI The Truth about Laozi’s Original Daoism & Its Difference with The Popular Daoism—Its Offshoot.....71

Chapter VII The Authenticity of the Person Laozi and His Book(aka Daodejing)—A Retrospective Examination.....77

Chapter VIII The Proof From Epistemological Perspective.....86

Chapter IX The Proof from A Logical Perspective.....97

Chapter X The Proof from A Historical Perspective.....106

Chapter XI The Proof from A Linguistic Perspective
Historical Linguistics.....110
Epistemological Linguistics114

Chapter XII The Dao of Laozi’s Daodejing—Conclusion117

**Part Two *The English Translation of Dao De Jing*..... 131
Based on Laozi’s Original Daoism**

BOOK A The Book on “Tao” (Chapters 1 to 37) 131

BOOK B The Book on “Te” (Chapters 38 to 81) 175

**Part Three 中文部份 *The Chinese of Dao De Jing*..... 229
Based on Laozi’s Original Daoism**

Chern and Laozi 陳省身与老子231

Introduction 老学研究简介236

The Book on Dao- First thirty-Seven Chapters 道章259

Bibliography I(Chinese)309

Reference.....313

Appendix I 附錄 一317

Sample of Internet-image Recovered Cotton Laozi (circa 179 BC-169 BC)—the oldest copy discovered.....319

QUOTES from Correspondences321

Vocabularies323

Introductory Remarks

*People [in vogue] are ignorant, so they do not know me;
There are only a handful people who [would make an effort to] understand me;
Those who understand me will discover that my theory is valuable;
The description, that ancient Saints were like men who carried priceless
jades under coarse ragged cloaks, was not made from casual observation.*

(Daodejing 70.III)

The great 20th Century American poet Ezra Pound¹ has once attempted translating the three thousand year old *Shi Jing*(*Old Odes*²) from the original old classical Chinese text to English. Even though, having been a great poet/translator of Chinese and Japanese himself, his intuitive understanding of the Chinese ancient odes was unmatched in the Western world, yet when he carried out such a task, he honestly and humbly admitted that, *to combat the extreme hardships of translation, improvisation could be the only option a translator has*. Naturally, if this expediency has been used too immodestly and too frequently, the truthfulness of the translation accordingly suffers. Modern Platonic scholar A.E. Taylor, who has had translated Plato extensively, has also said about translating difficult texts:

*To understand a great thinker is, of course, impossible unless we know something of the relative order of his works, and of actual period of his life to which they belong.*³

¹ Ezra Pound (1885-1972) the great American poet of 20th Century, who has translated many Chinese and Japanese poems and classics into English. For more about him at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezra_Pound

² *Shi Jing* Old Odes: ancient Chinese poems circulated since the beginning of the history, and they were compiled around Laozi's time 7th Century BC. Their languages are thus very close to Daodejing.

³ A.E.Taylor: Plato, The Man and His Work, p.16(Meridian Books, New York, 1956)

The most celebrated philosopher of the 20th Century Ludwig Wittgenstein, who was German-English bilingual, has had deep thoughts on translations from a philosophical perspective, says:

“When translating one language into another, we do not proceed by translating each *proposition* of one into a *proposition* of the other, but merely by translating the constituents of propositions” *Tractatus (Logical-Philosophicus)* 4.025⁴

Many supposedly “orthodox” translations of Daodejing have suffered from failing to convey even adequately ‘constituents of prepositions’ which are not obvious. It is a mistake to embark to understand Laozi as a piece of poem, or of the opinion he could be understood from common sense view of Daoism. It was also a lazy approach to assume the translator’s understanding of the *prima facie* (superficial) common normal use (meanings) of words are sufficient to fathom Laozi’s thoughts. In other words, many interpretations/translations did not even grasp the framework of this book. This is also the reason why Laozi’s Daodejing has had been so difficult to understand, even by people at his home land China twenty three centuries ago. The biggest sin may be taking its statements ‘out of context’ piecemeal by piecemeal. The harm thus is it had ruined the gestalt of the author. Or, there was no gestalt framework to mirror Laozi’s gestalt.

After having had struggled with hard works for about half a century, I believe I have had pushed ahead significantly through; now I am able to comprehend the framework of Laozi’s original work. It was a philosophical pursuit to check-balance degrees of error in manifesting substantially the original true meanings of Laozi’s Daodejing. On the other hand, if one could start to understand Laozi through the Socrates’ dictum “Know thyself”, Laozi’s framework could be mirrored from one’s own gestalt framework.⁵ Confucius once said, “In old days, scholars pursued learning for the sake of self, but nowadays scholars pursued learning for showing off to people.” I have had been working on understanding Laozi for my own self examination all along. This is another reason I am iconoclastically unorthodox in this pursuit.

⁴ Definition of *PREPOSITION*: a function word that typically combines with a noun phrase to form a phrase which usually expresses a modification or predication. (fr. Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

⁵ Gestalt: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gestalt_psychology

The deeper the thought is embodied in prepositions, the more would it suffer from superficial “surfing of the text”. Many thoughtful writings have many layers of meanings and dimensions. Therefore with the same sentence (linguistic form) readers of different capacities could reach different layers of meaning. That is the reason the book *Laozi* was translated/interpreted in so many different ways; the background of an interpreter/translator were often injected in the manifestation. Often they borrowed from their accustomed background of Confucian, Buddhist, Christianity or (Religious) Daoist. Yet none of the above is appropriate. However, the aforementioned quote of Wittgenstein bringing right to the point what translation is all about epistemologically. That is a decent neutral philosophical approach, free from any hue of bias.

The aim of this translator was to cling to the tenet of Laozi's thought as closely as possible. As many established orthodox approach are philosophically and hermeneutically on the wrong footings, the aim of this translation has been to rectify (straighten out) theses mistakes and return the book *Daodejing* to its original thoughts and philosophical contents—intentions. Any kind of conversion of statements into poetry, the kind of practice Laozi himself had had also rejected, would inevitably shift and remove part or even all of the essence of his philosophy. For this reason, due to my reverence of Laozi's thought, which deepens as years go by, I have been taking advantage of this freedom with great caution and discretion, even at the sacrifice of the smoothness of English expressions.

In the past decades Sinologists have gradually shifted to the pinyin system practiced in China. For example, Peking is now expressed as “Beijing”. In pinyin system, Lao Tzu should be spelled as “Laozi”, Taoism as “Daoism”, and *Tao Te Ching* as “*Daodejing*”. After much deliberation, in the 1999 primary version of this book I had decided to adopt the traditional Matthew's Romanization system, which has being been used in the since 19th Century. By 21st Century, that system is definitely in defunct. Nevertheless, my translation is far different from a free-spirited venture into no-man's-land, as many translations have displayed this freedom and hubris, that it is inexcusable even if it was carried out inadvertently. It is strange that some self-claimed scholars on Chinese Classics, even in China, have ignored the principle of the Chinese hermeneutic and linguistics when come to the task of translating this book, let alone its philosophical framework. Worse than that there are writers or want-to-be celebrity with

brave hearts, would like to show off the translation of Daodejing as their trophy of achievements.

As a rule of thumb, reading the translations of the First Chapter of *Laozi(Daodejing)*, I could predict what kind of bending and distortion of the original their readers will be misled to. Accordingly, it comes to a matter of how much of the original linguistic meanings have been thus bent or far-stretched, not to mention its consequence on the philosophical meaning of the text. Confucius's aphorism, "You (One) should know that you know it for certain (and prove it), and one is able to admit what you do not know if your knowledge is not solid enough. Then that is what I called having the true knowledge." (*Zhi zhi wei zhi zhi, bu zhi wei bu zhi, shi zhi ye*)⁶ is a very good advise here.

I have always been a confirmed follower of Laozi; it began when I was a teenager, the same time I ventured in reading Western philosophies, and persists until this day, particularly when the going is tough, it especially sounds like as soothing voice. In my pre-enlightened years,⁷ Laozi's sayings hit me like lightning of immortality and served me as mottoes ever since then. Accordingly Laozi's philosophy has had been my anchor throughout my life. I get to know myself more and better through reading him as years went by. His wisdom has enhanced my dexterity of self-help and self-support, particularly when the going was tough. It seemed have opened my mind's eye, so to speak, rationally and scientifically to the riddle of life and death.

However, my readings of the last few decades were more on rationalist philosophies of the West, with the exception of the creative and amphibious Nietzsche, the person whose self-knowledge excels that of any other human beings(as said by Sigmund Freud); his observation was also razor sharp. I must admit that, in my tender impressionable years, the education system's mandatory intensive indoctrination of Confucianism did make it easier for me to apprehend Laozi's thoughts. These two great rationalist thinkers, i.e. Laozi and Confucius, were like Plato and Aristotle, close in spirit yet different in presentation. If the keynote of philosophy is "Know thyself", as suggested by Socrates, then I've benefited much by studying Laozi continuously, contiguously and consistently, with side trips to Nietzsche

⁶ Laozi has also expressed the similar opinion. See *Laozi(aka Daodejing)*, Chapter 71.0.

⁷ Before I read A.J.Ayer, I read Bertand Russell & Nietzsche.

and Schopenhauer. On balance, my main training and readings were in the Western philosophy, particularly modern Empiricism (from Russell to Ayer). For me it has been my self-help book in this hapless and insecure world of uncertainty. Through my dedication to Laozi, the philosopher and the man of wisdom, I came to the attention of two great intellectuals, Sir Karl Popper and the great mathematician Chern, Shiing-Shen; they both have had long-standing interest in Laozi as well. Their interest and encouragement were instrumental for me in finalizing this translation.

The Prologue here is abnormally long, for it articulates the long journey I have had taken to get where I was in understanding Laozi. Readers may choose to bypass this lengthy and chit-chat Prologue by choosing to go to the Chapters that have spelled out their interested subjects; this might help them focusing on various themes embodied in Laozi's book *Daodejing* in depth. So let it be, as Hamlet's good friend Horatio says at the closing passage of that play:

“Of that I shall have also cause to speak, and from his mouth whose voice will draw on more; but let this same be presently perform'd,
Even while men's minds are wild; lest more mischance
On plots and errors, happen.”

In the same vein, I wish to prevent any form of plagiarism, particularly about the translation of *Daodejing*.

There already has had plagiarism on my older 1999 rougher translation titled *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching Translation Based on His Taoism*. Even though it is also a form of admiration, consciously or unconsciously, yet the imitator's profiting from this through bargaining for notoriety or achievement trophy, if not illegal, is not ethically acceptable. Luckily in this case, many of their English paraphrases have altered the original meanings of Laozi's *prepositions*; the distortions thus caused cannot fit in fittingly (coherently) in Laozi's framework, which is embodied in the gestalt of this translation.

The Library of the University of California, in San Diego, was the source of many out-of-print Chinese books which I used in this research, particularly Section B of Part One. Before using information from the internet, I had been benefitted by the East Asian Library of University of California, Berkeley. On-and-off, I have also received some encouraging comments from my scientific-minded math passionate husband Roland Org. He is responsible for the introduction of two key terms “Serenity” and “non-interference” in this translation as well. In married life give-and-take

is carried out subconsciously and interminably, so all I can say is that that has helped. Our son Nyyrikki has been responsible to coach me since 1982 through all phases of development of computer software. I am also thankful to many other people, who are either related to me or have befriended me. Their spontaneous advice has all contributed to the finalization of this book. In all honesty, the credit should not be given to me alone; Sir Karl Popper has had showered me with so much attention on this translation before I had the break through. Whenever I was working on this book, I seemed to be reminded by Ayer constantly, "Follow your heart and write down all you can put on the paper *spontaneously*." In any case he had always addressed me as 'Lee Sun Chen', even to his then infant son.

I would say that I'm a whole-hearted follower of Laozi more than any other thinkers. Perhaps his thoughts have sustained me covertly on my passage on earth; it has made my journey much more bearable against all vicissitude. As years go by, the most impressionable memory that hovered around me was the urge given by Professor Chern Shiing-Shen about Laozi; he eagerly urged me to make known widely this translation and Laozi's real philosophy. Somehow I have been tempted by my selfishness to keep all the treasured wisdom for myself. However, his enthusiasm seems to have been growing on me year after year as time goes by.

Lee Sun Chen Org
(Aka Chen Lee Sun)
May 20, 1999 & May 20, 2011
San Diego, California

Prologue

The Inspirations and Philosophical Background of this Translation

Philosophy is akin to poetry . . . In each case there is reference to from beyond the direct meaning of words. Poetry allies itself to metre,⁸ philosophy to mathematic pattern.⁹

A.N.Whitehead, A great Mathematician-Philosopher

Translating Laozi's book *Daodejing* is a task that one must be mindful of three dimensions of this project. In other words, in order to understand Laozi's book, one must think through the following three phases before interpreting or translating his book into any language, including Chinese. These considerations are: 1. Being Philosophically correct about Laozi's thoughts. 2. Being hermeneutically correct about the text. 3. Being logically correct about Laozi's framework.

Notwithstanding there exist more than two hundred English translations of Laozi's book *Daodejing* nowadays. In the West, Laozi had been popularly known as **Lao Tzu** or **Lao Tse**, and his only book in circulation was *known* as **Tao Te Ching** or **Dao De King et al**. And it is said that this book has had been translated so frequently to match that of the Holy Bible. This reflects, *prima facie*, hardly anybody is sure what interpretation or translation is comprehensibly correct, so it is kind like anybody buying a lottery ticket will probably win. It is all because, unlike

⁸ Metre: systematically arranged and measured rhythm in verse: (1)rhythm that continuously repeats a single basic pattern <iambic meter> (2) rhythm characterized by regular recurrence of a systematic arrangement of basic patterns in larger figures <ballad> (Merriam-Webster).

⁹ A.N.Whitehead: *Modes of Thought*, p.237.

ancient Western philosophical works, there is strictly hardly any credible or thoroughly analyzed criterion for accurate translation, but lot room left for free-range guessing and speculations. Zealous Westerners, having been inspired by fragmental citation of Laozi, yet were constrained by their poor knowledge of the Chinese language, would use their improvisation in translating this book. Let alone of the fact that they have learned about the Chinese culture from their Chinese masters many have suffered from their very limited knowledge about the Western philosophy, as well as Laozi's framework. Even in China, not many Chinese could comprehend Laozi's framework, either due to their ignorance what is philosophy, or what is framework. Inevitably, pretention has seeped in due to the pursuers' attempts for over-achievements.

To set the record straight at the inception of the translation of this book, it should be noted that the most appropriate Romanized expression of names, as adopted by Chinese, should be **Laozi**, and the correct spelling of the title of his book is *Daodejing*. It is a book of, exclusively and inclusively, rational philosophical thoughts; not thoughts that embodies emotive thoughts, e.g. poem or religious serenade.¹⁰ Accordingly it is a gross mistake to versify Laozi, as many translations had tried to show off this way, for "*Poetry allies itself to metre, philosophy to mathematic pattern.*"¹¹

It appears that many translators/interpreters of this book, are handicapped, not only by the fact the book was written in a much difficult to comprehend ancient classical Chinese, but also their ignorance of the book's traditional background—the Chinese civilization. The language of the book *Laozi's* is close to the hieroglyphics, which appeared on oracle bones in the 27th Century BC. In other words, it was the language which could only be understood by people who know of the working of the ancient Chinese linguistics (hermeneutic), of the period between 27th Century BC (the initiation of literacy) and 2nd Century BC (when the unification and standardization of the classical Chinese language took place). Not to mention the recognition of both those ancient linguistic forms and their uses are another type of expertise.

Furthermore Laozi is a historically monumental figure of the Chinese civilization. Compounding the problem, particularly in the West, is the

¹⁰ The term "emotive thoughts" was first used by A.J.Ayer in *Language, Truth and Logic*.

¹¹ A.N.Whitehead: *Modes of Thought*, p.237.

readers' vulnerability that they may be swayed by, the more popular, pagan religious Daoists' mythologization of the text. That the original classical Chinese texts of this book handed down are still fragmentary and poorly reorganized. The best recovery could be achieved was still unsuccessful. Accordingly translator's being particularly mindful, to the extent of wariness, is the key to a correct recapitulation of Laozi's thoughts, i.e. his philosophy and framework, i.e. system.¹² Just as Laozi has said in the First Chapter:

1. I Dao [Truth] can be talked about [described or theorized] in any manner each person considers feasible, though hardly any of these descriptions will be perpetually valid;
Names [Descriptions] can be ascribed to Dao in any manner each person deems workable], yet hardly of these will last forever.

In this circumstance of free range translation, partial and incorrect translations of Laozi's book could subsequently rob readers the opportunity of learning about the real Laozi, let alone his deep and comprehensive thoughtful philosophy. In other words a translator/interpreter should try to adhere to the logic of Laozi's philosophy.

Then, how about the dimension of mirroring the real essential spirit of Laozi? That is the intense sincerity and seriousness for the quest of truth, rationality, serenity, caring for humanities and particularly self-reliance in facing uncertainties.

Usually translators/interpreters of this book especially in the West, where much less understanding of Laozi had had happened more frequently, have had mistakenly, customarily and commercially, confused the original full-fledged Laoism originated by Laozi with later trivialized Daoism, or worse still, other gibberish like Ying-Yang Talks. These kind of brutish starting point has had made the fatal serious intellectual mistakes about Laozi. Or worse than that, most often due to their poor understanding of either the hermeneutic of Laozi's language or Laozi's philosophy, some frustrated expert/critic even conveniently went so far by proclaiming that Laozi was never a real person and the book was but a juxtaposition of many Daoist writings! Laozi himself had said it candidly:

¹² Karl Popper: The Myth of the Framework (ISBN: 0415135559 / 0-415-13555-9)

“Dao (Truth) can be talked about (theorized in any manner each person considers understandably viable), though hardly any of these theories could stand the test of time to be always valid. (*Laozi* 1.1)”

“A person who knows [comprehensively] is not garrulous; a person who is garrulous is not wise (he is more likely knowing it incomprehensively). (*Laozi* 56.1)

People in this world often complained: either that my theory was big and empty, or worse than that it does not appear to be about anything (practically) significant;

It is just because I have discussed matters of great importance that it was difficult for [ordinary people] (even) to comprehend its outline; (*Laozi*, Chapter 67.1)”

After the long struggle of working for almost half a century on this book, going through studying the original texts (of various versions) over and over again, my understanding of him came only about a decade ago. Henceforth, I felt obligated to make an effort to live up and brush up Laozi’s philosophy for the 21st Century. In the mean time, my learning had been enriched by my enhanced knowledge of Confucianism and the Western philosophy; my English has also improved to the extent that I could articulate my thoughts more precisely. As a matter of fact, had I come across any tolerably correct and truthful translation/interpretation of the original *Laozi*, I should have quitted joining this mad rat race. There are something else more important, e.g. to explore deeper into the self-knowledge, as Socrates had originally urged students to philosophize through ‘knowing thyself’. Or to dive into the search for the truth of Nietzsche’s ‘eternal recurrence’, Schopenhauer’s analysis on ‘will’ and problems of ‘infinity’ in cosmos are equally noteworthy too.

