

THE
PARADOXICAL
LOGIC
DEVELOPED
BY
THE CHINESE

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More than twenty-five centuries, Chinese understanding of spirituality in down-to-earth teachings.

It is perhaps ironical that thinkers who are rising to the defense of oriental religions are not so much the traditional theologians as the western experiential scientists who do research into the nature of reality.

Experimental scientists will soon be able to confirm the scriptural revelations of the oriental cultures, their minds probing the secrets of the universe look to these ancient revelations as a source of divine guidance.

One will see the intimate link between atomic physics and the yin-yang and find the yin-yang duality found in atom in scientific research.

The key to the truth lies in paradox.

Is the world real or unreal?

Is your life-pattern predetermined or do you have free choice?

Religious thinkers of Europe and West Asia agree that the world is real, and that human beings have free choice. But as they are trained in the "either-or" logic many of them look to the East for a fight over these two related questions.

So these thinkers insist in their ideas that the Chinese religion is preaching that the world is an illusion Maya, and that fate rather than free will govern human life karma.

Having convinced themselves and others that this is the common failing of the oriental belief, they go on to argue that this religious belief is pessimistic in their rejection of free will and therefore is useless as a guide for mankind.

But what the Chinese ethos actually teach is that the world is both real and unreal; it is real at one level of experience and unreal at another level of experience.

Human life is fated as well as governed by free choice; life is predetermined in one dimension of living, and governed by free will in another dimension of living.

In the revelation of the Tao Te Ching, the world is said to be solid on the surface and hollow in the depths.

"Thirty spokes surround the hub.

In their nothingness consists the carriage's effectiveness. One hollows the clay and shapes in into pots.

In its nothingness consists the pot's effectiveness.

One cuts doors and windows to make the chamber.

In their nothingness consists the chamber's effectiveness.

Therefore, what exists serves for possession

What does not exist serves for effectiveness." - Tao Te Ching: 11

In these crisp lines of paradox, the Tao Te Ching reveals the dynamic interplay between the solid macro-world and the hollow micro-world, the symbiotic relationship between existence and nonexistence.

Let us consider this sacred revelation in the light of experimental physics.

THE WORLD IS REAL

No one level of experience the level at which our senses operate the world is real because it is solid. We can see its solidness and feel it.

But hang on there. Matter is only one side of the equation because nature shows itself to us in two ways as matter, or as energy.

Energy is not solid and thus its reality is not so obvious, although we can feel its activity as it has the power to create movement.

Matter/energy is a yin-yang duality. You can classify every physical entity as either matter or energy, but the two are not completely separate. Albert Einstein proved that mass (the substance of matter) and energy are merely two aspects of the same phenomenon, rather than two independent entities.

This is why the modern law of conservation is stated thus by scientists: "Mass-energy may not be created or destroyed, but each may be converted into the other."

This is an early warning sign that matter is not as solid as it appears. It can be energized away, although this doesn't happen in the macro-world except in Star Trek movies where Captain Kirk beams down to a planet from his spaceship high above, by converting his body to energy and reconverts into matter once he touches the surface of the planet.

THE WORLD IS ALSO UNREAL

Probing beneath the surface reality, scientists have analyzed the underworld of elementary particles where the matter/energy duality is replaced by a subtle duality physicists call it the "wave-particle duality" which underlies the matter/energy duality of the surface world.

We are now entering a world beyond Maya.

The particle, which by definition is a very small unit of matter confined to be the basic building block upon which our world of solid matter is erected.

The wave, which is defined in physics as a sea-like movement (like the waves of the sea) that carries energy but not particles from one place to another, appears to be the elementary characteristic of all forms of energy.

The particle can be compared to a dot that stays in one place; the wave can be compared to a snakelike movement that spreads itself over a large area of space.

Wave and particle are opposites because a particle is a minute mass of inert matter, whereas a wave has no mass but is a motion spread out over a large area of space. A wave is not a traveling particle as it does not carry any particle, only energy.

Given their opposing characteristics, are particles and waves incompatible?

No!

Scientists have discovered that particles possess wavelike properties, while waves possess particle-like properties. There is no clear dividing line between the two, as particle can exist as a wave and a wave can exist as a particle!

They are complementary opposites, and in physics this paradox is called the “complementarity's principle.”

