

A BASIC THEORY OF TAO PHILOSOPHY*

道家哲學基本理論

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Abstract

In this paper, we show that the intrinsic structure of Tao philosophy may be expressed in two levels of state or reality: the *classical* states and the *actual* states. The classical states refer to our experiences with the world of appearances and the actual states to realities in a transcendental domain. The classical and actual states are related, mathematically or symbolically, to form a *Principle of Oneness* 太一定律。 This principle is clearly exemplified in the relationship between Wu 無 and Yu 有, and it is a fundamental characteristic of Tao philosophy. Our Basic Theory of Tao Philosophy is built on this principle.

Following this principle, we discuss a *Process of Actualization* 實現程序 as a way to seek harmony in Tao in various domains and states. We show that Tao philosophy shares a common pattern of truth with many other ancient and modern philosophies. Our analysis is based on the Tao Te Ching, but the result is general and may serve as a possible step in developing a systematic framework for a Contemporary Tao Philosophy 當代新道家。

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1 INTRODUCTION

In this paper, we present a basic theory of Tao philosophy based on the *Tao Te Ching*. This analysis is a continuation of a field theoretic approach to the basic concepts of Tao [WA04, WA05]. It is an attempt to show the similarities and differences in various philosophies at a fundamental level. The approach is also consistent with scientific principles.

We present the fundamental principles of Tao in Section 2, where we show the architecture of Tao philosophy in terms of Wu 無 and Yu 有。 In Section 2.2, we introduce the concepts of *classical* and *actual* states to show their relationship in the Oneness of Tao. These states belong to two levels of our knowledge. The classical states have to be superimposed in a transcendental way to *reflect* the intrinsic realities of Tao. This formalism reveals the *Principle of Oneness* 太一定律 as the fundamental nature of Tao philosophy: Every reality must preserve Oneness. In Sections 3, we show the application of the Principle of Oneness in different domains and how we can achieve Oneness in each domain. Section 4 describes the Way of Wu 無爲論 and the Way of Yu 有爲論 as the *Process of Actualization* 實現程序 to achieve Oneness.

A Summary is given in Section 5. We discuss the dynamic nature of Tao and its similarities to many other philosophies. Relationship between Tao philosophy and quantum theory is also noted.

2 THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF TAO

Laotzu begins the *Tao Te Ching* with a concise architecture of Tao philosophy. He describes Tao in terms of its manifestations as Wu 無 and Yu 有。 He clearly states that Tao has two levels of appearances to us: we can talk about Tao at one level but the true Tao is at a higher level. He says:

道可道也非恒道也； Tao may be spoken but it is not the Eternal Tao.
名可名也非恒名也。 Name may be given but it is not the eternal name.

This two-level architecture is fundamental in Tao philosophy and will be treated explicitly in our formulation. There is considerable confusion in defining these two levels. Some associate these two levels of Tao with Wu and Yu and we hope to clarify the relationship of these two levels to Wu and Yu.

Let us follow Laotzu by accepting that Tao manifests itself in two modes as Wu and Yu. One mode is with the *unlimited* and the other mode is with *the limited*. Here we interpret Wu as *Wu-Chi* 無極, which means *without a limit* and *beyond all bounds*, and Yu as multifaceted appearances in the world that have *limits* and are *bound* by their appearances.

Laotzu proclaims that heaven and earth begins with the *Boundless* and that the ten-thousand things begin with their appearances:

無，名天地之始； As Wu, it marks the beginning of heaven and earth;
有，名萬物之母。 As Yu, it is the mother of ten thousand things.

The boundless Wu is overwhelmingly holistic so it may seem to be absent to us. Nevertheless, Wu is not a nothing and we can immediately and certainly apprehend Wu as the *Tzujan* 自然。Yu can be apprehended as the appearances of the world. Both Wu and Yu are *real* and can be secured in our *thought*. These are the classical states of Tao and are can probably be described with our ordinary language.

The reality is more complicated, since Wu and Yu are not independent of each other. Their inter-dependency is hard to describe since it is beyond our ordinary senses. Laotzu manages to express this critical feature in a simple way:

恒無，欲以觀其所妙； In Wu, it is to show its transmuting appearance (into Yu);
恒有，欲以觀其所微。 In Yu, it is to show its transmuting disappearance (into Wu).

This verse describes a process of disclosure of Yu and Wu in each other. Wu and Yu are *co-arising* and *co-producing* in each other. This is the fundamental dynamics of Tao philosophy. The relationship between Wu and Yu goes beyond co-arising. Laotzu proclaims that they are two *simultaneous* manifestations of the *same* Tao:

兩者同出， The two manifests at the same time; they are
異名同謂。 Different manifestations of the same.

This concise statement reveals the *Oneness* nature 太一 of Tao. The intrinsic interactions between Wu and Yu give rise to a state of profundity 玄。Understanding of this state of profundity is the ultimate doorway to all the mysteries of Tao:

玄之又玄， It is profound upon profound.
眾妙之門。 This is the gateway to all mysteries.

It is the purpose of this paper to show the transcendence or profundity nature of Tao in a systematic way.