My Inspirations

Chern, Mathematics and Philosophy

I owe my special thanks to Professor Chern Shiing-Shen, for his agreement to do the calligraphy of the Chinese title at his advanced age of pushing for ninety, as well as his encouragements and his enthusiasm about presenting the real Laozi to the world. With a person of almost ninety years old in 1999, it took quite an effort to write with a brush pen.

Notwithstanding, all his life Professor Chern Shiing-shen was pursuing deep mathematics as he had established himself as the great mathematician on topology of the 20th Century. From a philosophical prospect, his dynamical Chern-Simons Theory modified gravity, Godel Universe and variable cosmological constant; it is epoch making in both mathematics and science.¹³ My guess is that had his theorems in mathematics have come out twenty years earlier it could have helped Einstein getting a clue to the solution of his life-long problem of Unified Field Theory in his lifetime. In 2004 China has launched a satellite for his name sake, and here down on earth, the Chern Hall in the University of California Berkeley was named after him. Then there are numerous other mathematical institutes named after him as well. Before then in 1999 there was Chern-Simons Hall dedicated by the University of California Physics Department. In his alumnus Nankai University there is Chern Institute of Mathematics. He had shown his interest on my translation when he heard about my pursuit. A biological film about Chern is available on the internet: <http://zalafilms.com/takingthelongviewfilm/index.html>

Mathematics and philosophy are not unrelated to each other. On the contrary, they have a close affinity. In Ancient Greece their fusion was taken as a matter of course. The Pre-Socrates philosopher Pythagoras(570-495 BC), who had invented geometry and Pythagoras Theorem in geometry, which was known by everyone who studies geometry, was himself a Pre-Socratic philosopher. He is often revered as a great mathematician, mystic and scientist by scholars. His influence on Plato and hence the Western philosophy is comparable to that of Socrates. For him, mathematics was a kind of religion that it reveals the eternal truth of the world, hence he taught his disciples to practice and revere it religiously.¹⁴ Bertrand Russell, in his *A_History_of_Western_Philosophy*, contended that the

¹³ <http://arxiv.org/abs/1004.5106>,
<http://adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/2010arXiv1003.6017A>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chern%E2%80%93Simons_theory

¹⁴ Pythagoras in <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pythagoras>: Pythagoras made influential contributions to philosophy and religious teaching in the late 6th century BC. Pythagorean theorem, a theorem in geometry that states that in a right-angled triangle the square of the hypotenuse (the side opposite the right angle), c , is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides, b and a —that is, $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$

Fuzzy logic: Please read http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuzzy_logic

influence of Pythagoras on Plato and others was so great that he should be considered the most influential one of all Western philosophers; his Chapter on Pythagoras runs rather longer than chapters on any other early Greek philosophers. For instance, the thinking activity, of bearing in mind of the underlying problem of infinity, while developing the set theory is a philosophical decision. It started with Zeno of the 5th Century BC, continued in 19th Century AD by Georg Cantor and Russell. Zeno of Elea(490 BC?-430 BC?) had also raised a profound philosophical issue—Zeno’s Paradox which is still a debated issue in mathematics, science and philosophy.¹⁵ The term “asymptote” mentioned in the study of “Dao” in this paper is also a mathematical computational notion.¹⁶

During the Enlightenment Descartes(1596-1650) was the most noteworthy mathematician-philosopher. His significant contribution to mathematics is by pointing out that math is a science of discontinuous quantities, and geometry is a science of continuous quantities; a significant contribution in metaphysical reasoning. Descartes famous dictum “I think, therefore I am” is still influential in philosophy. Then there was Russell’s early philosophical idol Leibniz(1646-1716) who was also a mathematician, who had invented calculus simultaneously with Newton. In the 19-20th Century there were A.N.Whitehead and Bertrand Russell, co-authors of the monumental book Principia Mathematica, which seeks the logical foundation of mathematics. Whitehead was originally a mathematician who had made a smooth transition to philosophy, after he and Russell had labored on researching the logical foundation of mathematics.

One of the founders of modern logic, and made major contributions to the foundations of mathematics was a German mathematician Friedrich Ludwig Gottlob Frege (1848-1925) who became a historically important logician and philosopher later.¹⁷ Russell was responsible to introduce his work to logicians and philosophers; he was also enthusiastically supported particularly by his student Wittgenstein, another influential philosopher. Wittgenstein was originally an engineer and went into studying philosophy

¹⁵ Zeno’s Paradoxes, i.e. Arguments against Motion, may be started to be understood with he the parable of a race between tortoise and rabbit, for mathematically rabbit never wins.

¹⁶ Cf Note 184 for “asymptote”.

¹⁷ Gottlob Frege at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frege>. The contemporary authority on Frege is the official successor of Ayer, Professor Sir Michael Dummett of the Oxford University.

through researching on the foundations of mathematics. The other person who had influenced Wittgenstein was Whitehead. The fact was that Whitehead had started doing philosophical works only after “Principia Mathematica” was finished when he was in his fifties. Also there was Alfred Tarski, another mathematician from the University of California, Berkeley; his theory (definition of the logic) of Truth in his book “Logic, Semantics & Mathematics” is monumental in philosophy.¹⁸ Tarski was also considered one of the greatest logicians.¹⁹

Then there is Charles Sanders Peirce(1839-1914), an American philosopher, mathematician, logician and scientist, born in Cambridge, Massachusetts. His works are still being researched with diligence by philosophers and logicians, especially in Harvard University. His contribution was admired by Dewey, Whitehead, Russell, Popper, Quine and Ayer. In spite of the fact that he was professionally a mathematician and logician, he was referred to as the greatest philosopher of the United States.²⁰

I had read about Professor Chern’s doing pioneering work in mathematics (topology and geometry) even while I was in high school. He was responsible for the introduction of both Chern’s Characteristic Class and Chern-Weil Theory and Gauss-Chern-Bennet Theory.²¹ Among his massive works in mathematics, one of his books is entitled, “Complex Manifolds without Potential Theory” Back in 1960 he was elected member of The National Academy of Sciences of the United States. He was also the founder of The National Mathematical Science Research Institute (MSRI), which is located in Berkeley. Not to mention, to my knowledge, almost all the who’s who, top well-known Chinese mathematicians and logicians(in philosophy) in the United States from years of 1940’s to 2000, have had being been under Chern’s teaching and guidance one way or the other. He was loved and respected by his students of other national origins as well. One of them has donated the fund he has won in lottery for the purpose of doing research on Chern’s mathematics.

¹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_Tarski

¹⁹ Tarski, Popper and Ayer were all participating in the Conference of Vienna Circle for Logical Positivism, however none of them was ever a member of that Circle.

²⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Sanders_Peirce

²¹ Cf. Stochastic Local Gauss-Bonnet-Chern Theorem(or Chern-Gauss-Bonnet Theorem) at: <http://www.springerlink.com/content/k077372110p737m4/>

Chern's works could be further described to laymen by what was reported, in Sunday London Times, on December 10, 2004 about *Professor Chern: A Mathematician and a much-loved teacher who redefined global differential geometry*. It also says, "Chern's mathematical work is characterized by his absolute mastery of the techniques he learnt from Cartan and their application to *a vast number of global problems in geometry, topology and complex analysis*. One of the areas he studied most was the ***theory of fibre bundles***." Furthermore, a more mathematically-oriented biography described, in more depth about his contributions, could be found via web site of the School of Mathematics and Statistics of the University of St. Andrews University, Scotland.²² It further asserts, *by such an appropriate authority in this field, that his contributions are important to both mathematics and physics*. In the field of math and science, Professor Chern's mathematical theorems have provided a solid mathematical footing for the string theory and the probability of the mathematical (geometrical) explanation of multiple dimensions of the universe in contemporary physics.²³

Between 1911 (the year Chern was born) and 1945 (the year Chern came to the United States); China went through a great deal, politically, socially, and culturally. When Chern was an undergraduate in 1920-30's, then heated controversy over whether Confucius lived before Laozi attracted his attention. For years he did not have a chance to articulate his thoughts about the dispute that history had wrongly reported that Laozi

²² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generalized_Gauss%E2%80%93Bonnet_theorem

²³ <http://www-history.mcs.st-andrews.ac.uk/Biographies/Chern.html>
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/obituaries/article401212.ece>
<http://www-history.mcs.st-andrews.ac.uk/Biographies/Chern.html>
<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/07/international/asia/07chern.html>
<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/inmemoriam/shiingshenchern.htm>
<http://sciencematters.berkeley.edu/archives/volume2/issue8/legacy.php>
http://secure.msri.org/calendar/index_events_old
*SHIING-SHEN CHERN (from Google search)
PROCEEDINGS OF THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.
VOL. 151, NO. 1, MARCH 2007. 3 December 2004. SHIING-SHEN CHERN. Born 26 October 1911..
<http://www.amphilsoc.org/node/1131>(American Philosophical Society)

had shown guidance to Confucius. This much populated opinion was also ridiculous, an argument full of hot air.

Professor Chern had been thoroughly Confucianism-educated before his undergraduate days. Later he improved his scholarship with advanced mathematical reasoning power he originally achieved in the Nankai University. Accordingly, his proficiency in the Classical Chinese language was doubtless superior to mine, as well as most Chinese intellectuals of the 20th Century. Nevertheless, he had been drawn to Laozi philosophically more than to the Ultimate Saint Teacher Confucius. Nevertheless, he had considered himself a Laozi's enthusiast since he was an undergraduate in Nankai University. By his standard he had intuitively felt that Laozi was a great thinker, greater even than Confucius. And he was annoyed that Laozi had been wronged or devalued universally by Confucians. Laozi, the thinker himself, had even foreseen it.

Laozi said it himself in Chapter 70.III of Daodejing he says:

People [in vogue] are ignorant, so they do not know me;
There are only a handful of people who [would make an
effort to] understand me;
Those who understand me will discover that my theory
is valuable;
The description that ancient Saints were like men who
carried price- less jades under coarse ragged cloaks, was not
made from casual observations.

Sounds like since Chern's undergraduate days he was passionate about getting to the bottom of this truth and would like to make the real Laozi known to the world. For seventy years this passion was still glowing. Like Sir Karl Popper, he has also made the first move to ask me to send him my translation on *Laozi*. He was a step behind Popper though. A few years after Popper, in 1995, the year after Professor Chern had read both my Chinese and English drafts on *Laozi*, I happened to be in Berkeley. All this shows their intense desire to uncover a decent translation of Daodejing. By then, it was the second time met him. First occasion was in New York in the 60's; that time I was amazed by the humility of this great scholar. He chatted even with me then, this stranger and nobody, among other more important people. Besides he treated me as if I was his equals! This must be the way he treated all other human beings—all of them were created equal.

Professor Chern was brought up in Jiaxing of Zhejiang province; the area was well-known as the hotbed of many poets and men of letters. His early education was evidently traditional Chinese; even his humble demeanor was Confucian. As a matter of fact, Chern has retained the three thousand years tradition inherited by Chinese intellectuals; he read Confucius diligently, wrote classical Chinese poems and practiced calligraphy for recreation when he was not busy. His knowledge of the Chinese history was impressionable too. Unlike people from that area of his birth, he spoke very good Mandarin, which he learned only when he went to the Nankai University, in Northern China, in his late teens. His speech has absolutely no trace of any accents. Maybe he was the only person I met from that region who could speak Mandarin like a Beijing native. Generally speaking, literate people of his generation were brought up solely with the teachings of The Analects of Confucius. For example my father, who was about ten years older than Professor Chern and self-educated, wrote a Chinese classic *The Evolvement of Tibet* in the classical Chinese language rather than in the plain spoken Chinese.²⁴ Accordingly, it was much less difficult for Prof. Chern to understand the archaic language of *Daodejing* than your truly, this much junior me who had done extra works on Chinese classics. Let alone other people in general. In addition, I have come across his poems, which were written in the traditional thousand years old format of the classical Chinese.

There were abundant signs of Chern's closeness to Laozi's philosophy. He could overcome vicissitudes and hardships in his early adult life and managed to make him stronger with advanced mathematics was itself another achievement. In the vein of the thoughts of Laozi we could explain that his strength came from his strong self-knowledge that he was able to collect himself in face of all hindrances and frustrations. Later in his life, he was showered with multiple honors and generous donations personally. However, instead of using them personally he donated theses millions and millions of dollars to promote mathematics—one of the highest form

²⁴ My father's book, a Chinese classic, *The Evolvement of Tibet* was re-published by me with my comprehensive English translation in United States in 2009. The original 1933 copies are available in the Chinese Science Academy, National library, as well as libraries in Universities like Harvard, Chicago, Indiana, Stanford, Toronto et al. Its Web site is: www.evolvementoftibet.com.

of knowledge and invention by human beings. His greatness could be reflected in Laozi's philosophy.²⁵

He had started writing traditional classical Chinese poems since he was in his early teens, and it continued until he went away. The following is a sample of his poems written in the classical Chinese when he was seventy-five years old. I'm attempting to translate it into the plain Chinese language, then English:

*Three quarters of one century has elapsed;
Although my life has had been full with bumps and potholes,
I've always exerted to enjoy myself;
Oh, when will there be days when I could close myself door of
my house to read books that are close to my heart;
How am I longing to be able to talk to congenial folks even under
the circumstances of biting wind and disturbing thick fog.*

I think this is a very moving poem that reflects both his deep grasp of the classical Chinese language, from hermeneutical perspective, and his profound sentiments manifested through a traditional Chinese format of poems, as well as the deep sentiments shared by great poets and philosophers. The fact that he could suppress and control his strong emotions, in order to pursue the ultra cool mathematics rationally very successfully, has already made him a philosopher like Laozi. For instance even Nietzsche's emotionally embodied work should be read as cool-headed philosophy not as emotional poems.²⁶ His cool analysis functions like a surgeon's knife cut open the thick phony reality is absolutely not emotional but intellectual act. I have to admit that, even with my poetic disposition as pointed out by Ayer, I can never write poems as such, not to mention even in the traditional constrained format of strict rules; I was not so linguistically competent to do so. Poetry and math are in fact deeply rooted together—for they share the same intellectual resource of

²⁵ Cf. Laozi (Daodejing) Chapters 62.III, 19.II, 26.I and 33.0.

²⁶ Incidentally, sometimes people's pettiness could be annoying. I overheard from grapevine that when Professor Chern was first employed by UC Berkeley, the University assigned him the best housing available, and one faculty member complained loud to the University that he was against to situate below an Asian on the hill. The University responded that Chern was a highly respected scholar and the complainer could move elsewhere himself.

intelligence. When I mentioned briefly Plato's theory on thinking and knowledge to Professor Chern he seemed to be appreciative of it.

Allow me to mention again what the mathematician-philosopher Whitehead has said: *Philosophy is akin to poetry . . . In each case there is reference to from beyond the direct meaning of words. Poetry allies itself to metre,²⁷ philosophy to mathematic pattern.^{28 29}* Henceforth the conclusion being thus drawn is that, just like Whitehead Chern is only a breath away from becoming a philosopher had he put into words his thoughts.

Even though mathematically Laozi's system of thinking is a fuzzy framework, yet it is as viable as fuzzy logic is in our intellectual pursuits.³⁰ It is certain, like many ancient Greek philosophies, there is a framework embodied in Laozi's thinking. Chern certainly would have grasped Laozi's framework through the corroboration his mathematical background; this must have happened long before the thirty years younger me came across Laozi's work. Laozi's work is definitely not a product of unregimented and fragmental thinking of poets; in his book, there is hardly any emotional or sentimental outbursts; there contains strong reasoning and acute observation.

*Coupling Professor Chern's unsurpassed easiness and familiarity with workings of diverse frameworks of thoughts in mathematics, i.e. topology, and his superior proficiency with the classical Chinese and his deep understanding of the Chinese civilization, he was the unique person, who could best qualified to judge about the accuracy of translating/interpreting Laozi's philosophy. In other words, hardly anybody could match him for his comprehensive understanding of the **framework** of Laozi's philosophy.³¹* Furthermore, his humbleness and sincerity, a virtue promoted by Laozi and Confucius, reminds Chinese

²⁷ Metre: systematically arranged and measured rhythm in verse: (1)rhythm that continuously repeats a single basic pattern <iambic meter> (2) rhythm characterized by regular recurrence of a systematic arrangement of basic patterns in larger figures <ballad> (Merriam-Webster).

²⁸ A.N.Whitehead: Modes of Thought, p.237.

²⁹ Copies of his Chinese poems are in Appendix.

³⁰ Fuzzy logic: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuzzy_logic

³¹ **Framework**: [from Merriam-Webster Dictionary]

1 : a : a basic conceptual structure (as of ideas) <the framework of the United States Constitution>

b : a skeletal, openwork, or structural frame.

2 : frame of reference: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frame_of_reference.

Popper likes to use the expression "ad hoc" to refer to this. For meanings

intellectuals of the guidelines for inter-human behaviors. Accordingly when Professor Chern told me that my Chinese was good, it was a very credible stamp of approval and assurance of my deeper proficiency with the Chinese language—both the classical and the plain Chinese from someone mostly qualified to do so. The simple reason was his Chinese is much superior to mine; he was one of the handful Sinologists or scholars of Chinese of the 20th Century who was qualified to make such judgment.

Laozi should belong to the camp of rational philosophers like Socrates and Plato, as well as philosophers of greatness. When I quoted to Professor Chern Plato's description of being able to come up with a more perfect system, namely better mathematical system, is the act of getting closer to touch eternity, he was moved. I felt and believed that had he got some leisure time of his own, as other mathematicians Bertrand Russell or Alfred N. Whitehead had, he would have been able to articulate his philosophical thoughts and joined them to be in the rank of mathematician-philosophers as well. Since Chern was so passionate about the proper depiction of Laozi and Laoism, his own philosophy must be very close to Laozi's, even though his given Chinese name, from his parents, bears strong aspiration of Confucianism. However, in his early years he had had to struggle harder socially, economically, linguistically and racially, particularly during the eight years' Sino-Japanese War, to draw out his talents, like almost all Chinese of the 18th to the most 20th Centuries had had gone through. Both the names of Professor Chern and mine were reflection of the period of instability in China, both culturally at the impact of the West and physically because of the imperialistic aggressions. May be they were factors encumbering him from bringing to open his philosophical talents. His relentless pursuit, to tackle and develop profound and complicated mathematical theories, must be sustained by his Serenity—the virtue highly upheld by Laozi in Chapter 16.II:

“16.I Each and every individual living thing will flourish
like inestimable weeds [every instant];
Eventually each and every [living thing] will return to its root;

of 'philosophical frame of reference', read <http://www.jstor.org/pss/985254> (Professor H.A.Simon).

3 : the larger branches of a tree that determine its shape
Also Popper's book "The Myth of Framework".

The returning of an individual to his [its] root is called returning to **Serenity**;
Serenity means to respond to the determining forces [Dao];
Responding to the determining forces [Dao] leads to perpetuation;
Individuals who know how to perpetuate are brilliant;
Individuals who do not know how to perpetuate are prone to rash activities, and then they are doomed.”

