Tao in the Philosophy of Pai-sha Tzu (1428–1500)
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I. Introduction

Ch'en Hsien-chang was born on the 21st day of the 10th month, Hsuan-te 3 (November 27, 1428), at Tu-hui village, northern Hsin-hui county, Kuangtung Province.1 Pai-sha Tzu or Pai-sha Hsien-sheng is an honorific name given by his students who studied under him at Pai-sha village, also of Hsin-hui county,2 where he died on the 10th of the second month, Hung-chih 13 (March 10, 1500).3 Pai-sha Tzu is relatively unknown in spite of his eminent achievements. His significance in Chinese philosophy was first recognized by the learned Huang Tsung-hsi (1610–1695), who regarded Pai-sha Tzu and Wang Yang-ming (1472–1529) as the two most outstanding scholars of the Ming dynasty.4

Pai-sha Tzu was a man of high intelligence and moral integrity, which is not a coincidence but a unity of theory and practice, a harmony among harmonies laboriously achieved. One of his most remarkable successes is precisely his unusual ability, as a scholar and as a person, in recognizing and attaining harmony even among seemingly conflicting elements. His prominent student, a close friend of Wang Yang-ming, Chan Jo-shui (1466–1560)5 was of the opinion that what distinguished his master from other prominent Chinese scholars lay in his initiation of the learning of the Natural,6 which is another name for Tao, and will be discussed in the last section of this article.

Tao, the eternal, omnipresent, omnipotent, the creator of heaven, earth, men and the myriad things is a common and ancient concept. As most Chinese philosophers, Pai-sha Tzu did not and could not eliminate human elements in the search of absolute therefore "inhuman", Tao. Thus Tao can not be adequately expounded unless we first carefully discuss Tao's relationships with men. Two reasons in this connection seem to be of crucial importance. First, it is essentially an intellectual conviction, instead of an ethical principle, on the part of Pai-sha Tzu that what Tao is could not be totally understood. Nevertheless, it could be explained by virtue of man's participation in the functioning of Tao, the supreme intelligence, and through his investigation and understanding of the things around him that manifest the nature and powers of Tao.

Second, also an intellectual conviction, Tao has a special form of presence in man known as Tê. By reason of Tê, man is able to acquire knowledge of Tao through himself.

2 I: 15a.
3 I: 18b.
4 HUANG Tsung-hsi, Ming-ju hsueh-an, Taiwan, 1965, p.28. The editor maintained that Pai-sha Tzu contributed to the subtlety (and profundity) and Wang Yang-ming the greatness of Ming thought.
6 I: 5a. This was written in Chia-ch'ing 30, 1551, when CHAN Jo-shui was about 85. Can be considered as his final judgement of his teacher's learning.
The ethical and social (proper relations among men) aspects of Chinese philosophy are not causes but the effects of intellectual speculation and investigation.

In the strictest sense, ever since the Book of Changes, I Ching, all Chinese philosophers simply wrote commentaries of Tao, none could be considered as a true innovator. Pai-sha Tzu was no exception, but his reflections on Tao, not only served as a mirror of his time, but originated a new school in philosophy.

To make a comparative study of Pai-sha Tzu’s philosophy on Tao with those of other prominent thinkers in China would fill a mediumsized book, and should be undertaken by an eminent philosopher. Nor have we here space for an introduction of the almost inexhaustible topic of Tao’s roles in the life of Pai-sha Tzu, however interesting or intellectually stimulating it may be.

II. Tao and T’ien

Three categories of T’ien-tao, which can be loosely translated into "the Way of Heaven", can be found in Pai-sha Tzu’s writings.7 However, they should be understood as different interpretations along a continuum, as Tao by definition has no parts. In the first category, T’ien-tao has no explicit significance other than natural phenomena, i. e., the visible, tangible, external manifestations of physical laws, which are but the natural functioning of Tao. In the second, we find a mixed notion of Tao’s functioning in the universe, and Tao as a personal entity or the supreme being. In the third, Tao is the Supreme Being. Thus T’ien-tao may be understood as Tao, or T’ien in its narrower or broader senses. The three terms, T’ien, Tao, and T’ien-tao are interchangeable except in some places where T’ien signifies heaven, and Tao or T’ien-tao the laws or way of heaven.

(1) The Tao of heaven (heaven as natural phenomena)

In a poem, Pai-sha Tzu wrote: "It remains uncertain whether T’ien-tao will be sunny or rainy."8; in another, "We do not know T’ien-tao would be sunny or rainy. Oft do we see mountain-flowers bloom and wither."9 On another occasion he commented: "Man knows not whether T’ien-tao has equally divided [day and night]. One feels here on earth, night indeed is long."10 In one poem, we read "From the prices of wines in the streets, one knows T’ien-tao."11 Rain or shine, day or night, brightness or dankness, good harvest or bad reveal the ever-functioning and alternating expansion and contraction of Yin and Yang, through which Tao operates. T’ien-tao means the law of Tao or nature.