2.1 The Oneness Architecture of Tao Philosophy 道的太一結構

Tao manifests as Wu and Yu within bounds of Oneness. In order to model this Oneness of Tao, we may follow a common practice in sciences to “divide and then re-combine” an entity in order to reveal its structure. To follow Laotzu, we demonstrate this basic procedure by dividing Oneness of Tao into Wu and Yu, and then show how Oneness can be preserved. This is shown in Figure 1.

Let us begin with an observation of the manifestations of Wu and Yu *far from* the Oneness state. At this level, we can describe Tao in terms of the *Classical States* 傳統狀 of Yu and Wu – as the limited and the unlimited. This is the level where we may classically speak of Tao (道可道). However, we realize that these states by themselves cannot represent the true states of Tao (非恒道也). There are unsettling interactions between these classical states that make them appear certain and constantly changing.

When these two classical states are *properly* brought together, we may return to the Oneness state of Tao, as shown in Figure 1. When this is achieved, the *true* Wu and Yu states with

Oneness are called the *Actual States* 真實狀。These actual states preserve the Oneness of the eternal Tao 恒道。

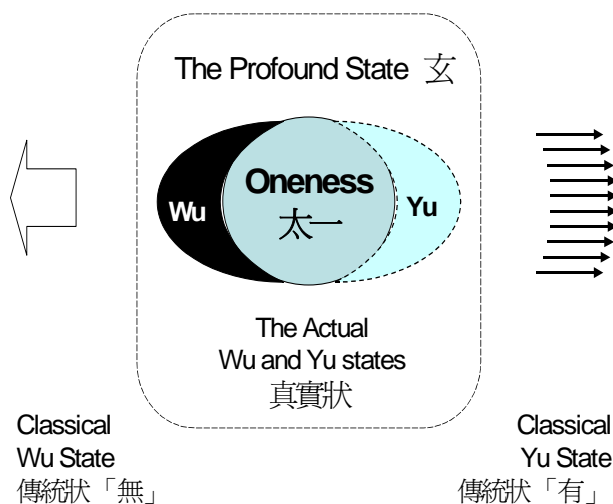


Figure 1 The Profound State of Oneness

The actual states are transcendental and are beyond our ordinary description. It is important to emphasize that philosophers often consider the states with Oneness as real. This is similar to the *Being* (What-Is) in the Greek philosophy. As emphasized by Parmenides, we should only pursue what really exists. However, such actual states exist in a *transcendental* way and are thus very perplexing to our ordinary senses.

2.2 Classical and Actual States 傳統狀和真實狀

The classical states may appear to our senses as *concrete experiences* and can be described with clarity in our ordinary language. The classical states provide a convenient way to define a *domain* and scope for our understanding of the world. As we shall show, these classical states should not be taken as outright illusionary, but should be treated properly with their mutual interactions. We shall introduce a model to show how Oneness can be preserved when we recombine the *classical states* back into the *actual states* with Oneness. We call this process *actualization of Oneness*.

INTERACTION MODEL OF ONENESS

In Figure 2, we show how the two classical states of Wu and Yu interact with an interaction V to become the actual states. The classical Wu and Yu states are shown as W_0 and Y_0 respectively, in (a). These classical states are not *stable* due to the interaction. When the interaction is *harmonized*, the states become the actual states, as shown in (b). If the harmonization process is complete, the interaction vanishes ($V_R = 0$) and the actual states become stable.

Therefore, the process of actualization is to achieve Oneness by harmonizing the interactions of the classical states. The action of harmonization is described, for example, in Chapter 4 and 10 by Laotzu as:

挫其銳解其紛 Blunt its sharpness and unravel its entanglements.
 和其光同其塵 Harmonize its lights and blend with its surroundings.

[We have selected only a few verses from the Tao Te Ching as illustrations in this paper. There are many other verses to the same effect.]

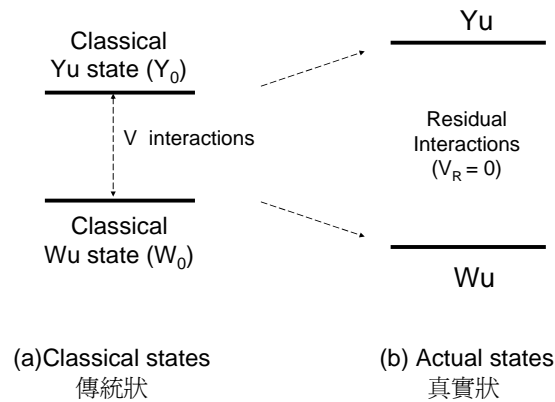


Figure 2 Actualization of the Classical States

Because of the interaction, the actual states are superpositions, or mixtures, of the classical states. For this reason, the actual states may appear paradoxical to us. A reality becomes a mixture of opposites and has an uncertain nature. For example is in Chapter 58:

禍，福之所倚； A misfortune is where a fortune lies;
 福，禍之所伏。 A fortune is where a misfortune hides.

