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APPLICATIONS OF THE TAO TE CHING OF LAO TZU TO  
PSYCHOTHERAPY THEORY AND TECHNIQUE

by

Thomas E. Hranilovich

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the  
Faculty of The Graduate College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Education  
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology

Western Michigan University  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
December 1990

APPLICATIONS OF THE TAO TE CHING OF LAO TZU TO  
PSYCHOTHERAPY THEORY AND TECHNIQUE

Thomas E. Hranilovich, Ed.D.

Western Michigan University, 1990

Existing paradigms in psychology are almost exclusively founded upon the hypothetico-deductive scientific tradition. As a consequence, prevalent psychotherapy theories and techniques are also founded upon this tradition. In recent years the realization has been growing, even among its adherents, that the hypothetico-deductive method is not the only avenue to knowledge about the nature of existence. An alternate avenue is provided by the mystic tradition, as exemplified by Zen Buddhism, Hesychasm, Indian and Tibetan Yoga, Sufism, Christian mysticism, Hindu mysticism, Jewish mysticism, and Taoism. This study is an examination of the central beliefs of tao chia, or the Taoist school, and a review of the literature to assess the extent to which these beliefs have been considered as an alternative or an adjunct to the hypothetico-deductive scientific tradition in the development of psychotherapy theory and technique. The focus is on the Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu, the core text of philosophical Taoism, which is examined for elements which are of application to working with clients in psychotherapy. Presented are ways in which the concepts of the Tao Te Ching can be synthesized with the concepts of existing psychotherapy systems to form an integrated psychotherapy system, and also ways in which the concepts of the Tao Te Ching can be used to supplement the concepts of existing psychotherapy

systems. The intent is to stimulate deliverers of mental health services to consider alternate worldviews, and thus alternate psychotherapy paradigms, and to expand their repertoire of techniques for working with clients.

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theory and technique**

**Hranilovich, Thomas E., Ed.D.**

**Western Michigan University, 1990**

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## DEDICATION

To my wife Barb, without whose help and participation not only this dissertation but my whole life would not have been possible.

Thomas E. Hranilovich

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Thomas E. Hranilovich

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION.....	11
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	111
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vi
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Problem Background.....	3
Combining Psychological Knowledge With the <u>Tao Te Ching</u> : An Integrated Psychotherapy System.....	15
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	18
Taoism and Psychotherapy.....	18
Taoism and Cyclic Change.....	32
Taoism and Scientific Paradigms.....	34
Taoism and the Self.....	37
Taoism and Organizational Relations.....	38
Taoism in Modern Chinese Psychology.....	38
A Summary of the Literature.....	39
III. THE <u>TAO TE CHING</u> OF LAO TZU: INTERPRETATION, MEANING, AND MYSTICISM.....	41
The Meaning of the Title.....	42
Factors Which Affect Interpretation.....	43
Expressing the Inexpressible: Levels of Meaning in the <u>Tao Te Ching</u> .....	50
The <u>Tao Te Ching</u> : A Summary.....	59

## Table of Contents--Continued

### CHAPTER

Combining Psychological Knowledge With the <u>Tao Te Ching</u> : An Integrated Psychotherapy System.....	60
IV. THE <u>TAO TE CHING</u> CONSIDERED AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY: ITS APPLICATIONS TO PSYCHOTHERAPY THEORY AND TECHNIQUE.....	62
Basic Philosophy: Central Teachings of the <u>Tao Te Ching</u> .....	62
Key Concepts.....	67
Goals of Therapy: Symptom Relief, Personality Restructuring, and Realizing the Absolute.....	104
The Therapeutic Relationship: The Master and the Disciple.....	110
Therapy Techniques: Methods of Symptom Relief, Personality Restructuring, and Realizing the Absolute.....	115
Applications and Contributions: A Summary.....	127
The <u>Tao Te Ching</u> Considered as a Psychological Theory: A Summary.....	137
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	140
APPENDIX: A Comparison of Representative Psychological Theories.....	145
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	152

## LIST OF FIGURES

1. The Process of Creation According to Traditional Chinese Cosmogony.....	75
2. The <u>T'ai-Chi</u> Circle.....	76

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Western psychology purports to explain the sources of human thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and to enable humanity to attempt to improve the human condition through both preventive and remedial action. Not inappropriately, it has always taken its paradigms from Western sociocultural sources. However, the nature of the present world, with electronic and computer technology resulting in a rapid break-down of barriers between peoples, nations, and cultures, makes such an approach untenable. Western psychologists must broaden their theoretical bases in order to keep pace with changes in their own societies and to continue to be able to offer meaningful suggestions to other societies for the treatment of psychological disturbances. A major source of new ideas for the West are those philosophico-religious systems of the East which have so strongly influenced the civilizations of India, China and Japan: Buddhism, Taoism, and Zen Buddhism. The present work examines the extent to which the Tao Te Ching (Chan, 1963b) of Lao Tzu, the major text of Taoism, has been integrated into the the psychological literature, and presents it as a source of new paradigms about psychotherapy.

For the past several decades psychologists have become increasingly interested in the Tao Te Ching. It has been only recently, however, that this interest has spread beyond a few pioneering individuals. All but

one of the works which have been written to date have been theoretical in nature, which is typical of initial applications of a new source of thought to an existing paradigm. Most of what has been written has included Taoism in a triumvirate of Eastern religions, along with Buddhism and Zen Buddhism. The few studies which concentrated on Taoism alone examined the Tao Te Ching in relation to various systems or concepts of Western psychology. Only two of these studies (Finley, 1981; Knoblauch, 1982) examined Taoism uncritically, rather than comparing it to existing Western psychologies. Neither of these authors fully utilized the rich symbolism and wide use of metaphor for which the Tao Te Ching is especially noted, however. Even so, both authors are to be commended, Finley for having utilized a novel approach in rendering a new translation of the Tao Te Ching which examines its implications for the practice of education and counseling, and Knoblauch for pioneering the application of Taoism to psychotherapy technique.