(2) The Tao of heaven-Heaven (heaven as natural law and the Supreme Being)

Once Pai-sha Tzu pointed out that his young daughter could not comprehend T’ien-tao, as she blamed the chilly west wind for her flowerless garden.12 She felt the cold wind, and knew its natural effect on plants. But what she did not realize was that the wind was not a separate or isolated natural force or phenomenon but the functioning of the prin-

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7 This is confined to his published work, i. e., Pai-sha Tzu ch’üan-chi, K’ang-hsi 44, 1710, in which no categories of Tien-tao are given.
8 5: 39a. His poems are not only literary works but also ways and instruments of expounding his philosophy. See CHAN Jo-shui’s remark, I: 2a.
10 6: 12a. This is farewell poem. "long" could be psychological rather than physical, which, however, does not take away the philosophical connotation.
11 6: 42b.
12 6: 8a.
principle, which governed all occurrences in the universe, and its effect on plants was only one of the manifestations of the principle, the Tao. In explaining natural phenomena such as the movement of water, birds, sunshine and rain, he saw that T'ien-tao should be fulfilled. To him the cycle of life and death (prosperity and decline etc.) of all forms of life on earth, as well as the change of seasons, signified "T'ien-tao takes its regular courses eternally." But all these imply more than natural phenomena, as he said: "Although the alternating evolution of the Two Extremes is in T'ien-tao, heaven and earth are united in the Mind." T'ien-tao is said to have "sympathy toward man." The idea of T'ien-tao in this context ceased to be confined to the principle or its outward manifestations. It is firstly the principle which operates in man and finds its fulfillment in the Mind. It should not be taken, however, as a subjective or moral aspect of man, but the objective functioning of Tao within man physically and spiritually, as well as myriad things in the universe. Secondly, it is invested with "human sympathy", acts and responds to man in a way analogous to human behavior. Thus T'ien-tao in this connection may be considered as principle-Being.

(3) The Tao of Heaven (Heaven the Supreme Being)

At least in two instances can one detect the obvious contrast between Tao and human feelings and wishes in the writings of Pai-sha Tzu. After cancelling a proposed visit to the mountains because of the illness of a friend, he regretfully suggested that T'ien-tao did not comply with human wishes. On another occasion, at the premature death of a friend, he wrote in a letter: "T'ien-tao treats a good man this way; how would it deal with the nation?" The message is quite clear, — the fates of men and nations apparently unkind or unfair, and certainly contrary to human wishes, also reflect the Way of Heaven, T'ien-tao.

But according to Pai-sha Tzu, human happiness and unhappiness are not solely determined by T'ien-tao. He wrote in plain words to a just and virtuous official temporarily in disgrace that T'ien-tao did not determine the fortune and misfortune of men, and that Li, the principle, was not the reason for his adversity. From his theory of the Mind, it is clear that Jen-yü, human desires or desires of men, the opposite of T'ien-li, the heavenly principle or the principle of Heaven, is the main cause for disorder and disaster. T'ien-tao has its course to run, it's not determined by man," he wrote in a poem that man changes and T'ien-tao does not. It is but logical that the principle does not change according to man's wishes. But it is also clear that there can and should be get-together of T'ien-tao and man, and that man must not impede the course of T'ien-tao.

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13 4: 59b.
14 4: 68a.
15 5: 11a. The Two Extremes: Liang-chi. They function also in the brightness and darkness of heaven.
16 5: 10b.
17 5: 28b.
18 2: 44b.
19 5: 70b.
20 Important passages of the conflict between the Principle of Heaven and human desires can be found in 1: 7a, 5: 83a, 1: 62b, 1: 72a, 2: 23a, 2: 46a. Cf. note 48.
21 4: 27b.
22 5: 9a. "T'ien-tao does not change, while man changes."
23 4: 22b. The text can also be translated as "There can be a getting-together, [of affinity] between T'ien-tao and man." Or "There is a reason for T'ien-tao." Since the word Yüan may signify get-together, affinity or reason.
or run counter to it. Since man changes and *T'ien-tao* does not, it is self-evident that what does not change is the principle of what does change. Disorder or disaster is a result or sign of deviation from the principle. But one's misfortune may or may not be the consequence of one's own personal or individual failure to comply with *T'ien-tao*. Therein the totality of human acts and relations plays a decisive role. The full ramification of the theory, important as it is in Chinese philosophy, cannot be expounded in a short article like this.

In two parallel passages, the terms *T'ien-tao* and *T'ien* denote two different entities: the former a fixed course or law, the latter a person with cognitive faculty and power for judgement. After strongly censoring the mishandling of a local peasant revolt, he wrote: "*T'ien* must have heard their appeal in tears to the government. Earth does not know that those who surrendered are buried alive [by the government]. Disaster and well-being take their natural courses. One should not hold *T'ien-tao* in doubt." In a detailed description of the unmitigated misery of the peasants, he stated: "Why is this *T'ien-tao*?... How can they appeal to *T'ien*?" It is quite apparent that *T'ien-tao* means the eternal law, and *T'ien* the Supreme Being here.

### III. T'ien and Man

According to Pai-sha Tzu, Man is created through the functioning of *T'ai-chi*, the Ultimate One, and also is in possession of its essence. He stated in a poem that *Chen*, the true or original nature, is endowed in man at his birth. This is the basis for his union with *Tao* and his nobility. In another passage, he expressed the idea that Man received the nature of simplicity and goodness from *T'ien* (Heaven); and *Ho* (harmony) resides in his *Sheng* (life or birth). It implies that, what created man, a being noble and capable of union with Heaven, is Heaven itself. Hence the greater possibility and degree of union between *T'ien* and Man, as distinct from that between *T'ien* and other beings.