MATHEMATICAL REPRESENTATION OF ONENESS

It is confusing to describe the actual states with our everyday language because of their transcendental nature. Fortunately, the interaction model shown in Figure 2 allows us to derive a mathematical representation of such a transcendental relationship.

The classical states interact with each other, so they are inter-mixed. Similar to a quantum theory treatment of two interacting states, the actual states may be related to the classical states by the following mathematical expressions:

$$\mathbf{W} = \alpha W_0 + \beta Y_0 \quad \text{Eq. 1(a)}$$

$$\mathbf{Y} = -\beta W_0 + \alpha Y_0 \quad \text{Eq. 1(b)}$$

Here \mathbf{W} and \mathbf{Y} are the actual states of Wu and Yu, respectively. They are shown as superpositions of the classical states W_0 and Y_0 , of Wu and Yu respectively. The parameters, α and β , are determined by the interaction. If the interaction is strong, we have $\alpha = \beta$, and, if the interaction is weak, we have $\alpha = 1$ and $\beta = 0$.

Mathematically the actual states of Wu and Yu differ only by a *phase*. To draw an analogy with the holographic effect [TA92], Tao may appear as a *hologram* of Oneness when Tao is manifested by these two “lights of different phases.” This is an interesting way to visualize how Wu and Yu together can reconstruct Oneness of Tao.

It is also interesting to see, if we treat Tao states in a way similar to the *quantum states*, the *measurable* properties of a state are in the “probability density” (square of the state function). For example, the properties of Wu may be expressed as: $|W|^2 = \alpha^2 |W_0|^2 + \beta^2 |Y_0|^2 + 2 \alpha\beta \langle W_0|Y_0 \rangle$. Here we have a cross term $\langle W_0|Y_0 \rangle$ showing the “transmutations of the Wu and Yu.” Such property of the actual states appears mathematically and transcends our direct experiences. A mathematical representation may be our language to describe the actual states completely and consistently. The mathematical relationship presented above provides a convenient way to show the nature of Oneness.

SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION OF ONENESS

The abstract mathematical representation should not appear intimidating to us. Eq. [1] is simply our familiar Tai-Chi 太極 or Yin-Yang Diagram, as shown in Figure 3. The Tai-Chi diagram represents our ancient efforts to overcome the limitations of our language by introducing such a symbol. It is indeed an accurate description of the Oneness state of Tao in terms of the *actual* Wu and Yu states. Figure 3 is a visual and symbolic representation of Oneness and Eq. [1] is an imageless, abstract, and formal representation of Oneness. The advantage of an abstract mathematical relationship is that we may manipulate the mathematical expression to show other relations not obvious to our direct observations.

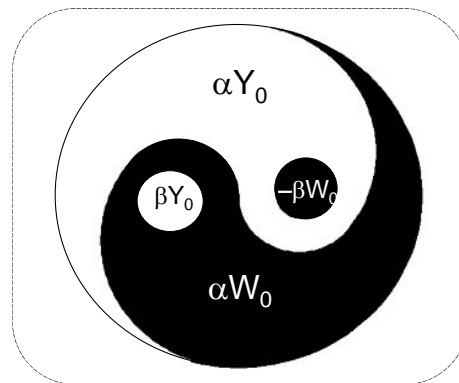


Figure 3 Symbolic Representation of Oneness

This is a symbol that can represent the Oneness relationship between any two interacting opposites, such as Yin and Yang or Wu and Yu. The interconnection between Wu and Yu is a result of Yin-Yang interchange and preserve the same relationship shown in this diagram.

COMPLETE SYMMETRY OF WU AND YU

As in any scientific theory, symmetry plays a fundamental part. In our model, Oneness has a complete symmetry in Wu and Yu. Such symmetry is formally shown in this paper, but it has

been recognized in [WA04] as a way to produce a more consistent interpretation of the Tao Te Ching. With such observation, we may interpret Chapter 11 with clarity:

卅輻共一轂，	With thirty spokes connected to the hub,
當其無有，車之用也。	It is its “ <i>Wu and Yu</i> ” that makes a wagon functional.
有之以爲利，	Yu is to provide the support.
無之以爲用。	Wu is to provide the function.

This symmetry of Oneness should be recognized in Tao philosophy. Our model may be extended to all pair-wise categories, such as Tao and vessel 道與器, substance and function 體與用, name and essence 名與實, body and soul, etc.

TRANSCENDENTAL NATURE OF REALITY

Our interaction model can adequately represent Laotzu’s concept of two-level Tao philosophy. The actual states transcend *above* the classical states. We may view the classical states as our *horizontal* experiences and the actual states as the *vertical* transcending experiences. The classical states appear impermanent and the actual states appear as unchanging reality. There is no inconsistency in seeing an unchanging reality *together with* the ever-changing appearances. For a mathematical illustration of this, $\sin(x)$ and $\cos(x)$ curves never cease to change, but their combination, $\sin^2(x) + \cos^2(x) = 1$, is a constant. It is not inconceivable that a transcendental reality remains constant while our classical experiences are always in flux.