Judging from some Chinese newspaper’s interviews on Professor Chern, I surmised that his interest and understanding about Laozi was deeply rooted that, like Popper, he was still questing for better translations continuously after seven decades. This undying spirit was sustained by nothing more than having comprehensive understanding of Laozi in the face of numerable intolerable environments. No wonder he had told a Chinese journalist that all his life he was a deep-rooted admirer of philosophies of Lao-Zhuang—Laozi and Zhuangzi. He was also of the opinion that Laozi’s philosophy and Zhuangzi’s application of it could be beneficial to a nation and an individual respectively. I guess he was much impressed by the government of Wen-Jing Era (180-141 BC) of Han Dynasty and attributed it to the practice of Laozi’s political philosophy of non-interference(*laissez faire*)—*wu wei*.³²

In 1994, when I talked to him again, I might have become somebody to him. However he treated me with equal decency. He and his wife took trouble to drive down the hill to take us out for lunch; by then he already had trouble walking. He told me at lunch “*It is important for people, of the world, to know the real Laozi and his philosophy correctly. Your research has demonstrated that you’re on the right track to interpret and explain Laozi the way I have understood his thoughts; I am frustrated by, having come across such overwhelming numbers of mistranslation of Laozi. However, I agree with you on your translation and analysis.*” I was so impressed with his zeal on letting the world to know about more accurate

³² The period is known as The Rule of Wen Jing in Chinese history; there are also books written about this prosperous period of early Han Dynasty of 3rd-2nd Century BC in English. Cf. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rule_of_Wen_and_Jing
<http://history.cultural-china.com/en/34History586.html>

manifestation of the philosophy of Laozi. Looks like for seventy decades he was also very bothered that, in China, not to mention in the West, Laozi had been misunderstood and mistreated. Secretly I dare to fancy that I, this person of younger generation, have been entrusted by Professor Chern for this pursuit of manifesting the true Laozi to the world.

The reason I had asked Professor Chern to leave my name out of the calligraphy was because for a long time, as being a true advocate of Laoism, I was debating with myself about publishing the translation anonymously. For “Dao is covert” and it helps people to improve their wellbeing without expecting to be paid back. However I later decided that I must present myself to take full responsibility of this translation—in both Chinese and English versions.

Luckily some prominent Chinese political leaders could recognize Professor Chern's greatness that since 1984 they have invited him back and had made it possible for him to leave the warm climate Berkeley California where they had been for four decades to return to his homeland—his alumnus Nankai University in cold climate Northern China. However, when we talked to them, both Professor Chern and Mrs. Chern were very excited about returning to Nankai University, the cold climate was not their concern at all. I also learnt later that Professor Chern had donated heavily to the Mathematics Institute of Nankai University; in addition to transferring all cash awards he had earned, he also chipped in with his own car, which was just a tiny drop of water for the cost to set up any institute. Hopefully the work of Chern Institute of Mathematics in Nankai University will mirror all dimensions of his greatness in mathematics, poetry and philosophy.

Just before I was about to wrapped up this book, I came across a piece of very interesting fact—it was about Einstein, Chern and Laozi's Daodejing! In the preface Professor Chern wrote on February 28, 2002 for his contemporary colleague's book “The Sighting of Zhuangzi's Soul”,³³ via the Department of the Chinese Literature of the Nankai University; in which he recollected the short encountering, academically and socially, he had had with Einstein from 1943 to 1945. He found out that serenity, i.e. Laozi's discussion

³³ “The Sighting of Zhungzi's Soul” is a contemporarily published Chinese book by poet, painter and Nankai University professor Fan Zeng. It is mainly a book of poetic literature, in which the author serenading the greatness of Zhuangzi, mainly from a poetic perspective.

about *jing* in Daodejing, was important to Einstein. Chern was also very impressed that on Einstein's bookshelf there was a copy of Daodejing—in German translation; this was one of the handful of books he took with him as a refugee from the rampaging Germany.³⁴ Before Einstein left Germany he had had also discussed philosophy and philosophy of science, from his perspective, with Karl Popper in 1930's and wrote a handwritten letter to him to discuss about the logic of scientific discoveries.³⁵

The following is the English translation, from Chinese by me, of the above-mentioned Preface written by Professor Chern:

“In this world, two most important elements are human beings and nature. In the last five hundred years, thanks to the great progress and development, we human beings' understanding of Nature has had been enghlightened and enhanced considerably. Consequently, this has also influenced the lives of human beings; we are no longer the kind of animals we were five hundred years ago. Chinese people are realistic and pragmatic people, Chinese civilization traditionally aiming at dealing with human problems in the context of social organizations, particularly the continuation of generation transitions The conflict of Sino-Western cultures have brought us(Chinese) again back to the (similar scenario of) Spring-Autumn and Warring State Eras(770BC-206BC)³⁶ . . .”

“I recall that in 1943-5 when I was in Princeton, USA, I often met with Einstein and were invited to visit him at his home several times. Nevertheless, I had been deeply impressed on discovering a copy of German translation of Laozi[Daodejing] on his sparsely filled bookshelf. I wish Professor Fan would also write a similar book about Laozi.” (February 28, 2002 published in China)

Chern also expressed to his interviewers the following opinions:

“For each person his life-span(personality) is a constant in the stream of time. Since he has to go with the flow of time, it is not easy to concentrate

³⁴ Sir Karl Popper told me that he had had read all available German translations of Daodejing, yet was disappointed at all of them. They all made no ‘gestalt’ sense to him, i.e. the shortage of underlying framework.

³⁵ Popper wrote in his *Unended Quest* that Einstein had been overwhelmed by German Idealism and Kant's Rationalism that he failed to balance the matter from Empiricist perspective, and this was instrumental to their disagreements.

³⁶ Spring-Autumn and Warring States were the two most creative periods of the Chinese civilization in history; it's a period of free expression and competition(for followers and consenters).

one's effort to accomplish good deeds . . . all my life the influence of Einstein was significant that I am primarily seeking serenity and follow the course of Nature, as emphasized in Laozi's Daoism."^{37 38}

"Constant" refers to the invariable element. In short, what is constant in real life is one's disposition propelled by one's personality, intention and wills. In as much as Dao, from this perspective, plays the role of physical, as well as mathematical, constant in our world.

Chern also states the following:

"The two main factors constitute this world are Nature and human beings. The great progress of science of the past five thousand years, has not only enlightened and enhanced our understanding of Nature, but also has influence the life of human beings. Accordingly we are especially different animals from what we were five hundred years ago."

"I know that many great Western thinkers enjoy reading Laozi and Zhuangzi's philosophies, respecting Nature . . . Following Einstein I've been pursuing Serenity."

Laozi said that Saint-a man of wisdom pursues Serenity; it is through Serenity we could pursue and join the ultimate real world. Laozi also says a Saint, by his reference should be a person who was broad-minded and could look forward far off to lay foundation for a plan that could benefit of his society for many generations to come. Given some chance, Professor Chern could have fit the bill to be that very modern Chinese philosopher leading the nation to intellectual revitalization after the second coming of the Spring-Autumn & Warring States.

Popper, the Greek Philosophy and Laozi

There are many other people who have either directly or indirectly helped me with the completion of this book. Among them, the foremost enthusiastic one was Professor Sir Karl Popper. Like many seasoned philosophers he

³⁷ Constant: In mathematics, a **constant** is a non-varying value, i.e. completely fixed or fixed in the context of use. The term usually occurs in opposition to *variable* (i.e. variable quantity), which is a symbol that stands for a value that may vary. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Physical_constant A **physical constant** is a physical quantity that is generally believed to be both universal in nature and constant in time.

³⁸ The concept of 'jing' (tr. Serenity) appeared frequently in Laozi's book.

was proficient at validating frameworks who could understand Laoism intuitively. Furthermore he was a great one on the same par with Russell (of the Greek lineage) and Wittgenstein (in logical analysis). Sir Karl Popper is regarded as one of the greatest philosophers and *The* greatest philosopher of science and scientific methods,³⁹ of the 20th Century.⁴⁰ His thinking method of “Conjectures and Refutations” and principles on “The Objective Knowledge” have had been a strong influence on me, particularly leading me in translating Laozi’s book; the aim was to be analytical, accurate and be logically positive. At the conclusion of Russell’s book on the History of Western Philosophy, he called out for a new philosophy that could teach people how to live with uncertainties, and Popper’s philosophy may be the answer to that calling. Many scientists, including Einstein, felt Popper’s philosophy congenial. Many of his devoted scientist followers were even winners of the Nobel Prize.⁴¹ The reason Popper was also enthusiastic about Laozi’s work was due to his powerful philosophical background that he could apprehend Laozi’s framework intuitively. Doubtless, from a philosophical perspective, he could understand Laozi deeply much more than this translator/interpreter.

I have read both Sir Karl Popper and Sir Alfred Ayer since my undergraduate days. I primarily came to know about Popper indirectly through Russell and directly through Professor Yin Haiguang of Taiwan University.⁴² Yin was a whole-heartedly sincere honest passionate political

³⁹ The result from Google search for the ‘Philosophy of Karl Popper’: assets.cambridge.org/97805218/39464/.../9780521839464ws.pdf—
(The Philosophy of Karl Popper, by Herbert Keuth, Cambridge, England, 2004)

⁴⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Popper
<http://www.tkpw.net/>
<http://www.answers.com/topic/karl-popper>
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/popper/>
<http://www.hoover.org/publications/hoover-digest/article/8018>
Karl Popper (in Chinese):
<http://zh.wikipedia.org/zh-cn/%E5%8D%A1%E5%B0%94%C2%B7%E6%B3%A2%E6%99%AE%E5%B0%94>

⁴¹ A search at Google for “Popper follower+nobel prize” could yield many names of, particularly scientists.

⁴² Yin, Haiguang: His mentor was philosopher Jin Yueling, who was quoted in Chapter IX(p.139) Footnotes 270-271. <http://zh.wikipedia.org/zh->

writer; he had ridiculed the then authoritarian authority's artificial cold-war mythologization of preparing to counter-attack the mainland Communist China (the lesser of this fashionable cold-war claim was Taiwan Independence). However due to his success he became a celebrity, later after him in Taiwan, there were opportunist imitator/pretenders who, deceitfully rode on Yin's popularity en route this government bashing path to become political celebrities, as well as politicians.⁴³ Bertrand Russell, Yin's god-like hero, in order to show his support of Yin in spirit, had recommended to him Sir Karl Popper's book *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. Yin subsequently arranged to have his copy of this book reprinted for the public in Taiwan with the hope he could spread the gospel embodied in it.⁴⁴ However it is very doubtful that since the content of this book is so substantial that any of the later activists in Taiwan could reach but the superficial level of using it as a slogan or crowd-pleaser. Initially in the 1930's, Popper was invited to visit England by Ayer. Later, in the following decades, Ayer has occasionally recommended Popper's work.

Later I was drawn, more and more, to Popper's philosophy because I detect from writings of my mentor Ayer their philosophical closeness and his respect for him. Popper's significant encountering with the Logical Positivism and Wittgenstein should not be ignored by academicians. Through reading his books, I've come to the belief that Popper, next to or on the same par with Russell, was the closest I could get to recapitulate the Hellenic spirit. The reason earlier I had preferred to read Ayer was because Popper was too mathematical and Ayer's style was much more elegant! In fact, judging from another perspective, Popper could deliver his argument in English with such lucidity and clarity that his style almost matches that of the urbane English-speaking Ayer. It is so rare for a German-speaking

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⁴³ Traces of the remains of Cold War are instrumental for the similar artificial myth of the island independence movement.

⁴⁴ It was legal to by-pass international copyright law to reprint Western books in Taiwan at that time. I did mention this to Popper and explaining that at that time people in Taiwan were too poor to afford the original price. Sir Karl said it was all right under the circumstance. Also since my son's birthday was on the same day as Sir Karl Popper July 28th, and that kid also got happy birthday wishes from him whenever he received my greetings. All these reflected another phase of Popper: a softy (as he said himself); has a tender and generous heart.

writer to be able to match wits with English writers, in either English or German-English translations! When comes to writing in English, he was far ahead of nearly all his German-speaking peers, even the impressionable Wittgenstein was unfortunately included. Popper also wrote better than most English-speaking intellectuals as well.

In Oxford, Popper was treated as a foreign intrusion. In fact he is more in agreement with the Empiricism than Wittgenstein. He was unfairly ignored and his contributions to the 20th Century influential *Mind* magazine were rejected.⁴⁵ The reason could well be political or having been overzealous towards the rivaling Wittgenstein. I re-read Popper because I came to the realization that there are so much agreement between Popper and Laozi. In 1980's, for wanting to understand *Laozi* in depth, I had inadvertently developed the urge to re-read his *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, a monumental book, about the necessity and guidance, of humanism, freedom and democracy in human societies. I felt that there were many agreements between Laozi and Popper, yet Popper has successfully analyzed these tenets in more convincing modern terms, as well has communicated them eloquently in well articulated English.

Unfortunately because of the success of his book, the essence of the humanistic 'open society' was lost through being sloganized. Even though Popper did not talk about "Love thy neighbor", yet as a person he had what Chinese described as "having a heart like Buddha". 'Buddha' refers to the ultimate kindness and compassion to fellow human beings. Exploitation other human beings, not to mention to the extent of destroying their lives or livelihood, for gains in the name of 'open society' is a betrayal of Popper's original intent for an utopia for humanity; the idealistic society for harmonious human co-existence, even at the price of self-sacrifice. This ideal was pursued by many, i.e. Laozi, Buddha, Christ and Confucius etc. Even the hard-headed Popper later claimed that he was willing to suffer being wronged rather than causing mistakes that would make others suffer. I am very sure that he himself suffered when he noticed that others were suffering. To understand his theme on 'Open Society' one should be oriented from a disposition like this. Otherwise it is a distortion and taking out of context reading of his book, as well as treating 'Open Society' as but a crowd-pleasing slogan or buzz word.

⁴⁵ Even Bertrand Russell had suffered from the same treatment when he responded attacks on his view.

A bona fide open society should be on the footing of egalitarianism, as Buddha has said “All creatures, big and small were born equal (that they all have a right to fulfill their existences on earth).” He certainly does not condone any violence, physically, politically or economically. People who read Popper’s book should bear in mind that it was written with passion of anti-Nazism, if it was any inspiration for replacing any existing political or financial system, totalitarian or not, it is because in those societies people are left with no other alternatives to keep their personal freedom. Accordingly it is a result of misreading Popper by taking his argument out-of-context to describe that his argument is revolutionary about regime change. When coming across an enemy of the open society, e.g. a closed society like totalitarian Nazi, which was insulated against even piecemeal social engineering carried out in democratic societies, one could be dealing with nothing but regime change.

Later, wanting to understand him more in depth, I further extended my reading to his other book *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, (orig. *Logik der Forschung*) which has laid the foundation for bringing out Open Society. Through it I realized why and how his claims are so solidly grounded—in the ancient Greek philosophical tradition. I have also gained from it some insight of the methodology of his analysis.⁴⁶ Mathematics was also important to Popper, for example many of his students of philosophy were also mathematicians.

Popper’s own translation of Plato’s original work from the classical Greek in *Open Society*, according to Bertrand Russell is “A work of first-class importance . . . his attack on Plato, while unorthodox, is in my opinion, totally justified.” Other British Platonic scholars, including his adversaries, are also having difficulties to find fault in his translation. He was also unhappy with existing translations of Goethe’s works and tried his hands on a couple. Popper’s other monumental book *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* especially expounds the tenet that our knowledge is not immutable; it is about the disciplined freedom of choice. In the book he successfully proves that either more

⁴⁶ Nevertheless the success of the book *The Open Society and Its Enemies* has induced lot borrowings of the term ‘open society’, invented and populated by Popper through his deep understanding of the early Greek democracy. However, it has been employed by sloganeers much too often that its substantial meaning has been missed out.

evidences or new thinking mode will propel us to eke out new and better theories about us and cosmos. This collaborated with the first two statements in Daodejing:

1. I Dao [Truth] can be talked about [described or theorized] in any manner each person considers feasible, though hardly any of these descriptions will be perpetually valid;
Names [Descriptions] can be ascribed to Dao in any manner each person deems workable], yet hardly of these will last forever.⁴⁷

Popper has also laid out guidelines of how to determine the superior acceptability of one theory over another. Nevertheless, since 1950's Popper was working hard on the Postscript in order to perfect, as well as to simplify, his axioms in "The Logic of Scientific Discovery".⁴⁸ This project, as his late editor W.W.Bartley, III, had described "represents the culmination of Sir Karl's work in the philosophy of physics", particularly in quantum theory. Bartley finally edited and published Popper's "Postscript" in 1982. They appeared as three books titled *Realism and the Aim of science*, *The Open Universe: An Argument for Indeterminism*, and *Quantum Theory and The Schism in Science*. These books are far more difficult to read than all his other books, particularly if a person is not knowledgeable of mathematics and modern physics, Popper agreed with me sympathetically when I told him so. However, Einstein has had discussed Quantum Theory in person with Popper and had hand-written an approving letter (in German) about his book "Logik der Forschung"(The Logic of the Scientific Discovery) after their discussion.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ The introduction of brackets [] is for the articulation of that which underlie the *prima facie* terse linguistic expressions. For details see Chapter X of this book.

⁴⁸ Popper did mention in his books, from the prospect of his analysis in *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, that the experiment performed before 1956 by the American-Chinese female physicist Wu Jianxiong's Wu Beta Decay Experiment, which propelled allying theoretical physicists winning Nobel prize was an example of what's the proper process of judging a scientific discovery.

⁴⁹ I wonder if Sir Kasrl Popper had known about Einstein's interest in Laozi's Daodejing as pointed out by Professor Chern(P.28) in this paper.

Even though Popper was a mathematical and logical oriented philosopher, yet through reading *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, that when re-reading him in 1990's has helped me with my English in articulating of Laozi's thoughts. Furthermore, I think that I owed my break-through on employing Popper's method of thinking, as presented in his book *Conjectures and Refutations* et al. I managed to get in touch with Sir Karl Popper because I was in the process of translating *Daodejing*, and the work had somewhat reminded me statements in his book *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. In 1989, when he was already eighty-eight years old, he said in his letter that since Sir Alfred (Freddie) passed away, *he wanted to make sure that I would finish the project and come up with a proper decent translation*; his good will has sustained me when I was making my arduous attempt. On hindsight my letter has had reignited his youthful enthusiasm on Laozi to certain extent

Even before I came up with any request to send him my translations, he took initiative to ask me to send him my drafts. The first draft I sent to him was done on typewriters! The second one was done on dot-matrix printer. And the third draft on the translation of whole *Daodejing* was luckily printed on Hewlett-Packard laser printer. Sir Karl had made an exception by telling me couple of times that he would be glad to meet me. Accordingly, in March 1994 I traveled to London to visit him. Nevertheless I have learned later, from Mr. Alan Montefiore of London School of Economics, a social-justice mindful and like Daoism-Saint Westerner, a former Don of Oxford and the present scholar in charge of the forum of the London School of Economics of European Philosophy, that by 1990's Sir Karl, due to failing health, had already declined to be disturbed by visitors.⁵⁰ I believed that, concerning about his health, his secretary has

⁵⁰ Mr. Alan Montefiore is, at present, the President of European Philosophy of London School of Economics, where Popper used to teach philosophy. Before then he had been a don of Balliol College, Oxford for more than 30 years. I used to attend his classes and seminars when I was in Oxford. In addition to his fluency in French, he also knew some written Chinese and Amoy dialect. Later in his career, he has concentrated on the subject of ethics of doing business, which is so important to our present society now! How many people are concerned about this when they were aiming single-mindedly of making money? Innocent people have been exploited both politically and financially through the existing systems and established business practice. He and Professor Chern both fit Laozi's criterion for

had made the arrangement grudgingly. When I visited Popper he was almost ninety-two years old. He was glad to learn that I studied philosophy because of my admiration of Bertrand Russell, whom he admired too. He also showed me the letter Russell wrote to his publisher that he wanted Sir Karl to review the manuscript-draft of the book A History of the Western Philosophy before it was sent to print.