The term *Tsao-wu*, creation or the creator, in Pai-sha Tzu's writings is usually employed in connection with the creation of man and it has the same faculties as *T'ien*. It inflicts hardships on man, bestows fortune and opportunities, and condemns Man's betrayal of the principles of heaven and earth. The term *Tsao-wu-ché* signifies a stronger connotation of personality and personal feelings. For instance Pai-sha Tzu once wrote, the creator disliked a man – meaning himself, who fell short in the cultiva-

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24 1 : 108a. Literally it is a praise for man's not destroying *T'ien-tao*.
25 5 : 6a. Literally, "Has the wise ever committed acts of injustice against *T'ien-tao*?"
26 5 : 89b.
27 4 : 31ab. Man's limitations for penetrating *Tao*, Cf. Section V, esp. 4) and 5) of this article.
28 1 : 59a, 1 : 27b.
30 Nobility of man: 1 : 59b, 1 : 74a, 2 : 58a, 4 : 10a, 2 : 89a, 4 : 3a, 6 : 98b, 1 : 28a; the main idea being that the basic human physical constitution is not too different from that of animals, what distinguishes man from animals is his Hsin, the Mind, and Hsing, nature, united in a special way with Li, the Principle, and participating in the noble mission of heaven and earth (i.e., life-giving-life-fostering). The myriad things in the universe all receive their Hsing, nature, but they all serve the purpose of man: 4 : 47b, 2 : 87a.
31 1 : 10b. Cf. notes 29.
32 1 : 74a.
33 5 : 53b, 5 : 65a. The image of "child" is employed in both passages, conveying probably the notion of doing harm or inflicting sufferings on men without evil intentions.
34 2 : 52a, 2 : 62a.
35 3 : 8b.
tion of virtues but had acquired an undeserved reputation.\(^{36}\) Man cannot be created without being endowed with the proper nature by the creator,\(^{37}\) but this nature is also said to be given by *T’ien*.\(^{38}\) *T’ien* also causes birth,\(^{39}\) filial piety,\(^{40}\) and actions and reactions.\(^{41}\) It seems that *Tsao-wu* has precisely the same nature and powers as *T’ien*.

In dealing with such events in human life such as fortune and misfortune, longevity and mortality, destinies in political career and literary fame, the term *T’ien-ming* is preferred.\(^{42}\) In a broader sense, *T’ien-ming* is understood as mandate for all things in the universe, but particularly it denotes the union of the Mind with Heaven,\(^{43}\) implying that man is created to be united with Heaven. The identification of *Tsao-wu* with *T’ien* can also be found in the following illustrations: An elderly man was given by Heaven a new-born son, so that his heirless brother could adopt him as his own.\(^{44}\) In another instance, Heaven gave a friend of Pai-sha Tzu’s a worthy son in order to bring honor and glory to his family.\(^{45}\) These convey the message that life-giving or the creation of a man involves a particular purpose, and that Heaven as Being has a will and its action is based on knowledge and judgement, and it is set in motion by *T’ien* as the Creator.

A noteworthy question naturally arises, whether *T’ien*, the Creator and ruler of man, governs exclusively in a dominant or arbitrary manner or with the participation and free consent of men. Pai-sha Tzu was of the opinion that though successes and failures in human life were said to be ordained by *Ming*, mandate (of Heaven),\(^{46}\) nevertheless, it was not entirely true that it was the sole cause.\(^{47}\) Being a Neo-Confucianist, he believed that *Jen-yü*, the desires of man, were responsible for disturbing the right order of *Hsing*, human nature, but men often falsely blame a mandate for it.\(^{48}\) The Principle of Heaven, identical with *Tao* in its attributes, contains no self-destructive elements, since it is eternal. Man through his desires can impede the course, but not nullify the principle of Heaven.\(^{49}\)

It does not follow that a simple act of removing the impediment (human desires) automatically enables a man to be united with the Principle. It rather involves a systematic, elaborate process and diligent and persistent self-cultivation. Human will is the starting point of this long journey. He was of the opinion that the status of an enlightened man, or sagehood, could be achieved through sincere intentions,\(^{50}\) and that union with Heaven be attained by will.\(^{51}\)

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\(^{36}\) 3: 18b.
\(^{37}\) See note 32.
\(^{38}\) See note 31.
\(^{39}\) 1: 11a.
\(^{40}\) 2: 76b, 4: 35a.
\(^{41}\) 4: 73a.
\(^{43}\) 4: 2b, 3a.
\(^{44}\) 6: 26b.
\(^{45}\) 1: 11a.
\(^{46}\) An abridged form of *T’ien-ming*. In common usage it also signifies fortune.
\(^{47}\) 2: 90ab.
\(^{49}\) See note 20. Eternity of *Tao*: 1: 52b-54b, 4: 25a, 4: 75b. Cf. note III.
\(^{50}\) Cf. HUANG Tsung-hsi, *Ming-ju hsüeh-an*, Taiwan, 1965, p.32: Pai-sha Tzu holds that mere admiration for the sages is futile for attaining sagehood; one must do what they did, which implies that the will of becoming a sage involves external acts, not merely an internal act which resembles but not equals an actual, effectual, intention.

\(^{51}\) 1: 26b. The text reads literally "to be Heaven". But there is no indication in Pai-sha Tzu’s teaching that a human being can be ontologically identical with Heaven, whereas it is a main tenet in his philosophy that through *Hsin*, the Mind, a human being can participate in the functioning and/or power of the Principle or Heaven. Reference see 2: 20a-21a and note 60.
No elaborate and systematic exposition of the nature and power of Heaven can be found in Pai-sha Tzu's writings. To him copious materials on Heaven/heaven already existed since ancient times—"The Six Classics are footnotes on Heaven" and commentaries on the Six Classics in existence during Ming dynasty seemed inexhaustible for a man's life-long study. At times, he seemed to suggest the inadequacy or incapability of man's knowledge to grasp the law of Heaven so as to predict the future. But on other occasions, he apparently contradicted the idea. He stated in a poem: "Who can guide and sit calmly in this boat amid waves of thousand miles? How sad that one is ignorant. It is for me not for Heaven to determine..."; and that "The mystery of success and failure, I must foretell. Man knows whether the Mandate of Heaven dictates his departure of stay." More revealingly, he wrote: "Extremely high and bright; nothing is left uncovered [by Heaven]. [Man] seeks it within himself. The handle is in his grip." This remark serves to distinguish Ming from Sung Neo-Confucianism, i.e., between the schools of Hsin, the Mind, and of Hsing, nature. It is typical of Pai-sha Tzu's philosophy on Li (or Tao) and man in two respects. Firstly, men can and should seek Li (or Tao) but he cannot succeed without a laborious, lengthy process of studying and practicing (Li), hence education, in the broadest sense, is paramount in his teachings. Secondly, the Mind of Man is at once the basis and means of attaining Tao and the very "locality" where man and Tao become united. Tao resides in Man, and man through this union, (as distinct from Tao's universal presence in all beings) participates in the attributes and powers of Tao. Therefore, man becomes capable of knowing what is regarded as proper to the knowledge of Heaven.