PARADOXES AS ONENESS BROKEN

We have stated that the classical states are not necessarily illusionary. However, if we let the classical states assume their own independent realities, we violate the Principle of Oneness. *Paradoxes will appear when Oneness is not observed.*

As an example, let’s use the familiar “chicken and egg” paradox. We commonly divide the *whole* “chicken-egg” entity into two *classical forms* of chicken and egg and assume they are distinct and exclusive of each other. In this case, the paradoxical question of “which comes first?” will appear as though with plausible meaning.

We may now understand this paradox occurs because we have violated the Principle of Oneness by ignoring the inherent interactions between “chicken” and “egg.” Separated chicken and egg are illusionary. Their *actual forms* must preserve the concept of wholeness: a chicken bearing the seed for egg and an egg bearing the seed for chicken. They are always *encoded* within each other. The paradox arises only due to the limitations of our language, which is built on the classical experience of our daily life. At the actual state level, the paradoxes will not occur.

Many other paradoxes may be shown as due to the same fallacy with broken Oneness. Even the famous paradoxes of Zeno may be shown simply due to the fact that *time*, *speed*, and *distance* are treated as independent. If time, speed, and distance were treated with Oneness, the paradoxes will not appear.

3 THE PRINCIPLE OF ONENESS 太一定律

Chapter 1 of the Tao Te Ching shows how the classical Wu and Yu are entangled to preserve Oneness of Tao. This is the highest holistic level of Oneness. This is the *Principle of Oneness* in Tao Philosophy. The principle is general and can be extended to any reality under consideration, even when we observe the world appearances. Seeking Oneness in the world of appearances may be perplexing to our common sense, but it is the fundamental teaching of Tao. Every reality, similar to a “*being*” of Parmenides, should have Oneness.

ONENESS WITH TWO CLASSICAL STATES

In Figure 4, we have an entity that is a reality with Oneness. We can analyze this *reality* in terms of its *classical* properties. In this example, we use generic *Black* and *White* as its two classical states. We have to bring these classical states into Oneness through the process of actualization.

Oneness is preserved when the classical states are properly *superimposed* and intermingled to form the actual states. This is shown in Figure 4(A). In this case, we may treat the actual states as realities in our thought.

A common error is to take the classical states of Black and White to be distinct and independent. In this case, the Oneness nature of the reality is broken. This is the case shown in Figure 4(B). The classical states are always linked by their interactions.

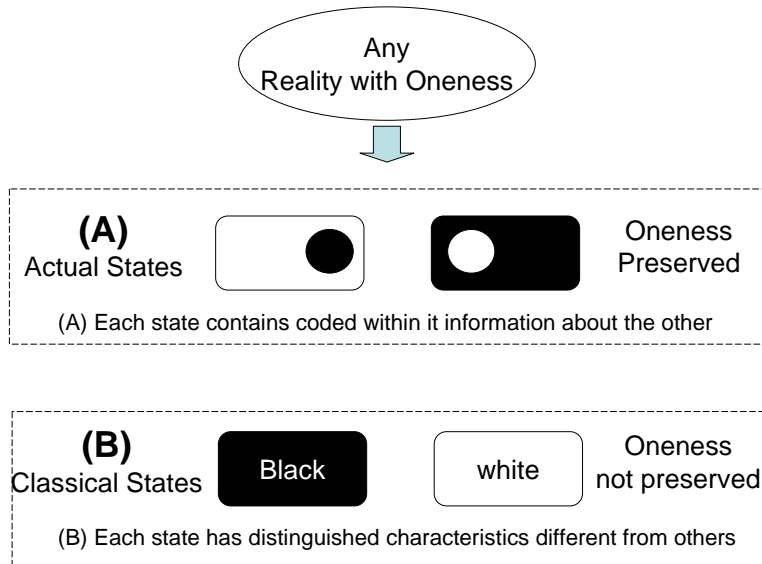


Figure 4 The Generalized Principle of Oneness

The model presented above is general and applies to any entity of philosophical investigation. Ontologically, only an entity with Oneness should be taken to be a unit of existence. There are many possible ways to choose a set of the classical states and each set will have a different interaction patterns. The actual states should represent the same single entity (a being). Scientists commonly consider the classical states as *realities* together with their proper

interactions. Philosophers consider directly the actual states as realities and observe their “manifestations” in the classical states. These are two equivalent ways of seeking the same truth.

This model may be used to represent the *actual entity* (entity with Oneness), the *fallacy of misplaced concreteness* of the classical states, etc. in Whitehead’s Process Philosophy [WH29]. The Cartesian model deals with the classical states.

MORE ON WU AND YU STATES

There has been more than one way to interpret Wu and Yu. It is important to mention a common way we use Wu and Yu without a qualifier (classical or actual) to describe the two-level architecture of Tao philosophy. In this case, Wu is transcendental and Yu is concrete appearances in the world. Wu and Yu are taken to have a vertical relationship.

In the model shown in Figure 4, we are dealing with the appearances in the world (the classical Yu states only). The actual states have the same Oneness properties as a Wu state. For this reason, we may consider the *actual states* as Wu and the *classical states* as Yu when we are dealing with our daily experiences. This may be the view taken by the so-called Pro-Wu group 貴無派 who would seek only Wu (the actual states) and avoid all *classical* Yu states. A Pro-Yu group 崇有派 may seek the actual *Yu* states in the world of appearances. Both groups are then seeking the same truth (in the actual states).