Sir Karl told me that he was fascinated about Laozi when he was an undergraduate in Vienna. He was impressed by the wisdom even though he had felt that it was poorly reflected, though the defective means of the inconsistent and logically incoherently translations, available to him. I think Popper could intuitively grasp the framework and comprehend the big picture Laozi, just like the way what Russell did when he was in China.⁵¹ *It was because they were used to tackle various frameworks of different philosophers.* However from the philosophical perspective, he had never come across a version that would satisfy him, logically and philosophically; hardly any of the translations, in German and English, has made any sense to him at all.⁵² He liked my translation, maybe because I was analytical and very self-critical. He would like to recommend it highly to the public. He did write such a letter to recommend me highly. Unfortunately his trusted publisher, whose founder and forefather had had extensive rapport with Popper, may have wasted the letter; it is because they know little of their forefather's philosophical bearings and much less about the bona fide Laozi, but the celebrity-like academician and commercial success rather than the true essence of translating Daodjing. However, in a letter Professor Popper subsequently wrote he recommended me strongly; I heard from the grapevine it was unusual. Professor Chern had also felt strongly about the linguistic accuracy and articulation of Laozi's philosophy spoken out in these translations.

Daoist Saints (Sage), who are humble, as well as unaffected and untouched by wealth, power and fame. His family has traditionally carried out many charities on both Continents for many centuries, notably the Montefiore Medical Center in USA here. More about him at:

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/forumForEuropeanPhilosophy/whosWho/president.htm>

⁵¹ In Russell's *The Problem of China* he says that the ethics Laozi suggested in helping our fellow human beings sets the highest principle of morality.

⁵² I wonder if Sir Karl Popper had known that a German translation of Daodejing was one of Einstein's favorite books, as mentioned by Professor Chern, Shiing-Shen.(cf. p27- 28)

From Popper, it was the first time I heard that I was very self-critical; I thought people generally considered me a too stubbornly independent subjective person as it was hard to browbeat me. Popper wanted me to keep on doing my best to get my work accomplished and came back to visit him again. Maybe that was the reason he made an exception to see me as he had declined many requests to visitors since his declining health had made it necessary to husband his energy.

When talking to Popper, I was so impressed by the sharpness and swiftness of his mind, as well as his persistence, his amazing memory (of even contents of our correspondents). Visiting him has enabled me to witness his compassion of a poet or religious person and his unparalleled self-sacrificing devotion to the quest of truth that were not revealed through his writings. It came to me as a great surprise that he could suffer deeply when he learnt about incidents of injustice inflicted on other people. The last Chapter in his book "Open Society" is 'Has History any Meaning?' He says, "*the history of power politics is nothing but the history of international crime and mass murder.*" He lamented about the miseries of human beings in lesser societies, a similar outcry about the thinness of truth, fairness and compassion in this world. Buddha went further to say all phenomena we perceive are illusory and renounceable, whereas Popper was constantly attempting to quest for a better world.⁵³ The softy part of Popper, as he described that himself, had had been suppressed all his life. He was kind excited when I told him that I liked classical music. Very curiously he asked me which musicians I liked most, so I told him Bach, Beethoven and Tchaikovsky, and he seemed satisfied. It appears to me that he suffered when he observed others suffered, even if he did not have anything to do with or causing other's sufferings. Imagine what would he feel when he learned that the slogan of open society was associated with the instigation of people's losing their life savings or their livelihood. Popper was by no means religious, yet his being compassionate is much more admirable; it is just like Laozi said "being compassionate for the sake of being compassionate" in the absence of any form of reward is the real virtue of compassion—*arête*. In Popper's autobiography he mentioned that his father had a portrait of Schopenhauer hanging on the

⁵³ In simple plain ordinary words, Popper has demarcated world epistemologically into World One (the material world), World Two (the world we've perceived) and World Three (the world we could build).

wall of his study. I had read Schopenhauer and had to struggle to snap out of his pessimism. However, Buddha's pessimism was more for salvation.⁵⁴ This may explain Popper's concealed compassion. It came to me as a big surprise comparing to what I had heard about him.

After Sir Karl Popper passed away, in 1995 his estate has published a mostly up-to-date book with the title **The Myth of Framework: In defence of Science and Rationality**, edited by M.A. Notturmo.⁵⁵ According to Mr. Notturmo:

“In a career spanning sixty years, Sir Karl Popper has made some of the most important contributions to the twentieth century discussion of science and rationality. *The Myth of the Framework* is a new collection of some of Popper's most important material on this subject.”

Sir Karl Popper was so unpretentious and unaffected by social achievements, particularly on power and money matters. He invited me back to visit him with my husband the following year, and promised by then he should have finished his four books he was working on. After that he would have time to write a Preface for my yet-to-come book on Laozi. He seemed to have something to say about Laozi's philosophy, which he had tried to figure out since his early youth. In spite of Popper's age, his consistent support and encouragement until he passed away in 1994, has given me a great boost, which was instrumental for my eventual breakthrough of interpreting/translating Laozi; it took place a few months before I visited him. I've also touched the subject of publishing my translation anonymously, yet he was mum about it. The greatest sorrow is that I cannot present my book to him when it was first finished. The older work I have presented to him was even printed with an obsolete dot-matrix printer, matched by the crudity of its content! I just felt regret with his blameful comment that I should have had made an effort seeking him out decades earlier.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ His secretary told me afterwards that the reason she would not let me go back to talk to him was because my talks had made him very sad and depressed. However, he was going to write a very good letter about me.

⁵⁵ The executor of Sir Karl Popper's estate is Mrs. Mellita Mew, his secretary of the last ten years of his life.

⁵⁶ Popper was not aware that without financial help it was impossible for me to do that.

Ayer, Empiricism, Logical Positivism and Pragmatism (Language, Truth and Logic)

If my English is acceptable, I owe it to the influence of my mentor Professor Sir Alfred Ayer, who was a great writer of modern philosophical essays and may be the last dedicated heir of the traditional empiricism of the Great Britain. His devotion to empiricist philosophy was just as strong as my dedication to Laozi's philosophy. Unfortunately both him and his unique linear continuing pursuit of Empiricist philosophies of Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Russell has had never been given its deserved recognition.⁵⁷ His later developed sympathy to modern pragmatist philosophies of American philosophers is a linear logical evolvement as well. He was also instrumental in bringing Logical Positivism, originated by Vienna Circle philosophers, to England and the world through his first book *Language, Truth and Logic*.

There are considerable streaks of empiricism and pragmatism in Laoism as well.⁵⁸ When I was an undergraduate, I had studied hard on John Locke, Berkeley and Hume before I discovered Ayer by myself, just like the way I have discovered Laozi—by myself. However, his brilliant introduction of Logical Positivism, through his book, has made an impact in philosophy globally before and after the World War II, wherever English was understood even in Japan. During the thickest of Cold War of 1960 he was invited by both China and the Soviet Russia (as a specimen of the West as he joked about it). Before then in 1950's he was also invited to lecture in China. When I asked him about his experience in China years later, his prophetic words were "Their younger generation is very promising". That prophesy seems have being been actualized fifty years later today—in the 21st Century. However, I am still curious why in 1950's would then poverty stricken Chinese have invited him. Decades later he

⁵⁷ Bertrand Russell, in the concluding chapter of his book *A History of the Western Philosophy*, admits that he was also a member of the modern British logical empiricism. The fact is that Russell's philosophical expertise was on the German philosopher Leibniz, and the tutor of his early childhood was Germans, and he still thinks logical empiricism, particularly Ayer's articulates more convincing truth.

⁵⁸ Laozi's starting points are empirical; his wisdom was derived from his wealth of experience as a naïve realist as well. Laozi's advice to Confucius in, reported by Sima Qian and cited in Chapter IV of this book also evidences this.

was hoping and seeking, as he wrote me, to be invited again but to no avail. Perhaps in 1980's he was considered no longer fashionable, in spite of the fact his Empiricism substantiates Laozi's philosophy.

In Ayer's universally popular book *Language, Truth and Logic*, his youthful enthusiasm propels for the coming of a new philosophical era, guided by then avant-garde Logical Positivism has touched many intellectuals. He had also read Wittgenstein's monumental *Tractatus* earlier than his peers and met him as early as in 1930's. Wittgenstein liked to refer him as "That clever Ayer" (with mixed feelings because dashing & rash Ayer would and could pick his brains!). Popper had met Ayer when they both participated in the original discussion seminars of the Vienna Circle, even though he was never a member of that clique like his good friend R. Carnap et al.⁵⁹ Ayer said it was due to Popper's (strong) personality (of not being a team player?).⁶⁰ And I'd add that it was also due to his lack of social and political skill when comes to the discussion about truth. However, it looks like that Popper is the only Viennese whose philosophy still outshines all the others today. At his death he was eulogized as the greatest philosopher of the 20th Century. After the 1933 Vienna Conference held in Vienna, Ayer invited then German-speaking Popper to visit England and encouraged him to speak up in symposiums (in English). But Popper's English had had improved so much afterwards,

⁵⁹ Another non-member participant of Seminar in Vienna was mathematician A. Tarski mentioned in this paper.

⁶⁰ For instance, many philosophers were hostile to Popper indescribably or irrationally; this continued from Austria to England to China. Some was angry about his straightforwardness in discussion by rudely puffing smoke on his face; he told me personally. And Popper had had made it known that he hated nicotine. The mutual dislike between him and his fellow Austrian philosopher Wittgenstein was so strong that whenever they were in the same room people could feel dynamite in the air waiting to be ignited. He also told me that Wittgenstein's writings were so boring and not lucid. Once Popper even felt that he was physically intimidated by Wittgenstein. Russell blamed Wittgenstein responsible for this hostility. The personal dislike of Popper by some members of Vienna Circle et al has even spilled over, from England to far away China; some character assassination was even casted in China on Popper by half-baked professional philosophers in China. When they reported about Vienna Circle they improperly mentioned Popper by ranking him, ridiculously, the one in lowest echelon of Vienna Circle.

his English accent has no trace of German influence, and the lucidity of his English writing style was unmatched by his peers (maybe except Ayer), even though they were native speakers. Same is true about the richness of vocabularies, e.g. he has introduced an important English word *verisimilitude*—truthlikeness—Dao in philosophizing.⁶¹

What I've liked about Ayer's gospel on Logical Positivism was his adherence to the philosophy of Empiricism and his not being exaggeratedly overwhelmed by the mathematical atmosphere generated by Logical Positivists, particularly in America. His advocacy on the principle of verification was a logical advancement derived from the lineage of Empiricism. To me it was through Ayer the relevance of Logical Positivism to the traditional Western philosophies were articulated. Unfortunately he had been elbowed around, side by side, so much by his fellow philosophers, particularly in Oxford, that he never did have a chance to elaborate it successfully.⁶² His principle of verification is still my guidance to know the world, which retrieved way back to Descartes motto "I think therefore I am" and British Empiricism giants Locke, Berkeley and Hume.⁶³ However, for the theory of verification, Popper has carried it deeper and even introduced the "principle of verisimilitude" for the more thorough analysis of deeper and more complicated knowledge like science. Even so, many philosophers, from Russell to Georg Henrik Von Wright⁶⁴ (the successor of Wittgenstein) had wished that the book *Language, Truth and Logic* were written by them instead.

Ayer's book has had big success globally. Summing up all afore-mentioned reasonings, what's wrong of my taking what Ayer said in his first book as credible and viable? Truth is truth. I doubt that

⁶¹ Verisimilitude: truthlikeness. The concept of Dao is also about the closeness to truth and truthlikeness. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verisimilitude>

⁶² In Oxford, some took the pain to criticize his book page by page, so to speak.

⁶³ Laozi said in Chapter 10.I:
[Each individual] unifies in himself soul aura] and vitality [physique], but can they never be split?

⁶⁴ Georg Henrik Von Wright, a Finnish philosopher who was the student, *confident(Fr)*, translator, successor and the main literary successor of Wittgenstein. *According to Ayer he was independent from Wittgenstein as he had his own separate philosophical thoughts as well.* For more about him at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Henrik_von_Wright

even now there is such a well written informative book, with clarity, on modern philosophy, particularly it strikes out as being free from pedantic pretention of patriotism and academician's hairsplitting gibberish. Above all the argument of the book runs logically with both empiricism and logical positivism. Later it enabled Ayer to discuss issues on logic, from philosophical perspective, with logic-savvy philosophers; personally he was close to the American Logical Positivist and the patriarch of logicians—Williard Van Quine.⁶⁵

All my life I have been trying to imitated Ayer's style of writing, he has managed to successfully explain smoothly complicated philosophical complexities in simple plain language; quite exceptional for someone who had been brought up in a standard-bering British public school Eton. However my attempt may be like what it says in the Chinese legend about an ugly woman's trying to imitate a beauty queen's celebrated facial gestures. When I was a sophomore in Taiwan University, I came across quotes from Sir Alfred Ayer's book Language, Truth and Logic amid my frustrated struggle with the indoctri—nation of the Logical Positivism preached by people like Carnap and Church; that time it was the only viable philosophy for my then contemporaries in my undergraduate days. This philosophy was, in fact, far less attractive than Nietzsche and Schopenhauer to me, whose philosophies have echoed the murmuring in my heart about existence of me, a human being. He has also spelled out the necessity of freedom in his other book Freedom and Necessity. He expounds that Freedom is necessary for individuals to live their respectable lives.⁶⁶

However, human beings are social-political animals, there are always shortage of rooms for every individuals to enjoy their freedom of their activities, power grasping scheming ones who impinge on other's rights to survival, just like financial vulture getting rich through exploiting on unsuspected and defenseless people. Ayer has suggested the concept "*Spielraum*" (playroom), i.e. necessity allowance of elbow rooms for each individual in any community they live in, with the provision that their activities sare so constrained that others are not going to be harmed or hurt. It is a rational voice calling for freedom and justice for

⁶⁵ Cf. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/W.V._Quine

⁶⁶ Laozi has also expressed the similar opinion (cf. Laozi, Chapter 72).

all, particularly when sources, politically and economically are limited; it leads to the need to address the measure for fair-minded sharing. His deep respect for the French Enlightenment philosopher Voltaire(1650-1722) had later led to his admiration of Thomas Paine(1737-1809), one of the founding fathers of the United States, as well as the thinker who had provided philosophical justifications for American Revolution against the British Colonialism before 1776. Ayer has also shared with them atheism. Nonetheless between 17th to 20th Centuries the impenetrable authoritarianism of the then Churches, as well as people's deep-rooted bondage of ignorance-superstitions in other parts of the world, were instrumental to push enlightened thinkers to this rather radical path of denial of deities. The Enlightenment Movement candle in this whole wide world may be kept burning had Ayer's common-sense political philosophy be apprehended and developed. I believe that Ayer was *prima facie* an atheist, whereas in truth he was agnostic about it. This has also been revealed in his works if one reads his philosophies thoroughly.

I felt that Ayer's first book has illustrated, when dealing with different problems, a proper path for the role of logic in the modern philosophy, in view of pursuing truth.⁶⁷ From his book I learned about modern philosophy as well as English. Luckily, when I passed the exam which won me the first-time offered very generous government scholarship to study in England;⁶⁸ I contacted Ayer with my B.A. thesis. Two months later I was admitted to the Oxford University solely based on this BA thesis and Ayer's recommendation. A person, at the Admission Department, who later became my friend, told me afterwards that Ayer's recommendation to the Oxford University was that I was very bright but too naïve to take everything he said in his book as true. He also added that I could be greatly benefited if I was admitted to the University.

After I won the scholarship awarded by then Taiwanese Chinese government in August 1962, it was too late to apply to any school in England or France; the full scholarship would sponsor me to study philosophy (including travel expenses) in either country. Even though I was ready to come to UCLA where some Logical Positivists were still

⁶⁷ More about Ayer and the significance of his philosophy, please go to: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/~uctytho/AyerbyTH.html>

⁶⁸ The two-years scholarship includes round-trip airfares, all tuition costs(including tutorials) and living allowances.

teaching as well as having the strong support of Professor Donald Piatt,⁶⁹ yet there was not any financial help available to support me in UCLA. After much struggling on obtaining traveling documents from the U.K. and a great effort from Ayer, I finally managed to arrive belatedly to Oxford after the school had started. Unfortunately I had to be assigned that time to a woman's college, and all the colleges had long waiting list even for the following few years. Even the chancellor's office claimed it was difficult.

Very surprisingly, there was some vacancy in St. Hughes College, a women's College then, the vacancy was created by someone bearing professionally her famous philosopher husband's name. Within two months of my application, in October of that year, I met Professor Ayer in person. Ayer was very happy to meet me for the first time. My impression was that inexplicably he was surprisingly kind nervous and jumpy. Maybe because it was the first day of school he had to get things organized after the long vacation.

Notwithstanding when he learned the Women's College I was admitted he immediastely realized who my future tutor would be. His countenance had thus changed and he turned out to be a different person. He seemed to know her very well, yet very unflatteringly. I heard him murmuring that she was unqualified and would use me to promote her status. Our meeting thus ceased abruptly, and he brushed me off immediately. Naturally I was very puzzled.⁷⁰ In fact this philosopher husband of the don of my college and his associates have had been perplexingly hostile to Ayer all their lives; to me that hostility sounds too much personal and unhonorable than being professional or academic. At hindsight the motive was very suspiciously and pitifully sinister, maybe vengeance could be incited by using me as a pawn. Perhaps on top of that, that don and Ayer seemed to know each other very well, and the charming and romantic Ayer could have been her close friend and she still harbor her infatuation about him. Otherwise why the saga of my studying at Oxford had turned bizarrely with sound and furry suddenly like a bomb had been detonated.

At the first interview in St Hughes College, right after I arrived, with my supposedly status quo tutor, i.e. the philosophical don of my college

⁶⁹ Piatt was the Chairman of UCLA Philosophy Department which hired Russell at the request of John Dewey during the WWII.

