

1 ☐ Lecture 10

Laozi

2 ☐ Laozi

- LAO-dsuh
 - Lao Tzu = "old master"
 - legendary founder of Daoism
 - perhaps a contemporary of Confucius
 - The Legend
 - A More Likely Story

3 ☐ The *Daodejing*

- "Treatise on the Way (Dao) and its Virtue/Power (De)
- poetic, suggestive, and short (~5000 Chinese characters)
- many nuances of meaning – and many different interpretations
 - the dao that can be dao'd is not eternally daoing

4 ☐ Harmony

- One basic theme of Daoist thought is that we should find harmony with natural patterns and tendencies
 - fit in with nature instead of opposing it
 - be sensitive and aware to what is happening, instead of resisting or distorting

5 ☐ The Uncarved Block

- Daoism emphasizes the freedom one attains by following nature rather than resisting it
 - be like an uncarved block
 - Confucian training is artificial, because ...
 - let things happen naturally, without regulation

6 ☐ Social Disorder

- Social disorder results from ...
 - we have an incorrect view of how the world is
 - ignorance leads to frustration
 - frustration leads to conflict and tension
 - the result is social disorder

7 ☐ Going with the Flow

- *Basic Principle*: strength, success, and longevity are due to ...
 - rigidity is self-defeating, because ...
 - cork in water
 - Tai Chi Chuan

8 ☐ Going with the Flow

- Being flexible is connected to the flow of **qi** (vital energies) and the balance of *yin* and *yang*
 - harmonizing inner energies allows one to "chill"

9 ☐ Going with the Flow

1. If one is flexible, then ...
2. Nature is naturally ordered
3. *Hence*, if one is flexible, then ...

Corollary: Need for laws, rituals, etc is due to ...

10 ☐ Daoist Metaphysics

- "Dao" is the central concept of Daoism
 - **dao** = way, path, the natural happening of things
- Laozi emphasizes that the dao cannot be expressed in words – but words can reveal some of its aspects

11 ☐ Daoist Metaphysics

- yin and yang are opposites
 - **Yin**: night, dark, cool, rest, female, receptive, soft, north, winter, even
 - **Yang**: day, light, warm, active, male, aggressive, hard, south, summer, odd
- they are inter-dependent
- and they transform into each other

12 ☐ Daoist Metaphysics

- The theory of yin-yang raises a problem:
If yin and yang are utter opposites (like magnetic poles), what accounts for their interaction with each other?

13 ☐ Daoist Metaphysics

- Answer: the dao
 - Dao is the basis for yin-yang interaction
 - but it is not *something*
 - and it is not *nothing*
 - Dao is the way things are and the source of all change
 - Dao is *wu*

14 ☐ Daoist Metaphysics

- **wu** = nonbeing, openness
 - formless, amorphous
 - an array of possibilities
 - not a *thing*
 - without *wu*, what there is could have no function
 - without what there is, *wu* is useless

15 ☐ Daoist Metaphysics

- Examples of wu
 - openings in bottles
 - pauses between musical notes
- Japanese bells

16 ☐ Daoist Sagely Behavior

- Daoism recommends that ...
 - dao is both the way the world works *and* the way one should lead one's life
 - thinking of ourselves as agents of our own activity is mistaken

17 ☐ Daoist Sagely Behavior

- **wu-wei** = doing (wei) nothing (wu)

- acting without a preset agenda
- being open, flowing, spontaneous
- not straining and striving to accomplish rigidly set goals
- birds vs. snakes

18 ☐ Daoist Sagely Behavior

- When we attain wu-wei, our actions ...
 - and we cannot make mistakes, because ...
 - Mistakes are due to ...

19 ☐ Daoist Sagely Behavior

- Wu-wei is effortless

20 ☐ Daoist Sagely Behavior

- Daoism recommends **wu-wei and yet not wu-wei**
 - "doing without doing"
 - *not* the same as not doing anything
 - go with the flow, without preconceptions

21 ☐ Daoist Sagely Behavior

- Doing without Doing is accomplished by being ziran
 - **ziran** = self-so, spontaneous, creative, natural

22 ☐ Class Exercise

Take three minutes to draw a picture of the *dao* in your notes.

Be creative.

23 ☐ Daoist Sagely Behavior

- Being *ziran* (open) requires ...
 - When we are open, we can be flexible
 - like water
 - and we can be creative.

24 ☐ Daoist Sagely Behavior

- 1 • Ziran is the basis of **de**
 - Confucian vs. Daoist meaning
 - Daoists disparage the Confucian emphasis on cultivation and training, because ...
- 2 • Daoism takes being passive and responsive to be the key to virtuous living
 - Confucianism takes being active and responsible to be the key to virtuous living

25 ☐ The Ideal Daoist Ruler

- Confucianism assumes that there is a fixed set of moral laws
 - this is why it recommends that rulers rule by *tianming*
- Daoists deny the assumption, because ...
 - how one should act is not fixed by *tian*
 - laws and rituals are band-aids

26 ☐ The Ideal Daoist Ruler

- Daoists recommend that rulers be invisible in action
 - minimalism

- allow the government to ...
- don't resist or try to change what happens
- anticipate problems

27 ☐ Reading for Next Time

Kupperman, chapter on Zhuangzi

The Zhuangzi, in Readings

Journal #2 (three entries) due next class!