In short, his contention of human cooperation with Heaven or Tao can be summarized as follows: Heaven creates man with the capacity of union with it, which resides in the Mind. Man cultivates the Mind based on the instructions of the sages, the so-called footnotes of heaven. Man's seeking of Heaven begins and ends in a man's own Mind. Man is active in his self-cultivation, but Heaven plays a prominent role in the completion of the task. As he stated: "It is for man to study and cultivate virtue, but it is up to Heaven to make it a success." The union of Heaven and the Mind transforms the Mind to a state, he declared: "This Mind is Heaven."
Pai-sha Tzu sanctioned prayer and worship, which was another significant aspect of the proper relations between Heaven and men. Heaven may punish or reward. Therefore men may try to appease Heaven’s displeasure such as praying for rain during a draught, which was seen as a punishment for men’s wrong doings. He prayed for the life of his mother when she became sick. But he did not consider his mother’s illness as a sign of judgement, because old age, disease, and death were part of the mandate of Heaven. But it nevertheless could be influenced by man’s good deeds, besides, his mother was a virtuous woman. Hence his actions should be considered as seeking a favor from Heaven. He also offered prayers for his own union with Heaven or Tao. However, examples of worship acknowledging Heaven as the Creator and showing man’s reverence, unmixed with any practical purposes, are not lacking in his writings.

IV. Man and Tao

First we will give a brief account of Pai-sha Tzu’s thought on the human aspect of the omnipresence of Tao. Then the problems of man’s union with Tao in its strictest sense, i.e., sagehood, will be dealt with. Lastly, we will discuss the effects of Tao’s transforming presence in man as distinct from its universal presence in man, especially his elaborate idea of man’s union with Heaven, the Supreme Being. Tao, although usually presented with a highly moral tone, resides in man not only in his intellect and will but also in his physical constitution. For instance he told a friend to look after his bodily functions in accordance with Tao, and advised a friend in adversity to let Tao control his Ching, emotions and sentiments. It goes without saying that spoken and written words, deliberate acts of intellect, will, as well as emotions and sentiments should not deviate from Tao. Human behavior, seen as external expression of will and thoughts, naturally should be in conformity with Tao. Above all in terms of merits, material gains should be excluded from a man’s intentions, as Tao is the only proper object for human motivation and objective.

61 1: 61a. Killing and robbery etc. were referred to.
62 4: 2b. It was suggested in this text that he intended to participate in the creative, transforming functioning of Tao.
63 1: 97ab.
64 2: 59b.
65 Cf. 1: 101b, 2: 48ab, 2: 38a, 1: 105a.
66 Cf. 4: 21b, sage-king Yao’s goodness was understood as having transformed harmful hail into beneficial rain through Huang-t’ien, the ruler of Heaven.
67 Cf. 1: 2b, 4: 76a, 2: 18a, 4: 29b.
68 4: 17b. It is not perfectly clear whether this is a formal prayer or wish, even though every wish of a sage could be a form of prayer, on account of his communication with Heaven which is close and constant.
69 Literally “to worship the blue sky (pai ching-t’ien)”. This should not be understood as the cosmic heaven because: 1) he worshipped it with Ting, a sacrificial vessel normally employed for worship of Heaven; 2) the form or the poem, i.e., seven words in each line, requires a double-word noun for T’ien, Heaven. And in writing poetry an author, a philosopher or not, enjoys greater liberty in employing terms more appealing to the visual sense; 3) in common usage, ching-t’ien signifies what is vast, high and bright (also intellectually bright, thus wise and just). These are also attributes of Heaven.
70 2: 11a.
71 3: 16b.
72 More explicit references: 2: 25a, 1: 5a, 2: 45a, 4: 3b.
73 1: 47a.
74 1: 33b.
Apart from the breadth of *Tao*’s presence in man, its functioning is not constrained by time, thus, as *Tao* by definition is eternal and omnipresent. Filial piety, or ancestor worship is a prime example of human relations that transcend the narrow confines of both time and space. But man’s relationships with other persons or beings should also comply with these characteristics of *Tao*. Sagehood, *Tao* in man, or man’s union with *Tao*, the highest stage of self-cultivation, and the highest virtue in Chinese philosophy naturally manifests *Tao*’s attributes of being unrestrained by time and space. We will return to this point of sagehood in the section on *Tê* later in this article.