It is therefore important to distinguish between classical and actual states, in order to avoid ambiguity in the arguments. Our formulation may provide a proper framework for a consistent analysis of Wu and Yu.

Another characteristic is that *both* actual Wu and Yu have Oneness. Each represents the wholeness of Tao. In other words, Wu and Yu are not just partial manifestations of Tao. To paraphrase Parmenides, we may say that “Tao is full equally of Wu and Yu, as both are equal, because to neither of them belongs any shares.” This intrinsic and unique property appears to be very deceptive, as also warned by Parmenides.

ONENESS OF MULTIPLE CLASSICAL STATES

So far, our examples have two classical states. The Oneness formulation may be extended to any state with *multiple* classical states. In that case, *all* classical states will be entangled to form the actual states. For example, if we divide time into past, present, and future, these states must become inter-connected, in order to preserve Oneness. This may be an interesting way to understand Heidegger’s treatment of *Temporality* in his Being and Time. Our presence depends on our history and our future.

HOLDING ON TO PURE CLASSICAL STATES

Repeatedly Laotzu warns against holding a classical state to have its own truth. Several instances are given in Chapter 39, such as:

天得一以清	Heaven attains Oneness to have its clarity and avoids
天毋已清將恐裂	fragmentation by not always showing its full clarity.

“Pure clarity” is a classical state and cannot be maintained for long. The actual state should have all possible manifestations. Following the same insight, we can interpret Laotzu’s Chapter 22: “Yielding will preserve wholeness 曲則全” as a way to preserve Oneness.

This view is echoed by Parmenides as, “For people made up their minds to name an appearance in two forms, of which they must not name one only – that is where they have gone astray – and distinguished them as opposite in appearance and assigned to them manifestations different from the other.” [KI83] We may see similar conclusion of entangled states in Bohm’s *Implicate Order* stating that each state “holds” all others enfolded within it [BO80]. It is also interesting to see many similar properties of Oneness in Field Being Philosophy [TO01] and Quantum Reality [HE85].

We are used to think and speak *classically* and often try to reduce each manifestation to a separately existent entity with its own characteristics. Such a thing is a *classical* thing and Tao cannot be reduced to such a separately existent thing. We have to *transcend* the classical states and seek the actual states in order to comprehend the mysteries of Tao. We may call this the process of actualization.

4 PROCESS OF ACTUALIZATION 實現程序

Tao philosophy is a process to guide us from chaotic states to the order of Oneness. The ultimate goal is Profound Unity that may take many levels to actualize. Laotzu has mentioned several levels of Oneness in the Tao Te Ching and we may seek Oneness in each level to achieve harmony.

In a worldly Tao system, it is likely that there will be multiple levels of Oneness. The general rule is that, as stated by Laotzu, the leaders should act with Wu and the followers should act with Yu [WA04]. In general, we will need to maintain many levels of actualization since different functions will require different level of actualization. The ultimate goal is to help all people achieve Oneness at their appropriate levels.

4.1 Tao Domains and Levels 道的境界層次

It is convenient to define various domains based on our subjective scope and capability. Each of us can only perceive a subset of the world appearances as a domain for our inquiry into Tao. A domain may be described with a set of classical states and their interactions. Our effort is to achieve Oneness in each domain and then to expand the domain by including more classical states to reach a higher level of actualization. We may say that the domains are *projections* of the infinite Oneness “space” onto our sub-spaces of finite dimensions.

Laotzu gives five explicit levels in Tao philosophy: Tao, Te, Jen, Yi, and Li 道、德、仁、義、禮 as shown in Chapter 38:

失道而後德	When deviating from Tao, we rely on Te.
失德而後仁	When deviating from Te, we rely on benevolence.
失仁而後義	When deviating from benevolence, we rely on righteousness.
失義而後禮	When deviating from righteousness, we rely on propriety.

According to this, if we lose Oneness with Tao at a level, we may rely on a lower level to regain our foothold in order to recover. By reaching harmony at a level, we may attempt to resynchronize with Tao at a higher level. Tao will be effective when we can synchronize at each level, even at the lost level. This is shown in Chapter 23:

道者同於道	While in Tao, synchronize with Tao;
德者同於德	While in Te, synchronize with Te;
失者同於失	In a lost state, synchronize with the lost state.

As in a general philosophical system, we may start our inquiry at a level and then expand our horizon to reach into the next higher domain. The process will continue until we reach the ultimate harmony with Tao.

4.2 A Model of Actualization 實現層次

We may follow a process to achieve the highest level of actualization possible with our capability. This process of actualization is shown in Figure 5. We want to seek synchronization with a ultimate world order, which is represented by H in the figure. In the quantum theory, H is the Hamiltonian that determines the dynamics of a system.