It is important to note that if the world can be reduced to a unified field in which particles have no ultimate substance but are merely localized condensations of the field (like dew drops in the early morning), then it is essentially a world of hollowness just as the Chinese scriptures say it is.

On the other hand the Chinese scriptures also confirm the relative reality of solid matter, and declare that the only way to understand the universe is to unify the dual aspects and transcend them in a vision of a higher reality.

Let us deal briefly with the second question: is life predetermined or governed by free choice?

THE LINK BETWEEN FATE AND FREE WILL

Allied to human life, the two principles provide a means of understanding the oriental teachings about the connection between fate and free will.

According to the oriental teachings, the human life pattern in the world of the senses (the macro-world) is already set. If you possess all the relevant data about a person, you can exactly determine his past and future. His fate is sealed, if he makes no change of spiritual significance.

This spiritual change refers to the inner life of a person. Here, there are only probabilities, not certainties, and there is the exercise of free choice.

An explanation of this intimate connection between fate and free will is given in the I Ching, the world's oldest scripture. In this 5,000 year old scripture, the differences

and connection between the World of the Senses (governed by the deterministic principle) and the World of Thought (governed by the uncertainty principle) are described.

Basically, everyone of us has periods of good and bad fortune. The important thing to consider is that in prosperity, he should exercise constraint and realize his humble beginnings and not be too arrogant or overconfident.

He will also be easily induced into a state of omniscience to believe that he will not do wrong or make any mistake. This can bring about his downfall.

Similarly, when a person's fortune is at its lowest, he should persevere and be patient for his life cycle will change for the better. He must have faith in himself or else when the opportunity comes, he will not be able to grab it.

Every one of us can prevent or turn away bad fate or fortune by using our own power of mind control to discipline ourselves. In fact, mind power is the ultimate power a person can employ to help himself tide over misfortunes.

Like the saying goes, "Control your mind and you can control your heart", which goes to show that our emotional life can be subjected to the dictates of our mental power.

If one can do precisely that, then one will achieve a state of mind that is pure and clean and that is akin to achieving peace of mind.

If one cannot do that, then one needs the aid of religion or meditation, to attain calm and peace within.

It is only when one is peaceful and calm that one can come to accept the good as well as the bad in life with equanimity.

So, peace of mind should be the goal of every living being. If one is moderate in one's demands and expectation in life, then one will not be too demanding in one's goals or ambition and expectation of others.

As mentioned earlier, the five basic elements have both the yin and yang inherent in its properties. This means that there are in fact 10 different elements of line of forces that can change or influence a person's life.

These 10 lines of forces include our mental and emotional aspects and can be presented graphically to help us determine a pattern.

In this world, there are too many people who cannot use the power of their mind to overcome their weaknesses and as a result, they are unable to achieve happiness and peace of mind.

ORTHODOXY VERSUS HERESY

The tragedy of dogmatic religious thinking is that it has forced large communities of people to oppose each other because of disagreements over matters of belief.

Modern day thinking tends to believe that the various religions are like various theories attempting to explain a certain phenomenon. One has to take one's stand and not pander to this trend that eclectic attitude gets one nowhere.

This is the example of the uncompromising attitude of dogmatic thinking.

The general principle of paradoxical logic the validity of which as been proven by quantum mechanics is stated in the Tao Te Ching: "Words that are strictly true seem to be paradoxical." 78:4

Thus, throughout the Tao Te Ching the truth is expressed in a series of paradoxical statements.

Says Chuang Tzu: "It was through the definite expression of opinions about it that there ensued injury to (the comprehension of the Truth). It was this injury to (the comprehension of Truth) which led to the formation of partial preferences." - Bk. 2, 1:2

Chuang Tzu resolves the question of orthodoxy vs. heresy in this statement: "We know (for instance) that East and West are opposed to each other, and yet that the

one cannot be without (suggesting the idea of) the other (thus) their share of mutual service is determined. Looking at them with respect to their tendencies, if we approve of what they approve, then there is no one who may be approved of, and, if we condemn what they condemn, there is no one who may not be condemned. Bk. 17, 2:1 0

"Both sides of the question are admissible," says Chuang Tzu. Applying the yin-yang treatment further, Chuang Tzu says: "The sage brings together a dispute in its affirmations and denials, and rests in the equal fashioning of the Tao." Bk. 2, 1:2

In the oriental approach, contradictions are accepted as a challenge to extend the boundaries of one's knowledge and understanding of the ultimate truth.