⁷⁰ In spite of his well-known being urbane, Ayer brushed off people often. See following Note for other incidents.

had candidly she made it known to me that there was kind expectation of gratitude from me as hardly other women's college could admit me at such short notice. In other words, I should be guided to criticize Ayer and his philosophy, like the whole of the organized clique which made criticizing Ayer as their prime aim (in doing philosophy?). On hind sight, even though Ayer was usually good to control his emotions, yet when he discovered the circumstance I was in, his anger propelled him to utter that she had no experience of tutoring graduate students and being a control-freak she was unqualified to be my tutor. However, I had already formed the similar philosophical opinions before I contacted him. Interestingly, thirty years later Sir Karl Popper also expressed the similar opinion kind strongly even before I mentioned Ayer's opinion on this matter. In any case I was just an average student of philosophy in training with background on having read philosophies of Laozi and Ayer.

This college tutor was also the first person who had revealed to me that Ayer had exerted his utmost influence to get me admitted by the Oxford University. She even commented that he had had never done such a thing before.⁷¹ On hindsight it is reasonable to reason that it was her sinister motive that had made her to squeeze me in her already crowded woman's college. Such triviality or pettiness could also be illuminated by her having had proudly made it known that she had the honor of having once met Wittgenstein (socially for a short period I presumed). That was a politically oriented utterance (to add on her qualifications superficially), for a philosopher did not just get wiser by meeting Wittgenstein or even almighty God. Was there any discussion between them worth or other thing significantly worth mentioning?

Meantime there were people, faculty and student alike in Oxford, acting as attacking dog to the extent of casting unfair disparagement on Ayer's philosophy. The group was led by no other than the block of

⁷¹ Ayer had successfully launching careers of many of his students' soon after they graduated, as well as other philosophers. Some ended up teaching in Oxford, London and MIT. Even respecting Ayer as much as I do, I've heard that, like Russell, he failed to show any appreciation to any female philosopher. Some of his female students had also suffered from having short tutorial sessions. One nasty complaint was he should not have been paid for their tutorial sessions. I've also witnessed his amazing rudeness towards some male self-appointed genius as well. I guess Ayer's recommendation of me meant more to her than to me.

‘guess who’. This improper demand on me to ‘convert and betray’ has not only impinged my intellectual independence, but also forced me into the disgusting betrayal of my integrity, i.e. my moral upbringing of Confucian ethics, particularly on promotion on loyalty or condemnation on double-crossing. Not to mention the furthermore seriously moral inappropriateness of opportunism for the personal gains is also injected in. The simple truth is that, it is even improper for a parent to teach or press their children to be immoral. Surprisingly a self-promoted philosopher could be so irrational, especially in the vein of the British Empiricism, as well as living in that British tradition of seeking moral excellence to be part of a gentlemen nation.

However, as the Chinese saying goes “Historically, intellectuals all over the world would like to engage in disparaging one another (wherever they are in close encounters)”. Ayer came to be noticed as a brilliant young infatigable philosopher at the tender age of twenty-five. In 1930’s he was a kind of a charming celebrity and good conversationalist, thus he was inevitably associated in various jealousy and frolic flings, and mischievous and childish Ayer sought it out as an outlet for frustration (derived from jealousy) and boredom when studying philosophy and confronting so much unneeded frustration from the realm external to the philosophical studies; he was pushed to play the role Faust as a way out of the realistic miseries of his beloved career—a pusuer of truth and its logic. Consequently Ayer turned to be a very complicated man of charms down on earth; he was a man of unusually multiple dimensions. There must be many his contemporary females indulged in having a crash on him, that included many movie stars (including the one mentioned by his biographer Rogers actresses Joan Fontane and Lauren Bacall were his old friends), big or not-big, and unbalanced blue-stockings (intellectuals) in Oxford.⁷² Maybe most were *prima facie* (a word he liked to use) infatuation to the good worldly charismatic player Ayer; some ambitious one, particularly those who had studied philosophy, would even consider that capturing that intriguing genius was a trophy for successful maneuvering in life—a

⁷² Cf. Ben Rogers: A.J. Ayer, A Life, 2001, he might have failed to cover Ayer’s flings in Oxford. I’ve come across bits of them when reading Ayer’s Autobiographies “Part of My Life” and “More of My Life”. In which it was mentioned that Ayer had been sending identical copies of serenading letters to different people, sometimes even simultaneously but separately.

double prize. But the intriguing Ayer was as difficult to ensnare socially or romantically as a dragon when a blue stocking has to compete with beautiful and glamorous top movie starlets and socialites in the world of Vanity Fair.⁷³ Or as the imprints “Ayer Rocks!”, which are on currently available for purchase on A.J.Ayer t-shirts, caps, pillows and teddy bears, states that, it’s hard to pin down Ayer’s rocking movements. Whoever is merchandising them has at least got one thing right—restless Ayer was a keg of dynamite moving around swiftly waiting to get exploded like an artist performing to get to the high notes, in music or painting. No wonder some his good friends had mistaken him initially as either a dancer or magician.

Even though, deep in Ayer’s heart, he loved and trusted only (everlasting) truth and philosophy and himself—the meaning of his life. Pursuing them was the only way that could calm him down. It is strongly likely most of the infatuation was one-sided and those people were fooling themselves because of his being a celebrity. For all his life Ayer was mostly perplexed about himself of having been a multiple dimensional person that have had pulled him to different and sometimes contradictory directions.⁷⁴ Surmising from his two autobiographies and biographies, I would not be surprised to find out if there is a report that he had mischievously enjoying watching females competing for his attention. For him it was such fun which had offset the burden of his sufferings from the other façade of his life. It had also covered up his deeply-rooted shyness and sensitiveness. Even so, his perplexed nemesis and admirers should have realized that true philosophers could live, over and above, such silliness of obsession, and not indulging in the obsession of possessing him. Looks like it initiated as one side infatuation, and it later led to a rather disgusting selfish revenge on his womanizing. In this case, the blind jealousy sprung from this narrow-mindedly politically opportunistic hit-and-run emotive romantic behavior was not for gentlemen or gentlewomen either.⁷⁵ Unfortunately this irrational jealousy had over

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ E.g. his encountering with Michael Tyson displayed a streak of his recklessness when his sense of justice against stronger people bullying weaker one was disturbed. Similar event had happened in Paris when he was hving coffee in the Latin Quarter.

⁷⁵ Historically, the propensity of indulging in and overplaying out jealousy on innocent bystanders was the decadence many females particularly couldn’t resist.

spilled on me, the only female student of Ayer who had included in his circle of favorite philosophers. Besides I was just a young and dedicated blue stocking—a bookish student who had the disposition to be an admirer of all great writers, male and female, of both Western(in English) and Chinese(in Chinese) philosophies. My communications and interactions with other philosophers could prove to this fact.⁷⁶

With that female college don's political competence she had managed to worm through school administration, her professional playing of tricks and treats within that system could be just as easy as turning one's palm upwards. Even my matriculation record in St. Hughes College as a postgraduate student (equivalent to 'graduate' in USA) had been obliterated, yet underhandily not officially.⁷⁷ The most hurt person might be the lady managing the Oxford University Registrar who had honestly tried to use her influence to defend the British honor; she had then disappeared from the Oxford University administration soon after I left as well. It was like humpty dumpty sitting on the wall to be pushed down. Later when I informed Ayer in my correspondence years later from USA he had urged me to make an issue of it. However I had a family to support and I have had been browbeaten to accept it as, the way things were running in this case, i.e. political authority prevailed. Even though later I realized things like that would have been run differently in the United States; people here are normally not so reserved that they could manzge to speake out one way or the other. Maybe the weighty authority of a college tutor has had been used by a very politically enterprising person; other colleagues were overwhelmed by her game. Even this time she had broken the constraint of British honour by playing it unfairly and unsquarely. It only took a drop of black ink to smear the whole pan of water, as well as crime could be hidden through good cover up.

There was no way for a naïve foreigner from a culturally different and politically weak island country like me to recognize that the prominent people within an academic community could twist things around to that extent; those social entangling and chit-chats were also makers and shakers

⁷⁶ Bertrand Russell had sent me as "Thank you" letter when I sent him a Christmas card and letter in 1963, even though Ayer had asked me not to disturb him.

⁷⁷ Ayer had suggested me to raise an issue about it when I discovered it in 1980's from USA.

of human affairs in the field of learning, where only honesty and fairness sustained the progress. This decadent fashion was further populated when technology for mass media took off.⁷⁸ Notwithstanding this fashion took a fresh vigorous life in now newly wealthy China as well; chatting on private affairs and conquest of the opposite sex has become focus of mass communications, e.g. celebrities personal lives are such headlines from internet to newspapers. Unavoidably jealousy and competition breed fighting, and in civilized societies political fighting are mostly accessible. Back then I was circumscribed to live under the heavy crossfire set off by such politically-oriented don, who was possessed and obsessed with archaic social-political prejudices and personal get-even with Ayer presumably.⁷⁹ Such a person, whom I have had unluckily come under whose spell, later did later use this political exercise of maneuvering to become a very successful politician, who further employing her political choreography to get knighted in England. Just like Goethe observed the role of truth and ethics in human societies:

“Let no one complain about and grumble at things vile and mean, they are the real rulers,—however much this be gain said.”

Ayer had suggested in one letter that I should know how to face coarse people. I guess this is essential for survival in world we shared with them. In China, there was a scheming Empress Dodger in the Nineteenth Century whose seizure of power had selfishly led the country into speedy deterioration. And many Chinese were made helpless as well.

As Ayer was not allowed to be my supervisor due to the political pressure, the tutor Ayer had originally managed, through compromise, to assign to tutor me was Professor David Wiggins. Ayer's move was keeping me away, as I have pleaded, from being brow beaten. However, thanks to my rebellious disposition, I struggled to break off from Wiggins' tutelage (Ayer's comment). However, in considering the fact for those two years in Oxford I

⁷⁸ Nietzsche once commented that when he contacted people socially, he caught their dirt; similarly devoted Buddhists, particularly monks, also had such puritanical attitude of avoiding being vulgar.

⁷⁹ The time when Ayer recommended me strongly to the Oxford University in early 1960's he labeled me as very bright, I was of tender and fresh age of 21 and the winner of the highest scholarship (only six were offered) on philosophy. From a vulgar perspective that had made an impressive embellishment and meant much to vulgar people, i.e. those who were so impressed to spin out their jealousy.

did attend all Ayer's seminars, which as he put it, were for bright students to discuss and debate. In those seminars Ayer was thinking with exertion and highly concentrated, sometimes he appeared as though he was a Zen master whose mind was not in this mundane world but on a higher platform. Or, his dedication and concentration in tackling problems could be described with the Buddhist expression 'steadfastness' (*dinggong*). I did have been benefited from his seminars, as well as some tea-time meetings, without any tea, I've with him. In those meetings he was checking on my progress and his advice were taken seriously that he liked; in any case I considered his reasoning solid and heuristic. At that time I have had been particularly hampered by my English, and he boosted my morale by throwing in some compliments. However, his encouragements was not taken seriously by me, as he put it, an action-&-result seeking pragmatic action-hero, and he did mention that was no fitting way for a philosopher. For those two years my English tutor was Mrs. Ann Strawson, who happens to be the wife of the famous philosopher Professor Sir Peter Strawson. She was a conscientious teacher even when I visited her three decades later, she still did not change the habit of correcting my English—an USA grown up me. And I've never got a chance to repay her for having sometimes fed me or invited me to their parties. Hopefully she is somewhat satisfied with my English now.

Subsequently, Professor Gilbert Ryle had kindly provided me a refuge from that woman; an alternative way to save my neck and rescuing me from my predicaments of living under enemy occupation.⁸⁰ Even though he was an impartial and just person, yet poor Ryle had been ridiculed so much by my college tutor, as I heard through grapevines, because of me. He became my philosophical tutor unexpectedly and grudgingly approved by my college tutor. Even though we're friendly and I've much respected him as a father figure, yet intellectually we had had a great deal of fighting—because I had originally come to philosophy through my admiration of Bertrand Russell. Nevertheless, just as Ayer once said, with gratitude, that Ryle was an excellent teacher to him and he had had been benefited greatly philosophically by Ryle. He also reiterated it to me in person. I would join his serenade with no hesitation.

⁸⁰ One student of philosophy I occasionally dated had made the comment Ryle had acted protectively of me in lectures and seminars. Naively then I was wondering for what? I think his original opinion of me, complimented Ayer's, was that I had a LONG way to go.

Professor Gilbert Ryle of the Oxford University was the only heavy-weight intellectual who had seriously tutored me in my life.⁸¹ He had exercised me to work out my brain power diligently. Initially it was Ryle who together with Ayer had admitted me to the University by shorten application procedure to one month. They had jointly made the decision after having had read my BA thesis in Taiwan University. He was an excellent tutor but politically soft-headed and thin-skinned, he himself could hardly survive among his colleagues. Those who used their philosophical competence to counter muddy politicization, particularly the underhanded tact of smearing rumor mongering and mud sling; it was way below Ryle's dignity and honor, let along to analyze the motive and ill-will behind it and counter it. Even though this disturbance of his serenity through means of sound and fury signified nothing philosophically but emotively. As many respectable British intellectuals before the 20th Century, under the influence of Christianity, he was a dedicated scholar and confirmed bachelor. His adherence to the moral advancement of his kind of honorable citizens of the Great British Empire was rubbed off by living among over-ambitious highfliers, it would have taxed so much his energy to counter that over-blown ill wind.⁸² Just look what had been happening to Ayer. I recalled the first day I went to visit Ryle he said to me "Ah, you have had read a great deal of Ayer!" There's twinkling in his eyes. I also have learned from grapevine that he had agreed with Ayer about me, yet he was also of the opinion that I had a very long way to go to improve my English. My college don's insidious behavior perplexed me, a tender child who had grown up wanting to be a philosopher; this was also the student of Laozi who believed that "Dao is covert" "Humility is the most viable virtue". Maybe Ryle had already realized, too late though, that I politically I was circumscribed to enter into the realm of academic predicament. He had, maybe naively thought that shifting my aimed direction away from Ayer to him might have saved me form Ayer's jealousy-ridden cunning

⁸¹ Gilbert Ryle, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gilbert_Ryle

⁸² Ryle was walking a rather tight rope politically through compromising to the demands of then majority—leaders of the clique of Oxford Linguistic Philosophers in order to retain his privilege; in the same manner, he had also tried to block Ayer, his favorite ex-pupil, from returning to Oxford, as well as rejecting to publish articles written by Russell and Popper. I believed that those acts were against his better judgments

enemies waiting in the wing.⁸³ Yet he had underestimated the passion and fury thus generated. Ryle's expertise was on Plato's epistemology; he knew the book *Phaedo* from top to bottom. Like Wittgenstein, and many philosophers, who have dedicated so much to this subject that they were both confirmed bachelors.

In spite of Ryle's personal closeness to Wittgenstein, I believe that the direction of then Oxford Linguistic Philosophy School had failed to move to the direction to explore Wittgenstein's philosophy as both Wittgenstein and Ryle had hoped. Somehow he had left out of the main stream of the Oxford School, as well as having had been left unattacked. However his philosophical writings have kept his uniqueness and differences from them. It is also doubtful whether Wittgenstein himself would have approved this School as a descendent or a spin-off of his thoughts either. His most trusted and dedicated successor was Finnish Professor Georg Henrik Von Wright. It appeared that Oxford School were dealing with issues Wittgenstein has raised, in a hairsplitting piecemeal fashion. Russell has said that it is kind of doing philosophy without tears (having sweated through hard work and hard thinking), and grammarians and philologists could have done a better job. It was also the similarly thing many experts on Daoism or Laozi have done to Laozi's book and philosophy.⁸⁴ However, I don't believe there has been people who have had thought over the problems to fathom as deep as Wittgenstein had. The question here again is about comprehending Wittgenstein's framework. Ayer even said that Wittgenstein's students have learned from him his mannerism much more than his philosophy. Wittgenstein was a very deep thinker immersed in meditation. He had religiously pondered

⁸³ When a person is temporarily insane, particularly in jealousy, his or her irrational behavior could be incredible and unbelievable, e.g. committing senseless murder or Japanese had committed atrocity during China in WWII.

⁸⁴ Cf. *Laozi*, Chapter 15.I

In old days, excellent scholar/doers were comprehensive and detail-oriented [in their pursuits] [for this reason] they could penetrate deeply into mysteries; Their scholarships and achievements were so profound, vast, and subtle that ordinary people had difficulties to evaluate them; Because of this, ordinary people had trouble to make out [the deep implication of] their performances; The ordinary folks thus compulsively depicted them [in their own accustomed ways, which will be exemplified in the succeeding paragraphs].

on philosophical problems deeply. Accordingly, the quote of Laozi in the Footnote 80 serves to describe reading Wittgenstein well.

Even though Ryle has tutored me for only one year, I probably owe my much deepening philosophical reasoning power by being trained to counter him diligently in arguments, sometimes that might be provokingly unpleasant. Imagine if I was tutored by Ayer's nemesis that was impregnated with seeking vengeance on him, instead of Ryle. Under that circumstance, a greater rumor mongering, smear attack and unfair twisting could be more easily taken place. Nevertheless, Ryle was still under the impact, institutionally, academically and politically, of the spell of the don of my women's college. He had given me a very good education; for that he had had taken as much browbeaten, from my argument, as much as he could bear; he had also taken much browbeaten from my College Don's gossip as well. Eventually he had to bow down to my college don's overbearing and tricky maneuvering—that kind of game-playing was simply not cup of tea for a dedicated scholar and teacher like him.

It is fair to say even in hindsight after I have grown to emotional maturity, I would say Ryle's clumsy dealing with the situation was due to his shortage of universal look at the down-to-earth world. However, that kind of act derived out of mafia reminiscent motivation was beyond his grasp, let alone to defend against such wicked influence. At different times, Ayer in the 60's and Popper in the 90's, they both thought it would have been a very disastrous choice to have my then college don to become my tutor, they have both judged that she was not philosophically good enough for me. Even I was shocked by such comment from both these two respected venerable philosophers have made, it was about that so-called philosopher. Either way it was disastrous, except that Ryle had given me an excellent tutorial within his power.

