

The Realistic Significance of Taoist Naturalism in Today's World

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Abstract

Taking the Tao Te Ching as the main literature basis, the rationality and contemporary value of Lao Tzu's naturalism is explained from a philosophical point of view through the interpretation and demonstration of Lao Tzu's "nature". First of all, the philosophical connotation of naturalism is expounded, and then the naturalism is demonstrated from the metaphysical and empirical levels. After demonstrating naturalism, how to achieve the natural realm is discussed. Finally, different from some scholars who simply and rigidly combine the text with reality, it results in the disconnection between theory and practice. In combination with the "nature" of Lao Tzu, on the one hand, it is the embodiment of metaphysics; on the other hand, it is the main thought of the existence of all things, and the significance of Taoist naturalism to the contemporary world is explored.

Keywords

Naturalism, inaction, contemporary value, Taoism.

1. Introduction

In today's society, science and technology are developing and society is advancing, but human beings are facing severe ecological problems and life puzzles. The answers are tried to be found from the classic Chinese classics Tao Te Ching. Through the study of Taoist Lao Tzu's natural thought, the Taoist Lao Tzu's natural thought is combined with the problems of today's times, so as to provide reference for solving practical problems.

On the discussion of natural problems, scholars published corresponding academic papers. However, mostly of them analyzed the "nature" in Lao Tzu 's philosophy from the perspective of natural concepts or categories and from the contemporary values, but not from the perspective of Lao Tzu's philosophical system (Morrow, 2015). The innovation of the research is to demonstrate the "nature" in Lao Tzu's philosophy as an ideological system, to analyze its social background, to explain from the perspective of metaphysics and experience, and to explain the ways of realizing the natural thought and the ideal state achieved. Focusing on the present world, it is found that in the process of using Lao Tzu's natural thought serving the contemporary society, the text is simply combined with the contemporary society, causing the deformity of the traditional culture. Therefore, how to extract the essence and remove the dross and enable traditional ideology and culture live in the contemporary era is the main problem needed to discuss.

2. State of the Art

The research on Lao Tzu has always been a hot topic in the academic circles, and there are a lot of related research results. Among them, the views related to Lao Tzu's nature are mainly as follows:

First, multiple interpretation of the meaning of "nature". Since the 20th century, in the interpretation of Lao Tzu's concept of nature in the domestic academic circles, the representative view is that it is interpreted as "the natural world" (Dolinszky, 2015). At present, the view that the domestic academic circles more admit is to explain "nature" by "nature", and the scholars such as Zhang Dainian, Qian Muwei, Mou Tsung San, and Chen Guying all hold this view (Lin, 2015). With the deepening of research, scholars no longer simply examine a specific meaning of nature, but focus on understanding

nature from multiple perspectives, such as nature of morality, nature of politics, nature of human, nature of positive, and nature of negative and so on.

Second, exploration of the reason why Lao Tzu's "nature" thought came into being. There are a lot of current research on this problem. There are several representative views: From the social foundation of Lao Tzu's thought, it is discussed from the relationship between Lao Tzu thought and the Spring and Autumn society (Rho, Kim, Park and Kim, 2017). Mr. Hou Wailu's General History of Chinese Thought and Ren Jiyu's Translation of Lao Tzu contain related illustration; Mr. Sun Yikai's General Theory of Lao Tzu seeks the clues of the origin of Lao Tzu's thought from ancient books and records of ancient Taoism; by combing the relationship between the Taoist thought and the ideological history of the pre Qin Dynasty, Mr. Qian Muwei's The Old Plea of Zhuang and Lao explains the close relationship between Lao Tzu's thought and the other schools (Steffen, 2016).

Third, comparison of the category of "nature" in the field of vision. From the existing research, it is found that the comparison of "nature" runs through all times and all over the world. First of all, Expected China, Cultural Source of Thinking in Chinese Philosophy and so on wrote by Hao Dawei and An Lezhe made a holistic comparison between Chinese and Western culture, and concluded that the category of "nature" emphasized the spontaneity in the process of world rheology (Crowe, 2016). Secondly, the French existentialists objected to the point of view of the opposition between man and nature and between the subject and the object, and they emphasized that nature is the existence of the existentialists of "in the world". Again, in Discussion on the "Nature" of Lao Tzu and Chuang-Tzu – Discussion on the Generation and Development of the "Natural" Thought of Chinese Philosophy, Ikeda Tomohisa made a comparative study of the nature of Lao Tzu, the nature of Wang Chong, and the nature in the metaphysics in Wei and Jin dynasties (Reyna, 2018). He also proposed that the original meaning of "nature" is "without external force, with its internal role to become or in a certain state". Finally, in the comparison of Lao Tzu's nature and Confucian morality, Mr. Liu Xiaogan tried to illustrate the similarities between the Confucian and Taoist in the basic spirit through the comparison of the concept of Confucius's benevolence and the natural concept of Lao Tzu (Brett, 2016). Chen Guying, Xu Kangsheng, Li Zehou and other scholars, through analysis and comparison, respectively, came to the "trunk of Taoism" and "Confucianism and Taoism complementary" theory.