'The movement of the Tao by contraries proceeds and weakness marks the course of Tao's mighty deeds." Tao Te Ching 40:1

The various yin-yang comparisons are produced below:

existence / non-existence
life / death
uniformity/diversity
beginning / end

"Existence and nonexistence generate each other." - Tao Te Ching 2:2

gravity / lightness
motion / stillness
height / lowness f
ront / rear

"Gravity is the root of lightness; stillness, the ruler of movement." - Tao Te Ching 26:1

male / female,
positive /negative

heat cold
light darkness

"Be aware of your masculine nature, but by keeping the feminine way, you shall be to the world like a channel to which flow the many streams. All come to you, yea, all beneath the sky." - TTC 28:1

action / inaction
left brain / right brain
reasoning / intuition
thinking / feeling

"The Tao in its regular course does nothing, and so there is nothing which R does not do." TTC 37:1

increase / decrease
assets / liabilities
debit / credit
expenditure / revenue

"It is the Way of the Tao to diminish super-abundance, and to supplement deficiency." -TTC 77:2

"Some things are increased by being diminished, and others are diminished by being increased." - TTC 42:2

rural / urban
control / freedom
subjectivity / objectivity

"In the Way of Heaven, there is no partiality of love; it is always on the side of the good man." TTC 79:3

"Hold all things in your love, favoring and supporting none specially. This is called being without any local or partial regard; all things are equally regarded; there is no long or short among them." - Chuang Tzu Bk. 17, 2:10

self interest / collective interest
management theory X / worker theory Y
personal goals / corporate goals

"The sage chooses to be last and so becomes first of all, denying self, he too is saved. For does he not find fulfillment in being an unselfish man?" - TTC 7:2

materiality spirituality
celibacy / marriage
orthodoxy / heresy
affirmation / denial

"All subjects may be looked at from (two points of view) from that and from this. That view involves both a right and a wrong; and this view involves both a right and a wrong or are there indeed, or are there not the two views, that and this?"

"They have not found their point of correspondence which is called the pivot of the Tao.

As soon as one finds this pivot, he stands in the center of the ring (of thought), where he can respond without end to the changing views without end to those affirming, and without end to those denying."

THE CONFLICTING ASPECT OF YIN-YANG

In every woman's life there is a man, and in every man's life there is a woman.

It should be easier for a woman to see the man in her since the word itself contains a man (woman), but a man always tries to deny the woman-ness in him (unless he is a gay).

If you are a woman, be all woman, if you are a man, be all man. This is the credo of society it is a credo that results in polarization and conflict between people.

This male vs. female polarization is duplicated in a hundred other schisms. To name a few:

- * Management vs. union
- * Right vs. left
- * Individual vs. society
- * Believer vs. unbeliever
- * Spirituality vs. worldliness

Do you accept these polarities as mutually opposed and hostile to each other? Do you force yourself to embrace one side and reject the other, to back one side against the other?

The answer you give will indicate whether your mental outlook contributes to peace or to war.

Study the prewar social history of Japan and Germany and you will be struck by the sharp polarization in those countries which made them so warlike and brutal.

In every area of life, the polarization was so clear-cut that the typical personality profile of the German or Japanese included these facets:

- * He rode roughshod over the female.
- * He showed strong hostility towards political dissidents.
- * He oppressed the racial minorities.
- * He cultivated a deep cynicism towards other nations.
- * He scoffed at the pious people who talked about spirituality

The polarization disease is as common as the common cold, but unlike the cold it can devastate humanity as it has ties in the past.

The antidote for this disease is the yin-yang treatment.

"There is no being which does not contain within itself the germ of its opposite. There is no male wholly without feminine characteristics and no female without its masculine attributes. Otherwise the duality's would forever remain in watertight compartments and the whole power of interaction be lost.

Thus the Tai Chi symbol is that of a circle encompassing two dynamic halves which represent the duality within a grand cosmic unity. You will notice from the symbol that the two opposite halves flow majestically into each other and there is an element of one within the other (represented by the dot).

When you examine the classification of all phenomena, for example in a thesaurus, you will discover that everything falls into pairs of opposites.

You can see from the sacred quotations in the listings that the perfect Man, or the Sage of Chinese culture, is the man who has established a perfectly balanced union of the yin and yang.

In this state of balance, he transcends the duality's and arrives at the original state of unity in the Tai Chi.