In this example, this overall driving force is shown to have a basic component H_0 and four sets of residual interactions ($V_1+V_2+V_3+V_4$). The base level has H_0 , and the first level has $H_1 = H_0 + V_1$, the second level, $H_2 = H_1 + V_2$, and the third level, $H_3 = H_2 + V_3$, etc. Each set of residual interactions defines a level or domain.

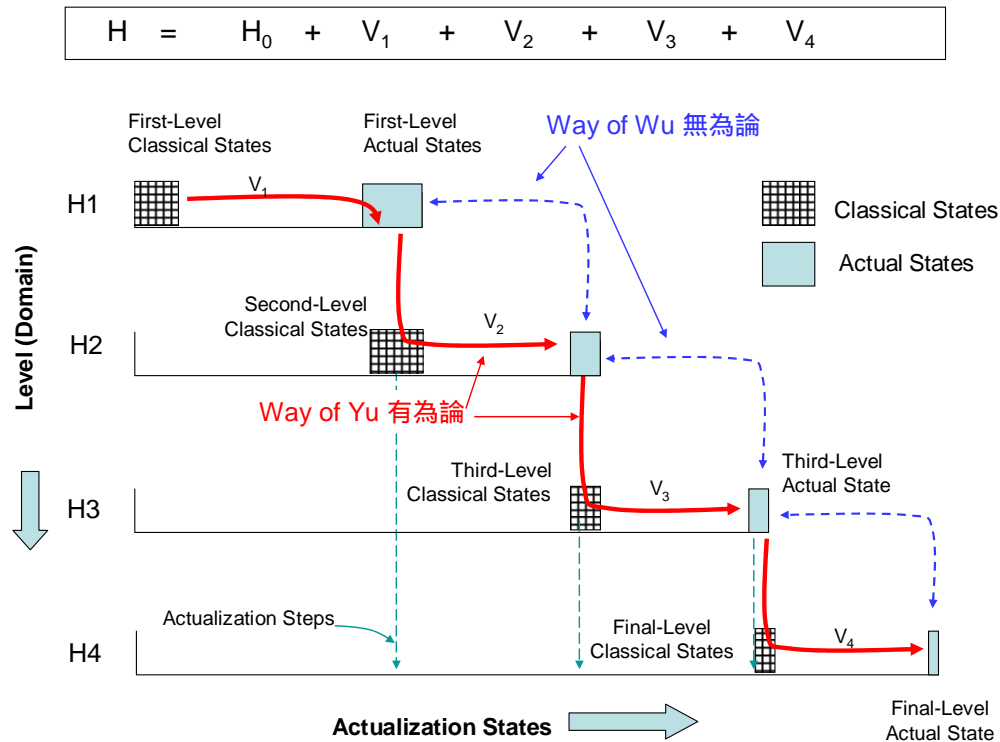


Figure 5 Levels and States of Actualization

The actualization process will start at a base level, denoted as H_0 . At this level, we have to *harmonize* V_1 in order to form the first-level actual states. When we move into the second level, these first-level actual states become the new base states to harmonize the new residual interaction V_2 . After harmonization is achieved at one level, this process continues at the next level. In this scenario, we always deal with classical states and their residual interactions in order to achieve Oneness, so we call it the Way of Yu 有爲論. In Figure 5, we also show the Way of Wu 無爲論, in which one is able to reach the actual states directly at each level. In this manner, one will not encounter any residual interactions. Both ways are essential in maintaining Oneness at all levels.

We should point out that Laotzu never indicates that each of us belongs to a level. He clearly urges all to seek complete Oneness with Tao. These intermediate levels are only temporary states to be recognized and used to regain our foothold.

4.3 The Way of Oneness

From the model of actualization, we may accomplish Oneness in two ways. Both ways follow the same Principle of Oneness. The distinctions between the two ways may be useful in our understanding of Tao philosophy and applications.

THE WAY OF YU

The Way of Yu is to achieve Oneness by *acting according to Yu* 有爲. In this process, we recognize our environment and the forces in the environment and begin to deal with the residual interactions. It is a process to reveal the truth 去僞存真. We may describe the efforts of actualization in the words of Chapter 4 as:

挫其銳解其紛；	Blunt its sharpness and unravel its entanglements.
和其光同其塵。	Harmonize its lights and blend with its surroundings.

Once a level is achieved, there is no residual interaction. The state becomes one of infinite possibilities within that domain. We may achieve Oneness by overcoming the residual interactions. This process continues until we reach Profound Unity 玄同境界 of Tao.

Laotzu describes the Way of Yu in many chapters. A clear example is given in Chapter 28. In this process, we cultivate our ability to recognize the classical states, such as Yin and Yang, and then inter-mingle their flow until we reach Oneness (as in Infancy). We have:

知其雄，守其雌，	Knowing yang and preserving yin,
爲天下溪。	to form a divine creek.
爲天下溪，恒德不離。	Being a divine creek, its true Te will never depart.
恒德不離，復歸於嬰兒。	When True Te never departs, all return to Infancy.

When we move from level to level, each level reveals a deeper core of truth of Tao. Each level is built upon a previous level, with continuity and persistence as stated in Chapter 54:

善建者不拔，	Master builders do not uproot.
善抱者不脫，	Master musters do not disengage.
子孫以祭祀不絕。	The offspring sustain by paying continuous offering to ancestors.