Nevertheless Ryle's well intended plan for his student—me to evade her grasp was sabotaged in the fashion a chess tournament had been swept away because the board was overturned. Maybe she has had reached her standing through the marriage to her politically-oriented philosopher husband, as well as her own political savvy, that power couple could manipulate, to her benefit, the academic circle they were swimming in. In any case she kept on complaining that both my English and philosophical papers were too inadequate for her to understand, whereas there has never had been any problems with all four

aforementioned philosophers, even including Popper.⁸⁵ How come she had had jumped on the wagon initially with Ryle and Ayer to praise my BA thesis Witten in Taiwan? Maybe there is some limitation on her non-pedantic intelligence. However, perhaps after having had been being upset, over and again, by my stubbornness (to keep on going on his rival Russell's path) and his suffering from the political pressure and a letter from my father about the shortage of fund because the Taiwanese scholarship would run out soon. Finally Ryle did mention that my philosophy was not an academician or institutional kind and the Oxford University would give no financial help to me. It will be a waste of money and his struggle to defend me. That was quite a good news to the politically-oriented sinister don of my college, who previously has subjectively (a non-white or non-commonwealth or non-American) and racially taken my independence and dissent particularly as an offense.⁸⁶ Her politicization competence finally would be rewarded and she later had a very smooth ascendant in British politics and even made to the high(est) peerage. Nevertheless I've paid a heavy price for the dissent and offence to this intellectual imperialist⁸⁷; all because she had calculatingly drawn Ryle into her trap. Incredibly it was motivated by personal vengeance or jealousy.⁸⁸

However, Laozi says in Laozi 53.I: Even if I realize that I am unmistakably proceeding on the [right path of] the great Dao; I still would be worrisome if I would ever go astray [inadvertently]. Faust could also go astray by being attracted and corrupted by other pleasure in life, i.e. possession of power through playing power. All these were all led by the superficial notion of being successful earthy human beings, particularly with political power. So be it the survival of the fittest in any *ad hoc* human social circles. Being s follower of Laozi, one should consider all these pitiful human maneuvering, no matter how the doer was satisfied with

⁸⁵ Unfortunately I was seriously dating a student living next door to Ryle in the college of which both his and her husband were members.

⁸⁶ I learned later that I was the second Chinese being treated so unfairly by this character; before there was a person from Hong Kong, with better English though, being equally brutally terminated. From the grapevine I'd also learned that a visiting American-Chinese professor's family had been thoughtlessly treated by the same party when came to child-care issue.

⁸⁷ This person's grandfather was working under a British envoy doing negotiations in China in 19-20th Century.

⁸⁸ This case could be a single isolated incident of temporarily insanity, influenced by blind passion.

its glamour and splendor, is to exist by going counter the force (of Dao), which truly perpetual the significance of living as decent human being for self and others. On hindsight, I would not attribute it to the influence of somebody's personal heritage of having had practiced imperialism in China, because another lady from Hong Kong had also been handled the same way. Nevertheless, the fact that I came to study from a politically weak region of a declining part of China did make it easy to arouse someone's irrationally impregnated spirit of imperialism or colonialism, let alone personal jealousy.⁸⁹ Furthermore, the heavy handed playing of politics on an innocent student from far away could be fueled by jealousy hued with sex. Whatever it was, it did have played out with colonialism or imperialism. Or as they say in USA a rotten apple could spoil the whole barrel, Ryle had made the similar comment that the British's honor had thus been chipped away. What can a person like him, who has been so lied to and double-crossed as after his pleaded, to rectify this situation? When the sustaining honor of that society had been exploited by one of its member? It is against the nature of Ryle, a non-political person, to correct the situation when who had been double-crossed (wronged), to be able to handle the confusion led to by crookedness. It was all because his gentlemanly disposition had led him to the path of being fooled by the compromise my college don made, i.e. she will be willing to take me under her wing (he told me so). It was incredible that he was willing to let his hard work of tutoring me be overturned. Perhaps, it was beyond his decency to realize that passion of jealousy could destroy appropriateness.

Just like Goethe has said, "*Let no one complain about and grumble at things vile and mean, they are the real rulers,—however much this be gain said.*" Honest and straight Ryle could not have overridden suspicion of such a political scheming. He was led to believe the rumor-mongering would thus stop. Hardly was there any room for him to detangle the situation because this gentleman was duped; it was because his supposedly counter political maneuvering backfired. The Chinese saying "when a muted person was given the bitter lotus seed to eat, there was no way for him to complain his discomfort but being compelled to suffer in silence" describes the situation fittingly. Consequently maybe the penalty this person received was being temporarily sent out of the Oxford University; she succeeded to relocate

⁸⁹ I had heard from the grapevine that my younger age of two decades' could have also been the cause of my being mistreated because of jealousy.

to a local middle school (as Ryle had written to inform me after I left England). Yet that stunt did not last long that she managed to slip in the University from other doors, she knew the areas too well.

Nevertheless she could be credited that, after this tryout, her political nimbleness improved that it later even landed her much better jobs through wearing the shroud of a wisdom-bearing philosopher; appealing perception like this particularly enhances the image for a politician in UK. So there she has had been having a smooth sailing in politics hereafter, even though many other people were hurt and harmed by her concentrated effort on political deftness on this matter—to creepily manipulate and disrupt the career of a young student who adored Ayer's (and Russell's) philosophy from faraway land and culture—China, as well as others who had independent mind. If the world is full with people redy to forive like good Christians, will that thus prevent people of otherwise being take advantage of by people with ambitiou and exploiting disposition?

Similar to Christianity, Laozi talked about forgiveness too, he said “He(a Saint) must not reciprocate all accusations and animosities with virtuous acts, no matter whether it is serious, minor, many, or few.”(Laozi 63.1). It is reminiscent of the Christian dictum, “if one hits you on the one cheek, turn your other cheek to him(her).” Nevertheless, in a publicly traveled highway, forgiving a thug who had violated other drivers' right will entail recurring harms to far more people; violation is violation and consequential damages could be more damages incurred. As Confucius had commented this scenario, that had someone benefited from an improper behavior going unpunished, then how to deal with people who exert to deface themselves for the sake of decent behavior? The more one tolerates or ignores aggression behavior, the more the society would thus lose ground, physically and morally. On this issue, Confucius was pragmatically more viable by calling for rectification or correction, from the perspective of morality or the protection of the public. I find, from a perspective of altruistic morality, that Confucius' view on this was more appropriate for the sake of social justice. In American there is also the saying “A rotten apple could spoil the whole batch”, so picking off rotten apples could save the whole lot. All in all, a number of the upright people in the Great Britain has had nourished the greatness of the Empire, it was the improper elements that had chipped away the virtue that had sustained the nation which was the pride of British nationals for their embracing of both intellectual and moral excellence.

Same is true on any other countries, e.g. it was militant Japanese who contrived their way to launch the stealth attack on Pearl Harbor and China. Nevertheless innocent millions who were thus led to death were far better and peace-loving citizens. Millions of their own decent Japanese died in such rampage as well. That impingement of public affairs through their selfish obsession, and played out with streetwise political expertise, has diminished the good deeds of their decent majorities. And this has happened not in political quests but in academic quests. No wonder Ryle had lamented that that virtual act of twisting his arms was against British virtue. But Ryle was academically profound and honorable, but politically naïve and ham-handed. The flip side of this was he could be easily tricked in the university politics, when someone employed the confidence game which he was not familiar with. Consequently he ended up holding an empty bag or a massive situation like humpty dumpty fell from the wall that he could blame nobody but himself; he did not have the word underhandedness in his dictionary, as well as the word sinister. He therefore did not understand their application in daily life and was too confused to counter them. As usual, there are always casualties of by-standers in cross fires; straight nobody could rectify the situation once the killing has been done. This rampage has even gone so far as altering the registration book to get my history there obliterated. Looking at the publications in the United Kingdom up to the end of 1989, Ayer and his philosophy still was constantly being singled out for target-practice, from the same old orientations. In any case it sounds too utterly personal to be respectable, let alone for academics; what a heavy political covering of evidences?

This just illustrated that tolerating much political bickering in academic circles, could be detrimental to academic freedom, purity, progress and eventually justice. Unfortunately, from a wider perspective, due to then circumstance of heavy academic political pressure, even Russell was considered outmoded. I could have had been exceedingly benefited by Ayer's heuristic teaching and non-dogmatic approach to philosophy. Even Sir Karl Popper, who has also held Russell with high reverence, has had suffered from fighting against the force aiming at getting his wings clipped. This, however, has never dampened my enthusiasm about Russell, who may be the most formidable contender for the honor of the greatest philosopher of the 19th to 20th Centuries. Down to last Century, the United Kingdom was still the hub for globally weighty intellectuals, from Francis Bacon through Newton, Darwin, Marx, Russell, Wittgenstein and

Popper. Philosophically, a parallel could be drawn from Charles Dickens, in any human community, there are the best of the folks, and it also has the worse of folks; there are people who love people and peace, and there are also people who love power desperately. Nazis and militant Japanese were the worst of their people who had once opportunistically rubbed the inning of the good but weaker folks of their communities. In the crowded circle (of Oxford) When a loner rubs on the wrong side of politically folks, he could be improperly crowded out. As Russell has said: “(in academic fields) *Morally, a philosopher who uses his professional competence for anything except a disinterested search for truth, is guilty for a kind of treachery.*” (A History of Western Philosophy, p.863).

Back in China historically, several times intellectual circles of different times have committed mutual destruction in the similar fashion as well. This has had also caused stagnation in the development of knowledge and state politics in China, particularly in Ming Dynasty. There is hardly any guarantee that this lesson of history learned could avoid its being reoccurred in the future in China? From Laozi’s perspective, it is all too human.⁹⁰ As Laozi had observed, from perspective of analyzing De(arête) in Chapter 38:

38.I People who set their sights on the supreme De(Arête) do not cultivate De for the purpose of achieving [social reputation], They are individuals who really have [bona fide achievement of] De;⁹¹ People, who focused on not losing their [overt] possession of De, They are individuals who possess De of the lowest rank that is not De [in truth but in appearances only]; This passage continues as follows: A person of superior De does not interfere [with other people’s affairs], yet he has strong sense of responsibility that he never move away from [other people’s] problems;

A person of inferior De takes actions [to publicize his appearance of being responsible and diligent], whereas he is unwilling to

⁹⁰ Cf. Laozi(Daodejing) Chapter 77.

⁹¹ Part Two of *Laozi* was originally called *Part One The Book on De*. From Chapter 38 to Chapter 81(the last chapter) the natural theme was supposed to be De(arete; virtue).

execute any project [which has not potentiality to enhance his benefit or image].

38.II A noble act of kindness is carried out solely for being kind, not for any other purposes; A regal effort for justice is performed only for the purpose of maintaining justice; it should not be used for other ends."

After the incident of this person's double-crossing Ryle, she started actively seeking to publicize her persona, i.e. projecting her appearance of being a person who kindly concerned about welfares of the society.⁹² A kind of redemption like Lady Macbeth did, constantly washing her hands after the murder she had provoked her husband to commit ruthlessly, in order to replace the king himself. Just like Goethe said that things wicked and mean are more powerful than truth, when he described the harsh reality of the delicacy of Truth as follows: "Let no one complain about and grumble at things vile and mean, they are the real rulers,—however much this be gain said."⁹³

I always admire Ayer's talent in expressing various very deep and fine philosophical thoughts in plain simple English with lucidity, ease and elegance. He could articulate many philosophers' thoughts much better than they themselves. Wittgenstein was always cool to him. Maybe he could reiterate his thoughts better than he himself; doubtless he was afraid his brain could be picked by Ayer. Similarly the mystification and awe built up around him may thus be evaporated in thin air.⁹⁴ Ayer's book Language, Truth and Logic had persuaded me that philosophy was still a viable study, in spite of the fact the modern world was moving towards materialism, capitalism and communism; philosophy was in the danger to be replaced by psychology and theories of logic. And nowadays computer computational work is being assimilating to philosophizing; this is a very

⁹² Would her cotaiminating behavior be purged only god knows.

⁹³ Confucius also described how insincere and feigned were hypocrites of societies. He named them as "thieves of De" and "a pretender- gentleman of the village".

⁹⁴ The mystification built around Wittgenstein has gone to such extent of being blindly silly-funny idol-worship, and even superstitious, as it once expressed by someone like "I've met Wittgenstein once in Cambridge in a seminar (for just an hour or so?)", 'therefore I've been blessed'?

far cry from the original intention of Greek philosophers; these computer enthusiasts should just describe their works computationally like astrology rather than putting a philosophical mantle on it; it has more in common with designing games or astrological charts. Great spokesmen for philosophy of likes of Russell, Wittgenstein and Dewey might voice the last hurrah of philosophy. No wonder Popper has described the reliance on computers to as walking with crutches. Within the dominance or influence of the *ad hoc* computer system, our thinking is constrained. Having been indoctrinated by authoritarian Confucianism, it is all too familiar with me how difficult for our forefathers to fight against the bewitchment of the authoritarianism of Neo-Confucianism. Ayer once told me while I was in Oxford that he thought that I could be a better poet than an academia philosopher. Perhaps he had sensed the trace of my Nietzsche-like free spirit, so to speak. But I have never written any poem, either in Chinese or in English, not even a bit like his successful poet friends T.S.Eliot or e.e. Cummings or Professor Chern. In one occasion Ayer asked with seriousness whether I thought that he was also a born poet. I was surprised that it came from a rational philosopher. Ayer kept on corresponding with me continuously with fragmental advices and encouragements, for twenty-eight years until he passed away the second time.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ There has had been a great deal of reports and comments on Sir A.J.Ayer's near death experience occurred in 1988. Yours truly had also dreamt of Ayer telling me in excitement that he was in 'infinity' a year after he had passed away; I could feel the same excitement when he announced to me in 1963 that he just had a son being born. Even so, as a follower of his Logical Empiricism relying on the principle of verification, I still prefer to choose to be agnostic—most likely a nonsensical accidental dream. However, in cosmology 'infinity' is an important concept and it is related to the principle that if one travels in straight-line one will line through the universe perhaps one would eventually to the exact spot one started from. However, in *Daodejing* Chapter 16.II Laozi says:

“Each and every individual living thing will flourish like
inestimable weeds [every instant];
Eventually each and every [living thing] will return to its root;
The returning of an individual to his [its] root is called returning
to Serenity;
Serenity means to respond to the determining forces [Dao];

When I first attempted to translate *Laozi* back in 1985, Ayer gave me a double-edged criticism of my work. He said it was very interesting, but he also said that my English was “laboured” (pompous). Later he said editing will make its appearance much more acceptable. Yet in this three-dimensional work of translating Laozi, if I concentrated only on achieving linguistically perfect English, it would sidetracked my concentration on the articulation of the constituents of prepositions of Laozi’s deep thoughts.⁹⁶ In any case, he said later that I should make a serious effort to complete the whole project, and shed away the “laboured” effort—my pretention, by writing spontaneously with what I have understood. To be fair to Sir Alfred(Freddie) the version he had read was the result of my preliminary attempt on this task, whereas the 1999 version (of translation) adopted in this book was the result of my twelfth or so tryout afterwards. His last handwritten illegible letter sent to me from French Rivera, after he had encountered his first death and back to this world, he advised me again that I should make a special effort to finish the book on Laozi. In his well-known devil-may-care manner he had never read my later developed work on Laozi, perhaps because he had and would have never asked me to send him any of them like Sir Karl and Professor Chern did. This is but a joke.

Ayer was modest philosophically in expressing his deep thoughts, even though Bertrand Russell had publicly promoted him as his heir-apparent. Ayer compared their relationship as Horatio to Hamlet. Maybe he felt that he had not worked arduously enough for the detailed articulation yet, or he humbly felt pessimistically that was not a genius on the same par to his mentor Bertrand Russell. He had complained that I had a disposition of not trying hard and prone to be easily distracted when there was no short-term gratification in sight. I should have protested that so was he. We do hear that, in art world, critics have killed some budding project, one way or another, regardless whether it was fair and square.

Responding to the determining forces [Dao] leads to
perpetuation ;
Individuals who know how to perpetuate are brilliant;
Individuals who do not know how to perpetuate are prone to
rash activities, so they are doomed.”

⁹⁶ Cf. Footnote 4 the quote from Wittgenstein.

The truth about Ayer was very like what his good friend Professor Sir Isaac Berlin has described and paraphrased (from my memory),⁹⁷ “Ayer’s talent was like a missile which was held back from being launched by such force that it has never been fully articulated.” Berlin also commented that Ayer’s writing was better than that of Russell’s, so did his colleague Professor Sir Peter Strawson. Had Ayer’s missile be launched, the traditional British Empiricism would have got a new lease of life instead of going into dormant. One could say it, simplistically, that the fundamentals of the complexities of human experiences are worth fathoming *ad infinitum*. With Ayer’s thorough knowledge of British Empiricism he did have much more to offer to contribute to Logical Empiricism; it could easily absorb Logical Positivism to grow new leaves. Ayer was also capable of breaking out of the snag of Hume’s Empiricism and broadening dimensions of it by encompassing it with more modern advanced human knowledge. In this case one could not help to be reminded that people often do kill messengers. Remember the patriot poet Cinna killed by mob at Caesar’s assassination or patriot General Yue Fei(1103-1142) was executed for ‘not necessarily describable crime’?⁹⁸ My guess is that, because of all these, in his heart, Ayer was an earnest existentialist like the disheartened Camus or Faust; both his pursuit of truth and meaning of life turned out disappointing and somewhat nihilistic.

Ayer must have felt pessimistic, like Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, because the worldly affairs were run with considerable absurdities and injustice. He was an impressive heavy smoker, Popper and your truly, on the contrary, both hated nicotine. I have watched him walking in depression, after the lectures, and then finally took off his scholar gown to swing on his shoulder as if he had thus entered a freer realm. Just look in what company he was with when he was in Paris; he mingled with local men of letters (of existentialism) as a native-born Parisian confronting sex and violence. Otherwise with his proficiency in French and philosophy he could have written about Existentialism. Perhaps he did not need such bother to rub other’s celebrity status by adding this to his already impressive intellectual achievements. However, in his earlier years Whitehead did have advised him to take up more science and mathematics and he had failed to do so. Maybe his existentialist sentiments had caused him to agree with Faust

⁹⁷ Isaiah Berlin: at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaiah_Berlin

⁹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yue_Fei

that life is but a disappointment, in the end, you remain exactly what you are . . . that we know nothing finally.”⁹⁹ Even Confucius had depressing moment that he mourned that his knowledge could be so easily exhausted by being challenged by inquisitive individuals.

Before I went to England, I was harboring with the hope that I could cling to the coattail of a rising sun Ayer, a bright new comer in 20th Century Empiricist philosophy. Unfortunately the circumstance in his alma mater Oxford then was filled with gun smoke, and he was the object of the target practice. He was not a rising sun but a somewhat the sun at dusk. I could hardly find any of his inspiration and aspiration in his Language, Truth and Logic has gained any new lease of life. Even his writing style had lost its original luster and kind turning into being pedantic. And he was only in his fifties, the golden age to be a matured and fulfilled philosopher—the successor of Bertrand Russell. Had he stayed in the London University, the development might have been different. Or, my fate as a follower of his early philosophy and Laoism could be differently evolved and fulfilled. A blooming of merging of East and West thoughts might not have been just a daydream. Popper kind described my circumstance as survivorship in a small overcrowded fish pond. Maybe that's life—not everyone could survive adversities and injustice. Accidents or a casualty happens. And in China historians had commented “The winner became the king, whereas the loser was deemed the thief”. When I came to California with a generous teaching assistantship to teach Chinese and to study the traditional Chinese (hermeneutic) and modern

⁹⁹ From Goethe's Faust:

Now I have studied philosophy, medicine and the law,
and unfortunately, theology,
wearily sweating, yet I stand now,
poor fool, no wiser than I was before;
I am called Master, even Doctor,
and for these last ten years have led
my students by the nose--up, down,
crosswise and crooked. Now I see
that we know nothing finally
In the end, you are exactly--what you are.
Put on a wig with a million curls,
put the highest heeled boots on your feet,
yet you remain in the end just what you are.