Man’s union with *Tao* (Heaven) is not a privilege reserved for the Confucian scholars in Pai-sha Tzu’s teachings. He always maintained the oneness of end or objective and the plurality of means to the end. In his theory, all men are ordained capable of being united with *Tao* through the same nobility and goodness of (human) nature. But with varying degrees of endowments and mandates, the ways and means of reaching the end can hardly be one and the same. His comments on Taoism, explicit or implicit, were rarely negative and condemning. While critical of the Buddhist’s denial of *Li*, the Principle, and the significance of human affairs, he freely conceded certain common ground between Buddhism and Confucianism. While he showed a distinct preference for the way of achieving *Tao* practiced by Yen Tzu (521–490 B. C.), he never denied the validity of other schools of Confucianism. He asserted: "The ways and doors are different, but the *Tao* is one and the same."

He once remarked that an enlightened man should guard against what is contrary to the teachings of the sages. Good names and virtues were the "walls of *Tao*", when broken down nothing within could survive. If *Yi*, righteousness, is upheld, *Tao* would not be rejected. When *Tao* is present, *Ho*, harmony, is preserved. If a scholar is too fond of being different, he will deviate from *Tao*. More revealing was his death-bed instruction: "The *Tao* of Confucius is perfect. Please don’t add legs to it, when you draw a snake." Hence the term the "virtues of the sages" is practically synonymous with "*Tao* in man". The journey to union with *Tao* is long and arduous, but Pai-sha Tzu contends, if one strives to follow the paths of the sages, no destination is too remote. In
another passage he advised that stress should be put on the achievements in self-cultiva-

tion, and not on achieving fame.\(^9^2\) In short, though he recognized different ways to \textit{Tao},

he believed scholars should avoid the pitfalls of being different for difference's sake. The

traditional and well-traveled road is usually the safest.

As Pai-sha Tzu did not leave behind a systematic exposition of the concept of \textit{Te}, a

partial list of its attributes would be helpful. It includes benevolence, filial piety, righteously, self-sacrifice, justice, devotion to \textit{Tao}, not seeking material gains, generous in giving credit to others, establishing schools, skillful management of one's home etc.\(^9^3\) But what he stressed most was helping others to be virtuous and serving one's fellow men, i.e., social rather than individual virtues. Acts of serving one's fellow men should be reciprocal.\(^9^4\)

The emphasis on social virtues reflected the close link between \textit{Tao} and \textit{Te} in his

philosophical system. Only when \textit{Tao} resides in man — when man possesses \textit{Te} — can \textit{Tao}

freely function in human society. Only when \textit{Tao} operates relatively unobstructed, can

man acquire \textit{Te} without great difficulty. \textit{Tao} originates and sustains the principle of

harmony in the universe. All men and things in it are given their proper place in a hierar-

cy of orders with an immense network of interrelations entailing corresponding

privileges, prerogatives, duties, and obligations. Harmony induces smooth functioning

of the system and denotes tranquility, happiness, and life. To help \textit{Tao} function unob-

structed is not simply for the purpose of creating favorable conditions for men's self-im-

provements, but also the overall upholding of universal harmony.

War or any form of human conflict naturally is considered the antithesis of \textit{Tao}, the

smooth functioning of proper relations among all beings in the universe. To take either

\textit{Tao} or war as merely an ethical or moral question would be superficial. Pai-sha Tzu was

untiring in advocating \textit{Hsing-tao},\(^9^5\) which signifies "giving way to \textit{Tao}'s functioning in

the world", or simply "practicing \textit{Tao}" or "acting in \textit{Tao}". Nothing could be successfully

isolated from other beings and their proper relationships.

\begin{itemize}
\item In close relations with all in the universe, the men who are closer to union with \textit{Tao}

\item would be less dependent on others. Though Pai-sha Tzu never elaborated on this point,

\item it can be inferred from such statements as: "A man by keeping himself in \textit{Tao} does not

\item need to ask anyone for assistance,\(^9^6\) or "If one assumes public office or retires, or regu-

\itemlates one's behavior, according to \textit{Tao}, his joy or sorrow will not be dominated by men

\item or things."\(^9^7\)

\item Among the numerous characteristics associated with man's union with \textit{Tao}, two stand

\item out. In an account of Pai-sha Tzu's personal experience, in the beginning, on account of

\item strenuous study, there were intellectual perplexity, emotional strains, and physical suf-

\itemferings. They were all fruitless and in vain, as there was no communication between the

\end{itemize}

\(^9^2\) 3: 5a.

\(^9^3\) 1: 16b, 1: 38a, 1: 60ab, 1: 66a, 1: 72b, 1: 88b, 1: 90b, 1: 1:3a, 2: 35a, 2: 85b–86b, 3: 4a, 4:

\(^9^4\) 25a, 4: 52b, 4: 63b, 5: 80b–81a.

\(^9^4\) 2: 69b–70a, 2: 67b, 4: 24b, 1: 6a, 4: 4b.

\(^9^5\) Human capability of \textit{hsing-tao}: 2: 30a, 6: 36a, 2: 26a. Man's responsibility of \textit{hsing-tao}: 2:

\(^9^6\) 33b, 6: 78a.

\(^9^6\) 2: 46a. It seems to be confined to material help, other form of help is excluded, e.g., teacher

\item is generally expected to help his students spiritually as long as they live; this was fulfilled by Pai-sha

\item Tzu.

\(^9^7\) 3: 10b. This passage seems to suggest that position and all desirable things attached to it are

\item given and can be removed by \textit{Tao}, as the man is through wisdom—an attribute of \textit{Tao}—in a way

\item united with \textit{Tao}.

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Omnipresent and omnipotent, Tao is the creator and the supreme ruler. Tao works in the universe "in innumerable particularities and forms. It is absolutely incomparable and extremely wise. All this is the function of I-yuan, one origination." 

"Tao is extremely formless but it moves; extremely close [to men] yet extremely intelligent." 