Fourth, the contemporary value of Lao Tzu's "nature" thought. Lao Tzu's nature thought is deeply cast in the blood of Chinese culture and has far-reaching influence. In terms of aesthetics and art, Lao Tzu's natural philosophy takes "truth" and "simplicity" as its beauty, which influences various artistic forms such as architecture, design, poetry and prose (Coyle, 2016). In terms of ecology, Lao Tzu's nature thought contains many ideas and methods to solve contemporary ecological problems. By analyzing the causes of the contemporary ecological problems, the scholars put forward constructive solutions to the contemporary ecological problems: "unity of heaven", "conform to nature" and so on. These thoughts have become an important theoretical source of contemporary deep ecology theory. From the management level, the research on the management thought of Lao Tzu's naturalism is not very deep at present, and it is still in the explanation of "inaction" and so on categories. The contemporary value of the political level is more significant. The words such as "the book of salvation" are all used to describe the Tao Te Ching. It can be seen that there is a wealth of political wisdom in the Tao Te Ching, and the most important of which is "natural inaction", and some scholars have refined this idea into concrete measure to combine the naturalism and humanism. From the aspect of life, Lao Tzu emphasizes transcendence and focuses on nature. It includes the natural outlook on life, the view of human nature, the view of life that a man who is contented will be happy, the outlook on died but alive, and the view of desire.

To sum up, the elaboration of the connotations about the "nature" provided us with a wide field of view to understand Lao Tzu's natural thought, which enabled deepening the understanding of Lao Tzu's naturalistic thought through the different cognitions of the ancient and modern Chinese and foreign scholars about naturalism. The contemporary value of naturalism is further explored, to seek

the connection between classical literature and contemporary society so as to further serve the contemporary society.

3. Connotation of Taoist Naturalism

Lao Tzu's philosophy is the most original philosophy. As a compound word, the word "zi ran" was first found in the book Tao Te Ching. In the ancient literature, "zi" has the meaning of 'self'; 'ran' has the meaning of 'appropriate' and 'achieved', and the meaning of the two words is combined, and the literal meaning of "nature" is 'self-appropriate' or 'self-achievement'. In the structure of the word "nature", the word "zi" is very important, with special emphasis on "not being influenced by external forces". Therefore, it is appropriate to interpret Taoist "nature" briefly as a state of "oneself". This explanation is also an interpretation generally accepted by academics.

Based on the existing research results, Lao Tzu's nature is understood as three meanings: natural, real, and conforming. "Natural" emphasizes that in essence, this is automatically. "Real" focuses on the facts, which proves the natural state with all things in the world. "Conforming", as the name implies, it emphasizes conforming to the trajectory of the development of things, not doing anything against them, and stressing conforming to the state of "naturalness".

To sum up, in general, Lao Tzu's "nature" can be interpreted as "its own state". Specifically, nature can be understood from three angles: natural, real and conforming, and the three have progressive relationship in logic. First of all, from the height of Tao and cosmology, it is proved that in essence everything is natural, which is from a metaphysical point of view. In Tao Te Ching, the idea of "heaven and man isomorphism" has different forms of expression. Lao Tzu explained "heaven and man isomorphism" from the perspective of homogeneity of heaven and human. The heaven and human are connected, and the saints take the natural nature in order to govern the country and achieve the ideal political effect. This confirms the "natural" from the perspective of "real". Finally, it is determined that the essence of "nature" is "conforming", that is, all things, whether metaphysical or physical, should conform to the state of "nature".

4. The Ideal State of the Taoist Thought of Nature

The problem of realm is a matter of great importance in ancient Chinese philosophy, and the ideal state is the realm of expectation. In this sense, the ideal realm that Lao Tzu's natural thought expects to achieve is the whole harmony of the universe and the free development of the subject.

4.1 Harmony

"Harmony" is the ideal state pursued by Chinese philosophy. The harmony of individual life is an important aspect of Lao Tzu's thought of harmony, which is specifically embodied in the concept of human returning to nature. The original human had not been crafty and cunning. However, with the continuous development of society, human beings have been gradually socialized and become people in the society. As a result, there are all kinds of social problems and life puzzles. In view of these problems, Taoism's return to nature is particularly important. It is impossible for a person to live with a mask forever. In the long run, it will eventually lead to mental malformation. Therefore, returning to the state of sincerity and simplicity can provide an internal basis for each individual's own harmony. In order to return to the pure brightness of human nature, Lao Tzu expects to turn man into a natural person. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to dispel the false benevolence and righteousness and wisdom of the secular society. Lao Tzu deeply felt the hypocrisy between the social people at that time, and was deeply aware that relying on externally formalized things to maintain the people's hearts was unreliable, so they asked people to return to their nature.