Western linguistics (in the lineage of anthro-linguistics of L. Bloomfield and Sapir), in the University of California, Davis, I have achieved better perspectives for linguistic philosophy. Traditional linguistics is scientifically oriented and tackles the basic problem of languages. Later, the work carried out by psychologist-educator Vygotsky¹⁰⁰ and his colleagues had developed psychological linguistics that would tackle many problems in linguistic-philosophy scientifically and more viably. What has had been sustained me was similar spirit manifested in Professor Chern's poem quoted in this paper.¹⁰¹ I would also contribute it to the internalization of Laoism; that is being genuinely philosophical about life.

Needham the Greatest Sinologist-Microbiologist and Daoism¹⁰²

I had a very brief encounter with the greatest sinologist Mr. Joseph Needham, the founder of the Needham Institute of Cambridge England. After Sir Karl Popper passed away at the age of ninety-two, the editor Popper had sent me to contact has suggested that I might get help from Mr. Needham regarding this translation as he was keen on Daoism too. Needham was then already ninety-four years old. Naturally he was not in good health either. However, he so kindly wrote me back and signed the letter; he said that with deep regrets, he was not able to do anything about my translation on *Laozi*. He had also kindly invited me to visit his Institute in Cambridge, England to use their library. However, the Institute's library still keeps the manuscript of my original translation made in 1994. When he was in China during the WWII he also took a likeness of Daoism and wrote about it. Some of his insightful comments were quoted in this paper. What had made Needham so outstanding and as perceptive as Bertrand Russell about China was because he was an accomplished scientist before he discovered the wealth of the Chinese civilization. It takes an accomplished man like Needham to develop deep understanding of the cultural wealth of China. No wonder he appeared like another British weirdo to his countrymen. That reminds me of what

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Footnote 180.

¹⁰¹ Cf. p.24.

¹⁰² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Needham

Laozi has said in Chapter 15.I about people with profound scholarships being improperly depicted:

“In old days, excellent scholar/doers were comprehensive and detail-oriented [in their pursuits] [for this reason] they could penetrate deeply into mysteries; their scholarships and achievements were so profound, vast, and subtle that ordinary people had difficulties to evaluate them;

Because of this, ordinary people had trouble to make out [the deep implication of] their performances; The ordinary folks thus compulsively depicted them [in their own accustomed ways, which will be exemplified in the succeeding paragraphs].

Because of this, ordinary people had trouble to make out [the deep implication of] their performances; The ordinary folks thus compulsively depicted them [in their own accustomed ways, which will be exemplified in the succeeding paragraphs]¹⁰³

In my opinion, Needham has been trying to propel England, ahead of all other countries, to work out a balanced view on China. He has also spearheaded the recapitulation of science and technology in China, as well as the portion of the lost Chinese civilization. What Needham has done individually has surpassed the work done by institutes or organizations inside and outside China. I hope eventually it will be recognized that his behavior demonstrated the British honor that has done good to the humanities of our world.

My Father

Somehow I should mention my father Chen Zhiming(aka Chen Chiming), the original writer of the Chinese classic The Evolvement of Tibet¹⁰⁴ which is available in libraries of major universities, particularly

¹⁰³ *Shi* scholar-doer: Before Laozi's time most of the scholar-activists were officials wearing two hats: they were both theoreticians(scholars) and men-of-action(warrior-politician). Later, when the administration became more complex, the schism of thinkers--scholars and activists--politicians evolved.

¹⁰⁴ More about The Evolvement of Tibet at: <http://www.making-of-tibet.com>

East Asia Division, in the United States and Canada. He was the teacher who was the one who had originally enlightened me (*qi mong shi*). From him I received my first copy of the book Laozi, a miniature 3"x2" copy of the original done by the 13th Century Sung-Yuan calligrapher Zhao Meng-hu. He had also introduced me to attend the free class given by a self-made scholar and previous Buddhist monk and renowned Daodejing interpreter Nan Huai-jin.¹⁰⁵ My father was a contemporary of Popper and Needham. He was more interesting in Guiguzi, a pragmatic follower of Laozi on strategies, as well as the famous Zhuge Liang strategist-politician of the Three Kingdom (in the 3rd Century AD), as well as the poet Tao Yuan-ming (4th Century AD). Last couple decades of his life he had deepened his dedication to Zen Buddhism, his medication had seemed carried him to a better world. Afterwards he revealed, in his private notes the sadness and disdain of this beastly world.¹⁰⁶ Then in his poem he revealed that "my body trapped inside this flesh, but my heart is longing for a (better) outer world. I live my life at the Right (as a conservative?), but my heart is for the Left (liberal; egalitarian?)". However he grew up an orphan, relying on scarcely available scholarships to obtain his basic education. Then he advanced his learning through working on The Analects of Confucius and other Chinese classics. Accordingly he was a thoroughly self-made intellectual, even though his old book is available at the Chinese National Library etc. His knowledge of the classical Chinese was far better than the well-educated me. He was my primary English teacher too; he himself had improved his English mainly through reading Bernard Shaw word-by-word with an English-Chinese dictionary. My husband had no problem to carry—indepth English conversation. The dictum he gave to this disappointing rebellious unconventional female child is, that the Chinese culture is as broad and deep as the sea. He had had kept many unbridged classical Chinese dictionaries, which I have used extensively in translating Laozi's book. His attitude had influenced me subconsciously all my life. Perhaps because of this, I've always felt

¹⁰⁵ Nan Huai-jin: Laster he became a much admired Zen master and interpreters of the 20th Century in Taiwan And mainlnd China. More sabout him could be found at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nan_Huai-Chin <http://www.nanhuaijin.org>

¹⁰⁶ I had come across his fragmental diary recollecting the mental status he entered in to world of nearly total serenity and fulfillment. A monk told me that my father had achieved the disposition of steadfastness--*dingong*.

proud that I could recapitulate Chinese classics, and I can go as far back as three thousand years to the Era of Laozi and Confucius of the 6th to 7th Centuries BC to enjoy their works.

Actually, my father's 1933 book was written in the language of classical Chinese. The book was a continuation of my grandfather's work—a brief historical description of the making of Tibet, based on its various preceding ethnical ancestors' (mainly Quiong) interaction with China, in the past three and half millennia. He made many new discoveries about the evolvement and formation of Tibet, that are quoted by world class Tibetan scholar in Europe, i.e. the distinguished multi-linguist-physicist Luciano Petech and inside China. He lived like a bona fide Laozi's follower, by being rational (scientific), selfless, adhere to humility, thrifty, simplicity and aloof to this maddening world of striving for worldly gains; when he worked he exerted his best, intellectually and dedication and had never compromise integrity for fame, power and profit; he had never sought or expected any recognition or compensation for any deed deeds through his political activities; his equalitarianism is that people who worked hard for others, e.g. farmers and manufacturers, should be compensated fairly and rightly by those who consumed, e.g. farmers should have their own land to grow crops and people wearing silk should raise silk worms per se. It might be called an idealistic humanitarian communism, this kind of thoughts had embedded in the Chinese culture and surfaced from time to time in poems¹⁰⁷.

The paradox is that it is pragmatically impossible to seek the ultimate justice, since expediency and other elements, e.g. vulgarity, vanity, selfishness and favoritism rule in both politics and economics. And politics universally incites killings physically and psychologically, especially of politically lesser sophisticated ones; it is the way of the human world, that is to reward relatively higher achievers, or survival of the fittest.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless Laozi's last statement in this book is: "The way of a Saint is to pursue [the happiness for others but abstaining from competing against them [for worldly gains]. (*Laozi* Chapter 81.II). I think my father had lived this dictum more than anybody I've known. Even though he was in

¹⁰⁷ Poets like Tao Yuanming, Li Bei, Du Fu etc have all manifested this humanitarian view.

¹⁰⁸ My father hated to exploit others to the extent that when learning that I had made purchased a piece of real estate with lower offer, he apologized to that savvy millionaire seller that I had pushed him too much.

politics, he had been politically ‘unwisely’ to criticize Chiang Kai-shek’s son openly as an undeserving future leader. Maybe the traffic accident that caused his demise in Taiwan had something to do with it. All these years I can’t help to assimilate the nature of this accident to the murdering of the patriot Yue Fei (1103-1142) of Song Dynasty.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, on the other side of the coin, whatever he had accomplished, particularly in politics and strategy outlay he had contributed, had had been exploited by so many people:¹¹⁰ politicians, so-called friends, opportunists and go-getter upward moving people. Perhaps he was not the type to survive in but to give himself to this world.

Methods Used in This Translation of Laozi’s Work

Historically in China, there were people who had truly attempted to dive into the and even steeped into the bona-fide tenets of Laozi’s philosophy, e.g. the great painter-calligrapher and Zen (Chan) master Zhao, Meng-hu. People like him had read the book Laozi constantly for many decades like the way Buddhist monks did with Scriptures. Judging from the comments he had made at the end of his calligraphic book “Laozi’s Daodejing”, I found his articulation surpassed all the scholarly interpretation and commentaries; it’d thus set a good example to laymen.

¹⁰⁹ I learned about Yue Fei very early in my life and had learned to recite his poem “The Redness had Spreaded All Over the River” with lyrics. My father’s handwriting resembles his writing too. More about Yue Fei at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yue_Fei. General Yue was also an excellent follower of Sun Tzu as a military strategist.

¹¹⁰ My father had never taken any credit for the role he had played in the land reform of the early 1940’s in Taiwan. The dictum “The people who plow the (rice) field should have his own land to work on” reflects very much his philosophy and his deep knowledge of manual works he had done in his early childhood as an orphan. After the Taiwan Land Reform, he had also bought a small piece of land to try his hands on farming to live up to this conviction. Nevertheless it was always his passion that credits and proper rewards should be given to hard-working peasants and silkworm farmers. I was taught to recite two poems in childhood: one was about our daily rice was grown with peasants’ sweat and silkworm farmers could not afford to wear silk themselves.

Serious Chan(Zen) practitioners might have deeper insight into Laozi's thought. However, for good Buddhists like them, silence was gold, and individualistic subdued soul-searching was more significant than seeking for social recognition through any form of self-promotion. Therefore they were normally quiet about talking about Laozi's thought. It is a great misfortune that, due to the primary linguistic hurdle that throughout history even among educated Chinese, the general tendency is taking the easy way out, either by associating Laozi with superficially irrational but much easier to approach paganism affected Daoism or just to articulate the layer of the *prima facie* meaning of his book. Accordingly his *exoteric*, objective and rational philosophy was grouped with *esoteric*, secretive and subjective mysticism. Alternatively being lost in pedantic scholastic-like treatment of Neo-Confucianism could also be attributed to the indulgence of the mysticism. Laozi was a rational philosophical thinker; his Daoism could therefore be interpreted much more efficiently in terms of Western rational philosophy than in any other platform. The truth is that an arduous research of the framework of Laozi's thought, viewing him as a *gestalt* man, would demythologize a great deal myths created about his philosophy. It is disastrous to enshroud (cloud) it through injecting in some mysticism or even sexism, e.g. as done by some self-promoted followers/interpreters. Further misfortune was, mistake upon mistake, those balderdash have subsequently enshrined general people's grasp of his philosophy (Daoism).

Notwithstanding, if Laozi's, over-zealous but superficial, followers be given a chance to dominate the representation and manifestation of Laozi's thought, much more harm will be eventually done. Their esoteric proliferation, distortion, fragmentation, trivialization, and mythologizing of the original Daoism Laozi, has provided a wrongful scaffolding for public to learn about Laozi's philosophy and has also done a disservice to the humanity.¹¹¹ The more and the longer and the wider perpetuation of this could devaluate and wipe this human heritage from the face of the Earth. The distortion was made because three hurdles must be overcome before people could read Laozi: Step One, proficiency with the modern plain written Chinese. Step Two, capability of reading the classical Chinese. Step Three, knowledge of the Chinese hermeneutics. Laozi's view is applicable universally for all the human beings, disregarding their creed

¹¹¹ Cf. Scaffolding Theory at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scaffolding_Theory

or ethnic background; he was neither a nationalist nor a cultural-centralist (like Confucius). He had aimed at speaking to all the people as individual human beings. One particularly important point is that, even at this time, while countries are moving towards globalization, the wisdom conveyed by Laozi's sayings are still very valuable, it could still brighten up our life. He is promoting universal human love and peaceful co-existence like Jesus. No wonder there are many parallels between Laozi's sayings and Christian teachings. Perhaps this is what Plato's talk of touching "immortality" with our limited life *is all about*. **Based on historical records, I've adopted the very original title of this book and refer to it as Laozi instead of the later popularly known title Tao Te Ching (Daodejing) launched in 2nd Century AD.**¹¹² This title was opted for social-political-religious appeals. It was introduced under the influence of the Second Century Han opportunistic religious Daoists, and felicitously adopted by their followers and posterity. Because of the considerable wide spread of the religion to the general public, especially the semi-literate crowd, the urge for popular assimilation to words used often in Confucianism was strong. Dao-De refers to "morality" in common Chinese usage until today. Perhaps, a more appropriate modern English translation should be "**Truth and Morality**".

The language of this book is very antiquated, and truth and morality were the original intention and reference, even though Laozi did not articulate that was his book title. In that time titles of books were normally named after the author, e.g. Zhuangzi and Sunzi (aka Chuang Tzu & Sun Tzu). Three centuries before the establishment of the Daoist Religion, even then the great scholarly historian Si Ma-qian, the author of *Shiji(The History Book)* of the 2nd Century BC admitted that he, or hardly anyone else, could understand Laozi's text exactly and accurately; the problem was both hermeneutic and philosophical. Throughout the history in China, some documents revealed that, serious objective scholars have said that, the original Daoism discussed before the Second Century BC was different from the Daoism, especially the more popular version, advocated thenceforth. Furthermore, even the very text which we have inherited may perhaps be, as suspected, the incomplete remnants recovered from several rampages of fires. Nevertheless Laozi's framework could be recovered intact through the remaining unaltered original text when, namely dots are

¹¹² In China the book "Laozi(aka Daodejing)" and its author—Laozi were advertently indiscernible.

properly connected. This explains why consistent meditation practitioners, like the aforementioned Chan(Zen) master Zhao, Meng-hu, had better grasp of Laozi's philosophy than socially recognized professional Daoists and Confucian scholars. Zhao's short comment appeared in his calligraphic copy of the book *Daodejing* testifies to it.

The task of knowing Laozi's Daoism is about understanding him as an individualistic integrated human being; it is best to be carried out through, keeping in view, his *gestalt* as an individual human being; philosophically it is about his framework (mathematical system) rather than (poetic) metre. As A.N. Whitehead said, "*Poetry allies itself to metre, philosophy to mathematic pattern.*"¹¹³ That may explain why Plato and Nietzsche had inspired so many people philosophically not poetically. The sentiments convey in the book *Laozi (Daodejing)* is all too human not to be unfelt by any compassionate person. More than that, it is also intellectually stimulating and challenging; the inherent underpinning themes hold together all statements within his book coherently. In other words, a reader must make effort to fathom for Laozi's deep thoughts. Even some careful and systematic mental reorganization of the text will bring to light the system of his thought. This is the very book which contains Laozi's own original philosophy. In other words, his philosophy was resulted from the convergence of philosophies before him. However his thought was the most integral philosophical frameworks, Confucianism included, in China. Accordingly the attitude, as held by many readers of various translations, "I feel good about is expressions" is like barking at the wrong tree by looking for poetic gratification through the book. Laozi's book is not to be read as poetries, for there is no depiction of any fleeing emotional outbursts in it; being a rational thinker, even emotive statements do not have much room in his book. It said in *Laozi* "Beautiful words are not trustworthy, inasmuch as beautiful talks may not be truthful."(Chapter 81) "A good person may not be a good at debating, inasmuch as a good debater may not be a good person."

One of the methods I employed for this research was similar to that which was used, in the Middle Ages, when Europeans reconstructed early Greek and Roman works from survived fragments among ashes of ruins. There is no doubt the branch of study called "hermeneutic" provides very important method for demystification. The hermeneutic I've employed

¹¹³ In his book *The Adventure of Ideas*.

is a traditionally Chinese one. When comes to the consideration of the scope of this translation and the significance of the introduction to Laozi's philosophy, I did have made a conscious effort to confine its content, as much as possible, to common-sense approach and exerted to illustrate my understanding of it as much as I can. Nevertheless, materials provided here should be adequate to serve as the starting points to spin off discussions by people whose specific interests about the Chinese civilization lies particularly in fields like history, politics, classics, linguistics, philosophy, economics, and sociology etc, as well as some specified subject like the ideas of democracy or *lasses faire* in Laoism.

Even for native Chinese-speakers the primary major hindrance in approaching this book is its linguistic remoteness. The ordinary use of the classical Chinese in Laozi's time is even more difficult for modern Chinese to comprehend than the classical Chinese used in *Analects of Confucius*, which has had been polished between 5th Century BC and 2nd Century BC. One factor particular to the understanding of this book is that, the literary manifestations in the original text alone are not sufficient to transmit its author's profound thought smoothly. On the other hand, had one grasped the framework of it after reading it, over and over again, this hardship could be gradually weakened. Laozi's philosophical framework is the determining force which holds all statements in this book together logically and subsequently philosophically. Keeping in mind that the existing text was poorly organized, this undertaking is just as difficult as figuring out physical shapes of owner of any ancient bone fragments, e.g. of dinosaurs, solely from a few scattered ones. However, it was the logic of physiology that has helped us to reach the conclusion what physical forms these creatures were supposed to possess. The quest for the logic (framework) of Laozi's thought was much more strenuous than breaking through its linguistic hurdles, even though laborious analysis of its linguistic expressions, in the light of its historical background hermeneutics(of ancient Chinese language), is fundamentally necessary, though not sufficient. Many translations did not even walk through that necessary first stage of linguistic clarification of the text of the book *Laozi*, let alone a more difficult task of manifesting of translators' comprehension of the framework of Laozi's philosophy.

The fact is, more than Latin, the Classical Chinese of the ancient time carried out communication of even more connotation (information) with simple linguistic expressions, e.g. "Dao"(the path). Add to this is the

misfortune that the development of Laozi's philosophy, as well as other Chinese philosophies before and around his time, was disrupted with the launch of authoritarianism in the First Century BC. After that, the social make-up within the Chinese society and its people's shared characteristics had been constrained and reshaped. China was developing; from a dynamic risk-taking creative youthful society tiptoed to a mature, orderly and stable society. By contrast, when came to the 16th Century, i.e. the time of Enlightenment Movement in the West, China appeared to be a tired, static and stagnant society. This was the consequence of the extensiveness of the conservatism pronounced through Neo-Confucianism, which is the most counter-productive means to explain and interpret Laozi's philosophy—Laoism.