"No space is left unoccupied, and there is no time in which it [Li] does not function [on beings]." In this context, we should keep in mind, however, the differences between a being's simplicity in essence and reality, and its complexity in manifestations and powers, what properly exists in the Creator itself, its being and its essence, the being without form, and what is functioning and manifesting in the myriad things.

Tao and men are infinitely different and "extremely close" on account of the intimate relations between the Creator and the created (men), and the latter’s participation in the principle. This is also the basis for the nobility of human beings.

The power of creation is "absolutely incomparable and extremely wise." Through its power, Tao's supreme intelligence is revealed. Human intelligence and capability, given to them at the moment of birth, can be such only in participation with Tao's supreme intelligence. Once created a being needs to be continually renewed, otherwise it would instantly cease to exist. The process of life-giving and life-fostering never ends, and its smooth functioning depends on the principle of harmony. This process may be considered as a reflection of Tao's omnipotence (and omnipresence). From Pai-sha Tzu's writings, one is not certain whether the power of creation is exercised through choice or through necessity.

The power of Tao exists in all places and at all times. Nothing in the past, present, or future can escape its support, influence, or control. Hence every being in the universe, and every detail of human life, simple or complex, weighty or trivial, can be understood by men through the essence and power of Tao and vice versa. The investigation of the myriad things is a surer and more objective way of gaining knowledge about Tao than philosophical speculations. A pure speculative act, being detached from its proper relations with Tao, obstructs or disconnects itself from Tao's penetrating and unifying functions. This is why Pai-sha Tzu instructed his students that to discuss Tao without relating to human affairs or vice-versa was either beyond or short of the target, and that Tao and Li should be properly studied and understood in any time or place.

Thus the distinction between intellectual and moral acts ceases to be, and Tao's omnipresence and omnipotence coalesce. Without omnipresence its omnipotence would be incomplete, and its omnipotence without omnipresence would be nominal or ineffectual.

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114 1: 55b. The passage starts with this sentence: "The Tao of Heaven has absolutely no Mind". This may be understood as the identity of Tao's Mind with its being as a whole. Tao has no parts; but to have a Mind, absolutely considered, is to have a part, and in Tao as such its one attribute is identical with all other attributes, one power with all other powers, and attributes with powers.

115 2: 10a. Shen, intelligent, can also be rendered into "inconceivably intelligent". Thus although Tao is close to man, man can hardly penetrate it but vice-versa is true. Cf. 5: 72a in which it is stated that Tao is formless and superior to material force, while man is material; and 1: 54ab, "A thing is restricted to its form, but Tao penetrates things."


118 Cf. note 44. The question of the necessity of creation is further discussed under Section VI, point 6.

119 2: 36b. Cf. note 81.

One more word has to be said about the omnipotence of Tao. Since Tao is eternal, it cannot cease to be. Tao as the creator cannot create an end to itself. It cannot change itself and create a new nature or essence for itself. These "impossibilities" exist in logic because the contrary would negate the concepts of infinity and eternity. One should not confuse these "impossibilities" with disability or incapacity which signifies limitation to its capacity or power. There is no such thing as the disability of Tao, as there is no limit to its power. For a created being, however, its disability is the cause of the "impossibilities" in its performances, achievements, cognition, or consciousness. To every logical possibility there is a corresponding impossibility which is not identical with disability of Tao, though every logical possibility is identical with an ability of Tao. Tao can be said to be all-powerful also because it is the source and Principle of all created powers.

A significant corollary of Tao's omnipotence is its goodness. Its essential goodness (goodness of essence) has been implicitly proved on the sections of its attributes. Tao is absolutely good on ground of its perfection, in the sense that nothing can be added to it for its perfection. As to Tao's moral goodness, Pai-sha Tzu is quite affirmative, a point has been discussed (though not always explicitly) in sections II, III, IV. It suffices here to emphasize that among all its "virtues", the creation of life (and its sustenance) is the paramount one, the highest norm and principle of all virtues. Its foremost importance is not only what is set forth in Chinese philosophy but is evident in social, political, and economic affairs throughout Chinese history.121

A second corollary is Tao's greatness. He wrote: "Tao is said to be extremely great; heaven and earth are also said to be extremely great. But Tao is the cause and principle of heaven and earth. In Tao, heaven and earth are but a piece of grain in a huge granary, or a spoonful of water in an ocean" ... "What alone is extremely great is Tao."122 In this text, besides demonstrating Tao's immense creative power, Pai-sha Tzu stresses Tao's infinity, its uniqueness, and the cause-effect relationships between the infinite, unique and the finite beings.

(6) "The Natural". Tao's Naturalness. That he gave the seemingly mystical but actually logical name, the Natural, to Tao is understandable. Though we have no record of his detailed instructions, its basic concepts may be deductively summarized here:

(a) It is what it is. It is that which exists naturally in the infinite time and space. There can be no explanation of its coming into being. It is unique. It is the first being.

(b) It is what eternally is, hence absolutely is. It receives no principle from without, can be only predicated by itself. It is unique. It is the first principle and cause.

(c) It is that which is by itself, through itself, in itself essentially, supremely, uniquely, infinitely and eternally that which is.

Wether Pai-sha Tzu, a Confucianist and Neo-Confucianist, was inspired by Lao Tzu in his tenet, "Tao models after the Natural";123 one can not be certain. However, Tao may be considered as the nature of the Natural, the being of the Being, the essence which models after itself. Tao could be named the Natural, because it is simply another

121 Cf. note 93. Relevant materials are almost identical with Chinese bibliography on humanities. An index or a source-book on this theme seems non-existent. From Sung through Ming periods, however, this concept received greater attention, probably under the influence of Buddhism.

122 1: 52b. Its greatness in relation to other beings: 1: 52b–54b.