4.2 Freedom of the Subject

If Confucius pursues the best of ethics, then Lao Tzu seeks peace and freedom of spirit. Freedom is also the ideal state that Lao Tzu's natural thinking expects to achieve. Specifically speaking, Lao Tzu's free realm includes two meanings: one is political freedom and the other is spiritual freedom and transcendence.

Lao Tzu expounded the freedom in the Tao Te Ching: first, Lao Tzu, based on the Tao and stood at the height of the Tao to illustrate the essence of life. In essence, life does not matter life or death, but life and death are merely imposed by the world. If it can be realized that life and death are different and the Tao is uniform, it is possible to transcend from the problem of life and death, so people will not stick to life and death. If the truth of returning to the baby is further understood and the transcendence of the limited life is also known, then it is possible to understand the truth of death and no death, and will not be controlled by the problem of life and death. Second, no desire. Lao Tzu does not seek people without desire. Human is a purposeful existence and it is impossible to live without pointing, so desire must exist but must be controlled within a reasonable range. Once trapped in external desires, it is easy to lose oneself and be tied down by materialism. To this, it is supposed to first keep the inner clarity. Secondly, it is necessary to have an objective understanding of the world. As an independent individual, we should have our own judgment and code of conduct, cannot be led by the secular nose. Third, the decree of the teaching of less politics. Lao Tzu's freedom also includes getting rid of outside shackles, which is "Freedom of action" not constrained by the ruling class, namely political freedom. Such freedom requires the realization of a non-mandatory relationship between rulers and civilians. However, it should be noticed that Lao Tzu's advocacy of freedom is not entirely laissez faire. Laozi said that "Tao is natural", and the "nature" here is the only restriction on freedom. Only when individuals follow the natural avenue, can individuals achieve their natural freedom.

5. The Contemporary Value of the Taoist Thought of Naturalism

Taoist philosophy represented by Lao Tzu has influenced Chinese culture for thousands of years. Although contemporary society is facing different social realities, it can still get beneficial nourishment from Lao Tzu's naturalism.

5.1 Returning to the Simplicity of Human Nature

Lao Tzu advocated to return to nature and return to the existence of "Metaphysics", because only in this state can we restore the clear heart of people and reduce the blinding of the appetite. Secondly, know common things. "Knowing the common things" means understanding the law of the development of things; otherwise it will cause confusion. Again, know oneself. It requires to have an objective understanding of oneself, and eager for quick success and instant benefit or high self-esteem are not in line with the Tao, which will not last long. "People who know others are smart and people who know themselves are wise." Finally, on the basis of inner quietness and clarity, not violating the nature, and having a correct understanding of oneself, one should cultivate his nature: first, with good heart, treat all people and everything honestly. second, kindness, thrift and daring not to be the first in the world are the three simple human natures. Keeping this kind of behavior is more conducive to inner peace and harmony.

In short, the misery of life and disorder of society in Lao Tzu's view is due to the temptation of material desire and the departure of the people from the road. In order to solve this problem, the solution given by Lao Tzu can be summed up in a sentence as returning to the road. At the same time, it should be supplemented by benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, intelligence and honest as an external norm. Some people may question: isn't Lao Tzu thought abandoning benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, wisdom and faith? As a matter of fact, Confucius once asked Lao Tzu about rites, indicating that Lao Tzu knew "rites". These are the embodiment of being polite and respectful, and Lao Tzu repeatedly stressed benevolence, faith and beauty, "to be kind and benevolent" and "to be kind and trustworthy". It can be seen that Lao Tzu does not want to completely abandon benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and honest. However, it is undeniable that benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and honest as external norms do depart from the Tao of "natural inaction". From the social reality, Lao Tzu is in the era of "Ceremony Disintegration". The so-called "benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and honest" is only the means of the ruling class in order to seize the interests. They play tyranny under the guise of benevolence and

righteousness. Lao Tzu objected to the benevolence, righteousness, gift, wisdom, and honest in this aspect. And taking into account the actual situation of the society at that time, it is impossible to return directly to the road, so Lao Tzu put forward the external means and methods of benevolence, righteousness, gift, wisdom and honest, and then return to the road and return to the simple human nature.