Ever since Sung Dynasty (960-1276 AD), Laozi's philosophy (Laoism, but not Daoism) has had being becoming lesser and lesser approachable to model(stereo type) Chinese citizens, whose main concern was to be a good Confucian, obedient to government, superiors and parents (society). Any thinking, writing or acting outlandish were strictly forbidden by, up from the government down to the family. This is the reason why, Laozi must be read in the manner, not countering against the influence of conventional views, which more than often embodied elements of partial understanding or misunderstandings of his philosophy. Maybe it is the fact that, people who could intuitive speedily grasp the greatness of Laozi's wisdom, is "It takes one (great thinker) to know one (great thinker)". Many names of those great thinkers have already been aforementioned. Accordingly, the most involved part of translating *Laozi* is the recapitulation and the articulation of his philosophy. For example, the dynamism of the original Daoism was almost routinely spirited away, by so many myth-mongering interpreters' erroneous explanation of "*wu wei*" (non-interference); they took it as an endorsement of doing-nothing laziness "inaction" or "non-action". Whereas true meaning of *wu wei* is closest to that of *laissez-faire*.

This Book is Consisted with Three Parts

This book is divided into three major parts: Part One is the English Introduction, Part Two is the English Translation of the text and Part Three is the plain Chinese Translation, from its original archaic language, with Chinese hermeneutic notes followed.

Part One Section Section A is an **Introduction** about of this pursuer's long journey into the philosophy of Laozi(Laoism/original Daoism), together through studying his unique style, background, and his heritage. His personal relation to Confucius was paternal. His ideological relation to the creation of Zen(Ch'an) Buddhism is significant. My aim was to satisfy readers' curiosity about this great Chinese philosopher. It gives a detailed account of why and how '*The original Daoism instigated by him is as different as night and day from the popular religious Daoism introduced by religious and professional Daoists.*' It also introduces the historical Laozi to readers: his biography, religious ideas, his relation with Confucius, his influence on Zhuangzi (aka Chuang Tzu) and their differences. The sharp difference between his original Daoism and Daoist religion infected Daoism has also been pointed out.

Part One Section B ventures into more detailed research on heated scholarly controversies (which may have reached its peak in between 1920-30). Hopefully, it could help readers to avoid unneeded traps, i.e. barriers and sidetracks, in order to further their understanding of this major work of the Chinese civilization. In this Section, controversies which have been bothering academicians were mentioned and refuted, from of epistemological, logical, historical or linguistic perspectives.

Part Two is the **English Translation** presented in has retained the order of the traditionally accepted text by traditional Chinese intellectuals. The customary practice is to separate the text into eighty-one Chapters. This English translation was, however, based on my plain Chinese translation, which is the Part Three of this book. However, in both translations each Chapter is further demarcated into independent paragraphs, if different streams of thoughts were expressed. It is a finished product of the study of the contents of the original Chinese text, with reference to the use of the Chinese language—hermeneutic, between the ninth and fifth Centuries BC, as well as to commentaries made subsequently until this day. However, the hermeneutic substantiation with evidences for obscure, difficult and controversial points were left out in English translation. Accordingly, general readers are spared with the burden of presentations of cumbersome Chinese characters, as well as detailed linguistic interpretations and textual research on documents of Laozi's time, i.e. the Eastern Zhou Dynasty(770-219 BC). Experts could, however, easily find their answers in the Chinese version of the exact path which led to my determinations of the meanings of the original. The background information is too bulky.

I have therefore spun it off and may write about the mystery of Laozi as a future project when I shall write about Laozi's social philosophy.

Part Three contains the **Chinese Translation** of the **Book on Dao**; it is consisted with the first thirty seven Chapters of the book Laozi and a Chinese Introduction. They were converted to simplified Chinese characters from my original Chinese book—Lao Tzu in the traditional Chinese in the traditional Chinese characters. Nevertheless, the version in this particular publication contains the converted simplified version has The Book on Dao—Chapters 1-37 of the book *Laozi*; I am going to make, one way or the other, the original version available in the future.¹¹⁴ People with great scholarly curiosity for details could find answers to their suspicions about the man, the book, and his philosophy in this article. It is therefore their responsibility to locate the exact source when their arguments are based on. Nevertheless, I might eventually expand my draft in the future by offering an organized detailed explanation of the whole text of *Laozi* in the light of his original Daoism. All in all, this book still aims at retaining its original compressed “bare-bone” form as much as possible, yet not at the cost of its real allusion.

¹¹⁴ It will be made available through either ebay or Iuniverse with the English book title “Laozi's Daodejing: The Chinese Translation Based on Laozi's Original Daoism”. Further information on my web site www.daoism.net.

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to Laozi's Daoism & His Book known as Daodejing

SECTION A

The Book Laozi—Daodejing (aka Tao Te Ching)

Chapter I

Laozi's influence on Daoism & Confucianism

To understand an age or a nation, we must understand its philosophy, and to understand its philosophy we must ourselves be in some degree philosophers . . . The circumstance of men's lives do much to determine their philosophy, but conversely, their philosophy does much to determine their circumstances.
Bertrand Russell¹¹⁵

Laozi's influence in China is enormous, starting at the 6th Century BC until today. In spite of the fact that, for nearly two thousand and two hundred years, Confucius has had been the only officially installed Ultimate Sage Teacher—the Intellectual Father of the Nation. Laozi's philosophy, by contrast, has been officially purposely ignored since the First Century BC. In addition, it had even been frequently unfairly attacked by Confucian zealots. Nonetheless, because of his book, his teaching have been followed, and carried out by innumerable individuals out of absolute free choice, particularly by intellectuals who loved to think and reasoning. Unlike Confucianism, there had been no political reward or social gratification for studying Laozi, i.e. Daodejing. People were drawn to his philosophy not because of any kind of sentiments of blind love for sensual gratifications. People read his book arduously because even incidental sayings of Laozi's could shed light on their search for inner strength and self-realization. His philosophy, if correctly comprehended, is powerful; it can even go through the examination of the better organized and systemized Western rational philosophical methods. Accordingly, his thoughts were built on solid

¹¹⁵ Bertrand Russell: *A History of Western Philosophy, Introduction.*

underlying principles (backbone), so that his philosophical influence had been and is on the same par with that of, namely Plato of the 3rd Century BC. His bona-fide followers formed the breed of Chinese intellectuals who would rather live in solitude, poverty and obscurity in order to be truthful to their own selves, and that is called sincerity (*cheng*), for example the 3rd Century poet Tao Yuanming, who would not bend his back for five bushels of rice. Some of them were people who were preoccupied with seeking the truth about self and enormously mysterious cosmos. They were individuals to whom the calling to quest for Virtue and knowledge was as firmly fixed and everlasting as stars in the sky. Even though they did not belong to any secularly religion, their independence from the socially and officially approved Confucianism, as well as the vanity of vulgar achievements, has formed a durable under-current; the strength they have drawn from within had supported their unshakable will to live independently in spite of unpredictable changes. From time to time, there were still a few honest and incorruptible individuals, who were men of all seasons, and who would stand out like rocks in the vast sea of plebeian struggles for power and wealth. These were independent individuals who were struggling to reach out for spiritual nobility.

All Laozi's teachings are embodied in a simple and small book, which was originally called something thing like 'The Book by Laozi' and it was later circulated as the book *Laozi*. Then couple of hundred years later, around 3 Century BC, during the Han Dynasty, someone took liberty, perhaps attempting to make it more competitive to Confucianism to rename it Dao De Qing (aka Tao Te Ching in 19th & 20th Centuries in the West). However later, under the impact of then prevailing Confucianism, Buddhism and religious Daoism, it was renamed *Daodejing* (The Book on The Way of Nature and the Principle of Virtue). Up to this 21st Century the name *Daodejing* should be used to refer to this book, for Romanization purpose, within and outside China.¹¹⁶ For the past two millennium, until this day, this is the title which has being been popularly known as the only book which manifests the wisdom of the ultimately wise man Laozi. However what is quintessential about this book is that, it is a very short but powerful book, even though it consists of no more than five thousand and six hundred Chinese characters. From a modern point of view, we could say

¹¹⁶ This Romanization system, aka pinyin system, has had been adopted in China for more than half a Century and is widely used by now.

that Laozi's deep and complicate thoughts were compactly expressed in this book. In other words, had readers not thought comprehensively over those issues discussed by Laozi, not to mention even to reach reasonable depth and extensiveness, it would be difficult to figure out Laozi' original intended meanings; the biggest fault or failure of an interpreter is not making an effort to avoid slipping into the practice of interpreting Laozi, a gestalt system, out of context. Unfortunately most works on Laozi can't avoid this serious pitfall, and end up disintegrating the venerable Laozi. Historically, that serious pitfall was difficult to avoid that, there has had been gross and extensive misunderstanding of Laozi. He, himself, even predicted it in his book in Chapter 70.III. One of the examples of such misappropriation of his philosophy was the creation of Daoism Religion more than two thousand years ago in the First Century AD, in spite of religious Daoist's misleading self-appointed devotion.¹¹⁷ In ancient China of his time, Laozi was, perhaps, the most learned man of his time. From the perspective of modern information rich modern China, before and after Laozi, there has had never been anybody whose thoughts are so powerful and rational. Even the most reverend Confucius(551-479 BC), who had avoided talking about cosmological or metaphysical issues, treated sayings originated by Laozi as adages; they could be found in *The Analects of Confucius*.

Throughout history, until this day, it has always been the common knowledge, among Chinese, that Laozi's sayings are full with wisdom and deep thoughts; they are good guidance for searching meaning of life. Many particularly valued his teaching on self-reliance and pursuit for individual freedom. Hardly any punctilious Chinese intellectual, including those antagonistic to his book, due to their adherence to ultra conservative Confucianism, could argue successfully that the whole text does not deserve to be prudently examined. For example, the famous Chinese aphorism "*A journey of one thousand miles started out from one single step.*" was originated by no others than Laozi.¹¹⁸

In the past twenty six centuries, Laozi's philosophy, in loose and strict forms alike, has widely impacted Chinese of all walks of life, directly and

¹¹⁷ There is a Chinese saying "to paste golden (leaves) on oneself or something to promote their importance." The far-fetched superficial affiliation could be described with the aforementioned statement.

¹¹⁸ Cf. *Laozi(Daodejing)*, Chapter 64.II, the translation is available within this book.

indirectly. Confucius, though has had been extremely influential in China, was, by contrast, confined mainly on mainstream government supported intellectuals and/or civil servants. As time went on, their over-polished studies had created a pompous and impractical Confucianism, which was later given an avant-garde name Neo-Confucianism. It has had departed so far away from the spirit of the original Confucius' wisdom that it tends to lean more support to an anti-egalitarian society, e.g. suppression of women. The pedantic way to approach Confucianism began with its being raised to pedestal of the Han Wu Emperor of the 2nd Century BC. It has also negative impact on understanding Laoism, i.e. Lao Xue—Laozi's philosophy as known in China, on which the original Confucianism had drawn inspiration from. Neo-Confucianism, which could be described as conservative-Confucianism, was also the factor of China's evolving into a closed society.

However, Laozi's simple and down-to-earth tone of voice is like a piece of great music which appeals to both plain folks, whose wisdom was generated through inter-action with Nature, as well as to sophisticated well-read and reflective people. The melody his book plays out assures us the worthiness of the pursuit of supreme wisdom, i.e. true knowledge, virtue, and liberty. The unrelenting yearning, his writing had emanated for realistic self-dependent, universal compassion for human beings, had strengthened countless suffering souls. After the Enlightenment of the Eighteenth Century, a few Western intellectuals who first came into contact with the thought of Laozi, had discovered that this is a book of "*spiritual simplicity which deals neither in speculative cosmogony nor in popular superstition.*" This statement was made by an American missionary in China, observation of Laozi's philosophy from a man who had studied in Harvard Divinity School his name is Samuel Johnson.¹¹⁹ This statement shows the acute perception of Laozi's philosophy and spirit. His wisdom glitters especially when the going is tough. Since the 18th Century, many European intellectuals showed strong interest in Laozi. For instance, Leo Tolstoy considered it one of a few his most valued books; he has also

¹¹⁹ This is quoted from the book of the Nineteenth Century American missionary Samuel Johnson *Oriental Religions and Their Relation to Universal Religions*(1884, Harvard, Boston). More about Massachusetts-born Samuel Johnson at: http://www.harvardsquarelibrary.org/uu_addenda/Samuel-Johnson.php
<http://encyclopedia.stateuniversity.com/pages/19480/Samuel-Johnson.html>
<http://www.bookrags.com/biography/samuel-johnson-dlb2/>

translated the book into Russian himself. Nietzsche and Eugene O'Neill expressed their admiration too.¹²⁰ Quantum physicist Niel Bohr and psychologist Carl Jung were also among Laozi's admirers. Laozi is an "axial" philosopher whose insight helps shape the course of human development, according to Karl Jaspers (1974).¹²¹

Personally I've learned that the greatest philosopher of the 20th Century, Sir Karl Popper did have a very strong interest in finding out what did Laozi really say and mean, by reading some quotations, he began to appreciate his wisdom from a philosophical prospective.¹²² Like Bertrand Russell he was deeply impressed by things said by Laozi. My short five years' acquaintance with Popper, towards the end of his life, was held together by our mutual interests in Laozi. His constant encouragement had been such an inspiration in my lonely and arduous struggle to manifest Laozi's wisdom. He said in his letter that since Sir Freddie Ayer (one of my mentor) had passed away, it was his duty to make sure that I would finish translating the book Laozi (aka *Daodejing*). He reaffirmed again to me when we met that he was very happy that I was struggling on bringing out a most truthful to the original translation.¹²³ Laozi did have had advocated similar ideas of "open society", Popper particularly clarifies details of it in his book *Open Society & Its Enemies*, a guiding light for better and harmonious human societies.¹²⁴

Laozi, however, said "People would not feel that their lives are cheap and unbearable if they are not oppressed and restricted."¹²⁵ Thoughts of Laozi are powerful on two fronts—intellectual and emotional (universal

¹²⁰ Nietzsche was quoted by some Chinese literature as saying that ideas in *Laozi* are as inexhaustible as water from a deep well.

¹²¹ Jaspers, Karl. 1974. *Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Plotinus, Lao-tzu, Nagarjuna*. From *The Great Philosophers*, Vol. 2, *The Original Thinkers*. Ed. Hannah Arendt; trans. Ralph Manheim. A Harvest Book. New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974.

¹²² Cf. London Times, Sunday, obituary on Sir Karl R. Popper, September 18, 1994. And *The Oxford History of Western Philosophy* (by Anthony Kenny, p.363).

¹²³ There are 83 versions of the German translation of *Daodejing*, according to Laozi Society (www.laozi.net) located at Luyi County, Henan Province, it is supposedly Laozi's birth place.

¹²⁴ Karl R. Popper *Open Society And Its Enemies* (first published 1947), (Princeton University Press; 5th Revised edition, February 1, 1971).

¹²⁵ Cf. *Daodejing*, Chapter 72.II.

love of people). This explains why he was thought to be religious by both Buddhists and Christians, not to mention self-appointed Daoist Religion, whose teachings were, even though, considerably influenced by Chinese Shamanism, as pointed out by a top expert on China Joseph Needham.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, Laozi was most appropriately described as “a great philosopher”, by a Western philosopher named Paul Carus(1852-1919), who was the pioneer of the philosophical wisdom of the East among his peers, as well as a philosopher with religious spirit.

Many people, especially in the West, have unwittingly confused two kinds of Daoism(Taoism) as one and the same, namely religious Daoism and philosophical Daoism. Even though these two have being been unfortunately made to share the same name, they are in truth as drastically different as day and night. Half Century ago staff writers about Daoism of The Encyclopedia Britannica, have already crucially discerned the sharp distinctions between the philosophical Daoism and the religious Daoism as follows:

“The term Daoism has two meanings

- (1) The philosophical system attributed to Lao Tzu(b. 604 BC) and Chuang Tzu(b. 330 BC);**
- (2) The popular religion of the Chinese. It (Daoism philosophy) advocates frugality simplicity and joy of peasant life in contact with soil.**

The Daoist philosophy is responsible for that remarkable trait of the Chinese, namely their contentment in situations which offer a minimum comfort and their prizing culture above possession.”¹²⁷This acute description of two extreme breeds of Daoism seemed have been summarily ignored by many scholarly writings on Daoism. Even though Daoist(Taoist) religion has being been very popular in Chinese-speaking communities, it is a religion without theology, as well as the opiate of semi-literate masses.

Among all meant-to-be proliferations of Laozi’s original Daoism, religious Daoism offers the most churlish contortions. Differs from both Laozi’s philosophy and Confucius’ philosophy, its theme is but an

¹²⁶ Joseph Needham: Science And Civilization in China(first published 1956, Cambridge University Press).

¹²⁷ Encyclopedia Britannica: Daoism.

accumulation of folklore, superstition and shamanism. Both Confucianism and Laozi's teaching are based on rationalism; they were created after arduous intelligent observation and deep thinking; shamanism was not only excluded but rejected. In fact the original Confucianism and the original Daoism are reciprocal; thorough understanding of one enhances the comprehension of the other. Both are accountable for the longevity, stability and endurance of the Chinese civilization and nation, while the religious Daoism move people backward to the road of regress. The only thing the religious Daoism has kept of the original Laozi's thought was his egalitarianism, includes equality of sexes. Even so, the religious Daoism's merit to the Chinese civilization is a mixed bag: its shallowness is counter-productive to the advancement of knowledge, but its popularity exemplifies what people's desire for equality and the freedom to enjoy life; it makes no difference whether it is for good or for bad of the whole society, from the viewpoint of morality or politics—a kind of antithesis of Confucianism's seeking common good.

In modern days, Laozi's egalitarian attitude might be instrumental for the erosion of the traditionally extremely authoritarian custom and shifting of the political system, i.e. downfall of the feudal government, the speedy take-over of Communism in China, as well as its subsequent various economical experiments based on the principle the wealth should be fairly distributed and shared—*gungchan* (properties commonly shared); that was the communism originally understood by the general public. In the 20th Century China, it was very easy to make common folks understand that those who belonged to a party, whose proclaimed social agenda was fairness of distribution and sharing of properties, are called *gongchandang*(tr. Communists). This had especially appealed to the poverty stricken majorities, because the early ancient Chinese governments were built on the theme of the equality of people and emperors, e.g. Yao, Shun and Yue, became leaders because they were competent and caring that they were treasured by people; emperors surpassed crowds by virtue of Virtue. This reminded general populace of the egalitarian view, which suggested taking away from those who have too much to help those who do not have enough is justified.¹²⁸ Contrary to this justification, in the real world, many even do not have sufficient (food, clothing and shelter) to stay alive. It stroked the cord of the sense of justice, which we all intrinsically yearn for from

¹²⁸ Cf. *Laozi*, Chapter 77.II & 77.III.