123 Lao Tzu chapter 25.
name for "the inexplicable", i.e., the "unnameable". As a matter of fact all the foregoing points, i.e., the attributes of Tao or the Natural, serve as plain evidence of man's inadequacy in understanding and describing or defining Tao.

In naming Tao the Natural, one implicitly acknowledges all the attributes of Tao in totality. The name Natural can be seen as the acme of all its names, Tao, T'ien, Tsao-wu, Li, etc. We know what we know about Tao not by not knowing what Tao is. Not to know what Tao, or the Natural, is would contradict the existence of participated intelligence of man in the Intelligence.

VI. A Concluding Account

Because of the lack of sufficient and systematic accounts on Tao in Pai-sha Tzu's writings or those of his disciples, to present an analytical study would be pretentious, if not totally impossible. Nevertheless, certain points can be drawn from them, and we hope they would cover the essentials of his philosophy on Tao.

(1) The Names of Tao

Strictly considered, Tao as the being without interior and exterior parts, beginning and end, could have no more than one name, if it is nameable. The names Tao (the Way), T'ien (Heaven), Tsao-wu (the Creator), Li (the Principle), Tzu-juan (the Natural), etc., are used for human speculation and hopefully comprehension. There seems to be no steadfast rules in employing them in Pai-sha Tzu's writings. Generally Heaven is the designation for Tao as the person, the supreme ruler of all beings. It possesses will and intellect, giving life to all in the universe, governing with benevolence and justice in every detail of the lives of all the beings by reason of which man should offer worship and prayer. The Creator is Tao as the life-giver and life-sustainer. It shows a strong character when it is seen more as a ruler than life-giver and life-sustainer. The name Principle has similar attributes and meanings and is interchangeable with Tao as the eternal law, the sum total of physical and moral laws. In this respect he is quite traditional as most scholars since Sung dynasty. Tao was used occasionally, partially and implicitly as a person, while Li in all cases as the Principle or the natural law. Usually Tao as well as Li may be used to designate the nature and power of Heaven, hence the terms T'ien-tao and T'ien-li. The term Natural is the philosophical and the all encompassing definition of Tao employed by Pai-sha Tzu.

(2) The Personal and Human Characters of Tao

Tao as a person, in the philosophy of Pai-sha Tzu, as distinct from its functioning in the universe in the form of universal physical laws has two important aspects. Firstly, as discussed previously it has intellect, will, mandate for man etc. It may be pleased or displeased. Man can communicate with it through worship, prayer, etc. Secondly, Man's prolonged, strenuous struggle for union with Tao, and the rare phenomenon of man's

124 See Sections II and III of this article. The tenet of the philosopher that Tao as Harmony giving harmony to all beings is not to be dealt with, because the data are copious but not sufficiently plain, thus a disproportionately large space is required for an analytical account which can hardly be contained in this article.

125 See Section III. Cf. note 35 for its character of life-giver-maintainer as ruler, i.e., a judge for man's acts of ingratitude against the life-giver-maintainer.

126 Tao as a person, see notes 76–78, 86, 88, 96, 97 and Section V.

being in union with *Tao* suggest plainly the difference between man's union with *Tao* in its functioning, and the union of man's intellect and will with *Tao* as a person. The union with *Tao* the person, the master, alone enables man to be enlightened with the knowledge of *Tao*, and to control one's daily life like commanding a horse with bit and bridle.\(^{128}\) This does not mean, however, a man can personally be one with *Tao*. It signifies only that a man's (sage's) will and intellect are with those of the *Tao* as a person, and thus becomes morally the one and the same. It takes place in *Hsin*, the Mind, and not in *Hsing*, the nature, which lacks the connotation of person.

We call them human characters not because they stem from human personality or nature, but because they are recognized by men as similar to human characters created by *Tao*. The relationship between the creator and men serves to prove their origin. Man has special dignity among the creatures precisely because the similarity, -- closer participation in and with Heaven. As a result, man possesses self-consciousness, will, intellect, and the capacity of giving and fostering life in its broader sense.

(3) The Ethical Character of *Tao*

Although the problem of ethics is a universal one, and is treated virtually by all philosophers and scholars in China, Pai-sha Tzu's special emphasis on this deserves a brief discussion here. Foreign Sinologists may well get the impression that Chinese thinkers are moralists rather than philosophers, for they have greater interests and aptitudes for ethics than metaphysics or philosophy in general. We must point out that this emphasis or aptitude has its deeply rooted origin in the long tradition of Confucianism and, more significant, in its speculation on the nature of *Tao* itself, i.e., a form of metaphysics. Man cannot escape the omnipotent and omnipresent power of *Tao*'s functioning, nor can he evade the question of *Tê* and *Tao*'s essence. There is no real distinction between *Tao*'s physical and moral nature. For man, his understanding of the moral character of *Tao* is the result of his intellectual approach to *Tao* not vice-versa.

Beside the fact that men approach *Tê* through the investigation of *Tao* itself, it is often considered as one aspect of *Tao*. Together with *Tao*, it dominates all aspects of human life. The concept of *Tao*, especially its ethical aspect is often expressed in poetry. We can find no direct evidence of his deliberately making poetry a special forum for moral teaching, nor placing moral goodness above beauty in his poems. He did so simply in accord with *Tao*, the Natural,\(^{129}\) if and when, then and there, it was natural to expound moral goodness or *Tao* in poetry, then it was done. In any writing, moral teaching or otherwise, if "no trace of artificiality can be found, and it is like what is spontaneously written, it would be naturally fine".\(^{130}\) Moral precepts if expressed naturally, in whatever form, are edifying, in poetry, exquisite.