5.2 The Political Wisdom

The treatment of Huang and Lao Tzu in early Han Dynasty has proved that Lao Tzu's political philosophy of "doing nothing and doing everything" has its rationality and operability. In addition, the government controlling little in modern western countries is a good government, and the government should only act as a good night watchman. It can also be said to be a reversion of Lao Tzu's political philosophy of "inaction". The following part is referred to:

First of all, the idea of natural inaction contains dissatisfaction with ancient autocratic rule, implying the possibility of leading to modern democracy. To reinterpret "governing by doing nothing" from a modern point of view is to ensure the harmony of the whole society by means of "being but not being". Specifically, it includes: first, "people-oriented". Do things according to the will of the people, believe the people, do not disturb the people, and give the people rights for the full development of them. As Lao Tzu said, "the holy man is not fixed, and the heart of the people is the center". Second, "the king does not act and the minister acts". As a leader of the country, he cannot hide everything or control everything. Third, a leader can teach without saying. The cultivation of speech is external cause, which cannot convince the leader fundamentally. Therefore, the best way of leadership is to follow the people's heart and not force others, so as to make the leader go up voluntarily. Fourth, act in accordance with the law and act according to objective laws. Fifth, the executive order of the government cannot be changed overnight, so as to avoid disturbing the people and lose the authority of the state. Sixth, enable the people to live in peace and happiness.

Second, in handling relations with other countries, oppose strong hegemony and hegemonism. In the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu made a clear way for a big country to treat a small country: emphasizes the important role of humility in safeguarding the interests and peace of all countries. In particular, the great powers should be modest and tolerant of small countries, and the big countries should be good neighborly and friendly and promote the formation of a community of human destiny and common interests. The concept of "community of destiny" put forward by General Secretary Xi is the epitome of this new type of international relations and the application of this idea in the new era. It is standing at the height of "Tao", and puts forward a political strategy that transcends nation, state and ideology. This reminds us that if being poor and weak, we can only choose to be alone; if we have the ability to bear some responsibility, we should have the mind of the world, and connect the fate of oneself with the fate of the world.

Again, oppose the martial arts. Wars in human history give us lessons in blood. Disaster caused by war cannot be compensated for by any interests. "The murderer will defeat the funeral place with grief and sorrow". In the face of war, there is no victorious party, and even achieving victory in the form, this victory is at the cost of countless lives, not real victory. Therefore, Lao Tzu opposed the war and emphasized harmony.

5.3 The Ecological Principles of Naturalism

The natural thought of Lao Tzu has an inherent meaning, that is, to criticize the alienation of the man and the nature brought by the progress of civilization and to seek the living way with harmony between human and nature. However, with the progress of science and technology, the ability of modern technology to make human conquest of nature is enhanced. On the one hand, big industry has promoted production efficiency and brought the growth of gross domestic product. On the other hand, it also brings great damage to nature, and the metabolic rate of nature is far slower than the speed of human destruction of nature, thus causing a variety of disasters. In this regard, Tao Te Ching provides us with many useful references. First of all, we should deal with the relationship between human and nature in a natural way. Unlike western anthropocentrism, Lao Tzu emphasizes unity of nature and

human. Man and nature have unity, so it needs to rely on nature to survive and follow the laws of nature. Secondly, it is necessary to treat nature in a natural way. If the laws of nature are not followed and go against nature, it will cause trouble. Thirdly, it is supposed to establish the ecological principles of knowing starting and ending. Human beings are dependent on the nature to exist, so it is impossible to completely escape from the natural world, and the corresponding resources must be obtained from the natural world to ensure the life of the individual. For this reason, it is necessary to set up the ecological concept of knowing starting and ending. Laozi said, "no harm is greater than discontent, so the contentment is always enough". Lao Tzu affirmed people's basic desires, but emphasized to control desires within a certain range and people cannot excessively covet the pleasure of the material world.

To sum up, it is found that Lao Tzu's natural thought system is "grand and profound." From the small structure, the connotation of "nature" is embodied in three levels: natural, reality and conforming. On the whole, it contains three organic components: natural content, realization way and ideal state. Today, these brilliant ideas still play an important role.

6. Conclusion

Lao Tzu's philosophy is a doctrine of "Tao", which combines the international and domestic political environment, the state of life and the living environment of human beings in contemporary China. It determines that the research on the philosophy of the contemporary Laozi must pay attention to the problems of politics, life and ecology, and the best solution to these problems is Lao Tzu's natural thought. Although Lao Tzu's natural thought involves many aspects, in essence, Lao Tzu's natural thought is based on human beings. On this basis, Lao Tzu adopted the dialectical thinking of positive and negative style, and extended the ethical morality to the political and ecological fields, and put forward the political and philosophical ideas of "inaction" and the ecological view of nature. By grasping the nature of Lao Tzu's natural thought, the basic framework of ecology, politics and life science is constructed from the angle of nature, and it plays an active role in the contemporary social practice.

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