THE WAY OF WU

In the Way of Wu, we are able to reach the actual states directly, without explicit actions. This is the ultimate way to maintain harmony with Tao. As shown in Figure 5, we may start at any level and progress from level to level while maintaining Oneness at all levels. This is the way a leader can act and can lead people.

In Chapter 32, Laotzu describes this process from the initial state of Pu 樸 to a complete system of Tao where people are useful vessels of Tao, as “Pu will defuse to become vessels 樸散則爲器。” Laotzu describes this in Chapter 32 as:

始制有名，	When a system is started, it manifests (as Yu).
名亦既有，	When its manifest is established,
夫亦將知止，	It should also automatically know when to stop.

A great leader can lead people at different levels without showing efforts. Each level may be associated with a proper level of synchronization with Tao. A leader is to establish a set of levels and the required interactions at each level as guide to the people.

THE ULTIMATE WISDOM OF WU

The Way of Wu requires the ultimate wisdom of Tao, which Laotzu calls the “*Wu-Wisdom* 無知” – the Wisdom of the boundless state. He states in Chapter 70:

言有宗，	All teachings have their principles.
事有君。	All efforts have their guiding rules.
夫唯無知也，	Unless with Wu-wisdom,
是以不我知。	There is no way to understand my principles.

This novel interpretation of Wu-wisdom was a major breakthrough in [WA04]. This paved the road to a coherent interpretation of Tao philosophy. This interpretation is consistent with Laotzu’s urge to guide people to Wu-Wisdom, as stated in Chapter 3:

恒使民	The purpose is to guide people to
無知、無欲也。	Wu-wisdom and Wu-desire.

We should note that we have simply adopted our interpretation of Wu-action 無爲 to Wu-wisdom 無知 and Wu-desire 無欲。 This interpretation is also reflected in a similar statement in Prajna, “Prajna has Wu-wisdom, so it knows all. 般若無知，無所不知。” Wu-wisdom is the *unlimited* wisdom.

4.4 Different Levels of Harmony and Tzujan 自然的層次

Normally we can associate Tzujan with the ultimate harmonious state of Tao. We may generalize this concept of Tzujan at different levels. At each level of actualization, we may have a state of Tzujan at that level. At each level of harmonization, all residual interactions are harmonized into the actual states. Our thoughts are harmonized and our actions may become spontaneous within that domain.

This reflects a state of Tzujan. Multiple levels of Tzujan in Tao philosophy are also discussed in [LI05]. The harmony will last until a new residual interaction is encountered and the states become unsettling again.

5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

We have presented a basic theory of Tao philosophy in terms of the *Principle of Oneness* and the *Process of Actualization*. We show that the usual *paradoxes* appear only when such Oneness is not observed. Paradoxes represent the limitations of our language to describe Oneness in classical terms. Our two-level model may help construct a self-consistent Tao philosophical system, which is free from paradoxes and contradictions. The formulation has wide range applications. We would like to discuss a few observations.

A THEORETIC MODEL

The nature of Oneness is transcendental, so we have adopted a “scientific” model to simplify our description of the Oneness state. The advantage of a model is to enhance our conceptual understanding, by overcoming the limitations of our *classical* language. The reality of Tao is revealed in the transcendental actual states, which are not directly observable in the classical sense. We can, however, reconstruct the reality as superposition of our classical observations. We can also check the relationships among the concepts in Tao philosophy within a consistent framework. For example, the transmutation between Yu and Wu appears naturally in the *probability density* of actual states. A model can also make comparison with other philosophies more systematic.

Our model is based along a rudimentary quantum field theory, which can provide a base framework for a consistent interpretation of the key concepts in Tao philosophy. For example, there should be a law of interaction in the field. We may identify the Harmonious Chi 和氣 that preserves Oneness of all phenomena in Tao. This Chi should determine the *law of interactions* in the Tao field. Therefore, we identify this law of interaction with Te 德 or Li 理 [WA04]. We have also shown that Chi derives its symmetry from Yin-Yang interplay, which is preserved in the symmetry exhibited in Te. The relationship among Tao, Te, and Li was also discussed in [CH05].

A KUNG FU THEORY

The principle of Oneness is also an essential theme of Kung Fu practice, which represents a *process* of actualization. As long as one can maintain harmony in a domain, one can function without effort in that domain. If we take the levels of actualization to be the Kung Fu ranking levels of belts, each practitioner will be completely competent within his rank. A competitor will win by tripping the opponent into a level beyond his competence.

Our theory is a more general application of Tao principle in our pursuit of harmony and truth. The domain and states used in our formulation appear to be similar to the general philosophical structure discussed by Prof. Duh [DU99].

STATIC OR DYNAMIC TAO

Our discussions show that there is a *dynamic* Tao philosophy 動態的道; at the same time, there is an *eternal* and *unchanging* Tao 恒道。When we approach Tao from the classical Yu states, the states will first appear dynamic with residual interactions. When we move closer and closer to the final actual states, the states are more actualized and appear less and less changing. We may repeat the actualization process until all interactions are taken into account and we have ultimate harmony.