The great space devoted to *Tao* as moral principle in Pai-sha Tzu's writings is due to that through it, man may have greater understanding and fuller participation in *Tao*'s other attributes, that is, the objectives for both personal fulfillment and social order and peace.

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\(^{128}\) See notes 97–99. The Mind (*Hsin*) is the master of man: 3: 1a.

\(^{129}\) It means also to be in accord with *Li*, the Principle, and sum total of the physical and moral laws in the universe, not restricted to ethical ones.

\(^{130}\) 2: 35b, Cf. 2: 44a, about a defect in literature considered by the philosopher, i.e., un-naturalness or artificiality.
(4) The Social and Political Character of Tao

Since Te is synonymous with doing good (to others), it would be impossible to deprive Tao logically of its social and political character or man of his political and social obligations. Pai-sha Tzu is traditional in his belief that individual self-cultivation has two objectives, – personal sagehood and the renewal of the world. Thus Tao functions from man’s internal, individual will to universal peace, from theory to practice, from academic study to social and political action. The simplicity of Tao requires simultaneous presence and operation of all its "natures", which are one in reality but several in human speculation. Their omnipotence and omnipresence actuate, facilitate, expand, and stabilize their operations or functions.

The close ties between scholarship and career in politics are central both to China’s heritage and Pai-sha Tzu’s philosophy. They should be examined in the light of the attributes of Tao, lest they escape the attentions of a modern reader. The life-giving and life-fostering nature, an essential point in Chinese philosophy, is considered by Pai-sha Tzu as the basis and principle of the existence of all beings as well as the criterion and norm for ethical doctrines. Neglecting it, all aspects of Chinese culture could only be understood in the most technical or in a superficial way. Parents and kings as heads of the families and the country "give" and "foster" lives of offspring and subjects, analogous ot the functioning of the principle of Tao in men’s lives or Life. It is mainly through this spirit, or law of Heaven-Tao, that families, societies, countries and the world function in the proper order in social and political spheres. Thus Tao presents in human affairs not only through its omnipresence and omnipotence but in the fulfillment of the law of life-giving and life-fostering.

(5) The Essential Character of Tao

On account of the data, full justice cannot be done to Pai-sha Tzu’s philosophy on the essential quality of Tao. In his teachings Tao is basically a spiritual (formless, without activity and tranquility, beginning and end), infinite (extremely great, without beginning and end, eternal), personal (mandate for men, may be appealed to through worship, prayer etc.) being, in other words, a spiritual being which is an aspect of the infinite being. Thus the most essential character of Tao is infinity, which determines the infinite differences between itself and the created beings. Hence it must be considered as an essential quality of Tao. As the life-giving and life-fostering powers of Heaven and Tao pertain to its unceasing nature, creation must be one of its functions and handiwork.

From the fragmentary writings of Pai-sha Tzu, it is unclear whether creation is an essential part of Tao. It could be argued either way. In this context, one must differentiate between creation as a possibility or capability, and as an act and a fact. By nature, Tao, infinite, omnipotent omnipresent etc., has necessarily the possibility and ability or power of creation. But the actual act or fact of creation can hardly be an essential necessity. Without it, Tao does not cease to be Tao, as its most essential nature, infinity, is in no way affected. Nor can the fact of creation add anything to infinity itself. Tao as the

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132 See note 121.
absolute perfection does not need creation to complete its perfection. This demonstrates among others the difference between Tao as it is, – essence, and man’s description or understandings of it is infinitely great.

(6) Two Particular Aspects of Tao

Tao in the philosophy of Pai-sha Tzu in general is not very different from that in traditional Chinese thoughts since the Book of Changes, but in two aspects, he stands out in eminence, though in the strictest sense he is not totally original.

(a) Tao in Man as True Happiness

In Chinese thought, Tao as the universal, eternal principle is well known, but as true happiness, namely the real, perfect, and eternal happiness or the origin and the principle of such happiness is not generally acknowledged. One is not sure whether this happiness is more of a result of intellectual study or of a personal, physical, and spiritual experience. However, intellectually it is logical to consider happiness in Tao as true happiness. This happiness and this one alone can be considered real, perfect, and eternal because of Tao’s perfection and uniqueness, and nothing is more real than the Being that is infinite. In true happiness, we find a union between the absolute truth, Tao, and a relative one, man’s participation in it, between philosophical attributes of Tao’s absolute happiness and its practical effect in man’s life in the form of true happiness.

(b) Tao as Tzu-jan, the Natural

Tao is given the relatively new name by Pai-sha Tzu with it a new emphasis, if not strictly a new (speculative) attribute of Tao. In Chinese literature when the term and the idea of Tzu-jan are employed to describe the existence or phenomena of men and the myriad things, the idea or concept of Tao is generally excluded, namely as a rule the first cause or the creator is not referred to. Tzu-jan is seen as impersonal, universal law residing in all beings. A being exists naturally implies that it has its own cause of existence, apart from which there is no other cause. The causes and principles come to their end, as all things in the universe become so, each with its own cause, not the cause for the existence and passing or extinction of all beings. Pai-sha Tzu on the other hand sees Tzu-jan as the everlasting cause and the creator. He seems to be the first Chinese philosopher who stresses a single cause for the natural existence and activity of all beings by naming it the Natural. It causes all things to be natural. The existence of all beings participates in the Existence, the Natural. The Natural represents the unity between the existence of the eternal Natural and the natural, temporal existence of all beings, between being natural as a state or quality and its origin, the Natural, and between the purely spiritual Natural and the physical, natural phenomena. This is undoubtedly on outstanding contribution of Pai-sha Tzu.