When we reach the ultimate Oneness state, there is no residual interaction and Tao would appear absolute, eternal, and static 恒道。Nevertheless, along the journey of seeking Tao, Tao will always appear as a *Dynamic Tao* 非恒道。The dynamic and static nature of Tao appears naturally. For all practical purposes, Tao is dynamic. However, both static and dynamic natures of Tao are real [XU03].

THE DOCTRINE OF TWO TRUTHS

Laotzu' two ways of seeking Tao, Wu and Yu, may be called the *Doctrine of Two Truths* 二諦論 in Tao. Either way of inquiry will inevitably lead to the same truth. This is similar to Chuangtzu's "Two Ways 兩行。" This *Doctrine of Two Truths* is also reflected in Greek philosophy. In the basic Indian Vedanta tradition, the Ultimate Truth is *Nirguna Brahman*, which is without any attributes. All personal forms of truth are *Saguna Brahman*, which has attributes. In Buddhism, it is important to recognize that Nagarjuna 龍樹 has declared that all designations of the "classical states", *alone*, are illusions in his Madyamaka Middle Way philosophy 中論。In Confucianism, we may see a very similar philosophy in the Doctrine of the Mean 中庸。There are also other Chinese philosophers, notably Chu-hsi 朱熹, Cheng Suen-ying 成玄英, and Wang Fuzhi 王夫之, who view Yu-Wu as a dynamic process and recognized that everything has both Yu and Wu in a mutual transmutation.

These two ways are also embedded in Western philosophy. In general, the world emerges from the subjects in the Way of Yu, (as in Kant) and the subjects emerge from the world in the way of Wu (as in Whitehead).

TAO PHILOSOPHY AND MODERN SCIENCES

Our analysis shows that Tao philosophy and quantum theory, at the conceptual level, adopt a similar way to describe reality. The reality has symmetry and obeys the least action principle. Symmetry, as in the Principle of Oneness, is basic to all scientific investigations. The methodology, as the Process of Actualization, is also common in science and philosophy. Such similarity may be an indication of a basic common truth.

There is a potential confusion in our discussion of *reality* in science and philosophy. In general, scientists consider a classical state as "reality" in the physical world and philosophers consider an actual state as the only reality. Our formulation provides a view that both states are real within Oneness. For most situations, we may characterize the way of science as the Way of Yu and the way of fundamental philosophy is the Way of Wu. Both scientists and philosophers share the same goal in their ways of actualization.

The duality concept is shared in Tao and quantum theory. Heisenberg commented on wave-particle duality, saying, “the two mental pictures which experiments lead us to form are both incomplete and have only the validity of analogies which are accurate only in limiting cases” [HE29]. He also commented that it is very difficult to modify our language, and so to overcome the limitations of our language, it is necessary to use mathematics.

There is a natural synergy in science and philosophy. The interplay of scientific concepts and philosophical discourses is not new [JE81]. Success of Newtonian mechanics has inspired much great philosophical thinking. In fact, science and philosophy often paves new ways to overcome the limitations of our direct experiences. The quantum approach will certainly extend our understanding of many human inquiries into philosophy, body and mind, psychology, etc. as shown by Capra [CA00], Bohm [BO80], Goswami [GO98], Zohar [ZO90], etc. Elaborate extrapolation of quantum effects to Tao philosophy is probably not warranted, but there is a correlation between common principles in Tao and sciences.

CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHICAL RULES

It is also interesting to see that some usual philosophical golden rules need to be revisited. The actual states have the characteristic of the entangled states with both opposing characteristics, so the *law of excluded middle* is not directly applicable. In addition, the apparent classical contradictions exist naturally in the Oneness state, so the usual *law of contradiction* needs to be reformatted. Moreover, paradoxes can now be analyzed systematically and shown to appear only when the Principle of Oneness is violated.

Our formulation provides a framework to consolidate appearances and reality. It shows that manifested *appearances* and intrinsic *realities* exist concurrently in a symmetric way. This may lead to a Metaphysics, where there is no external reality ontologically prior to and separate from the appearances. Our reality and appearances exist at the same time and for the same thing. Our analysis also shows some similarities to ancient Greek philosophy, especially the relationship between Parmenides and Heraclites. We have not yet explored all the implications of this theory, but it may help us bring East and West, science and philosophy, into a closer state of harmony by forcing us to rethinking some fundamental notions. More investigations along this line may be a small step toward a more unified philosophical framework.

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He has seen many studies of Tao in the West and, in 2000, decided to do a systematic translation of the Tao Te Ching. After many years of research, he has come to a conclusion that Tao Te Ching is indeed systematic and coherent. He has brought many basic concepts of Tao to new light. He shows that Tao paradoxes are not any more mysterious than the current pursuit of modern sciences. This is published in his first book: *The Dynamic Tao and its Manifestations*. He is currently interested in the early Greek Philosophers, Heidegger, and modern sciences. He resides near Chicago, Illinois, USA.

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