I believe that the Tao Te Ching contains concepts of value to an understanding of the human condition, and to work designed to prevent or ameliorate psychological distress. I see a need for further research into the Tao Te Ching, certainly to delve further into its meaning, but also to increase the number of psychologists in the West who are exposed to it. In the present work I combine aspects of both Finley's and Knoblauch's works with a deeper analysis of the symbolism, metaphor, and paradox contained in the Tao Te Ching, in an effort to explore its applications to psychotherapy. I analyze the text and explore it for philosophical and psychological ideas relevant to Western psychotherapy theory and technique. I believe that such an approach to the Tao Te



Ching yields information which expands existing conceptualizations about both the nature of human existence and the process of change in psychotherapy.

In the present work I examine Lao Tzu's concepts of: the nature of being; the nature of man; how man interrelates with all that exists, including himself and other men; and the nature of change, including whether and how change can be facilitated. I do this through an analysis of various terms and concepts which are central to the meaning of the text, among them Tao, yin/yang, tsu-ian, wu-wei, p'u, te, sheng-ien, and "Yinism" (Scott, cited in Blakney, 1955). I then analyze these concepts for their applicability to psychotherapy theory and technique, both in terms of integrating a new system of psychotherapy from existing psychotherapy systems and the concepts of the Tao Te Ching, and in terms of applying the concepts of the Tao Te Ching to existing psychotherapy systems.

#### Problem Background

In this section I first consider the philosophical roots of Western psychology in the hypothetico-deductive scientific tradition and briefly compare the three main schools of psychotherapy: the psychoanalytic school, the behaviorist school, and the humanist school. (See the Appendix for a more complete comparison.) I then consider Taoism as both tao chia, or the Taoist school, and tao chiao, or the Taoist religion, and conclude that the former is a theory of mystical knowledge rather than either a philosophy or a religion, whereas the latter is clearly a religion. I finish by introducing the main tasks of the

present work, that of combining existing psychological knowledge with the information contained in the Tao Te Ching to synthesize an integrated psychotherapy system, and that of applying the concepts and techniques of the Tao Te Ching to the techniques of existing psychotherapy systems.

#### Western Scientific Tradition

Science in the West follows a tradition with roots which can be traced to the Greco-Roman philosophers from as early as the Sixth century B.C. (Leahey, 1980). The foundations of this tradition include adherence to beliefs in atomism, materialism, empiricism, and positivism. Atomism, the extreme expression of materialism, determinism, and reductionism, holds that the physical and mental universe is composed of simple, indivisible, and minute particles or atoms. To an atomist, concepts such as mind or free will are illusions which can be reduced to the mechanical functioning of the atoms which make up our physical bodies. Materialism, also called naturalism, holds that physical matter is the only reality and the reality through which all being and processes and phenomena can be explained: the objects of sense perception are taken to be real in their own right and to exist independently of being known or related to mind. Consequently, materialism denies that anything in reality has a supernatural or more-than-natural significance and claims instead that cause-and-effect laws are adequate to account for all phenomena and that teleological conceptions of nature are invalid (Webster's Third New International Dictionary, 1981). Materialism, also known as realism, was a reaction

against idealism, the philosophical view holding that the contents of our minds, i.e., the things and events that we know, are all that there is in experience (Rychlak, 1981). Empiricism holds that all knowledge originates in experience, especially of the senses, and emphasizes the practice or method of relying upon observation, experimentation, or induction rather than upon intuition, speculation, deduction, dialectic, or other rationalistic means in the pursuit of knowledge (Webster's, 1981). Empiricism, the central tenet of the hypothetico-deductive method, is in opposition to rationalism, which holds that psychological knowledge may be arrived at by deduction from a priori concepts or necessary ideas. Positivism holds that theology and metaphysics belong to earlier or imperfect modes of knowledge, whereas positive knowledge is based on natural phenomena and their spatiotemporal properties and invariant relations or upon facts as elaborated and verified by the methods of the empirical sciences (Webster's, 1981).

#### Western Psychological Theories

Western psychological theories find their historic roots in the hypothetico-deductive scientific method. Western psychology is founded largely upon the twin pillars of British Empiricism and Logical Positivism. British Empiricism, a philosophical school of thought associated especially with the British philosophers John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume, emphasizes that all knowledge must be based upon observable things and events (Rychlak, 1981; Webster's, 1981). Logical Positivism subscribes to verifiability as the grounds for judging whether or not a question or issue has meaning: "In essence, if we

cannot name the empirical observations that would help us to solve a problem we raise, then our problem is not a philosophical one, though it may have emotional or psychological significance" (Rychlak, 1981, p. 820).

There are many different psychological theories in the West, but all can trace their roots to one or more of the three main schools of psychological thought: the psychoanalytic school, the behaviorist school, and the humanist school. The psychoanalytic school, the first of the three historically, grew out of Sigmund Freud's efforts to integrate into psychology the major European intellectual movements of his time. Freud was strongly influenced by the efforts of scientists of his day to explain natural phenomena in terms of physics, chemistry, and evolution theory exclusively (Arlow, 1979). Freud believed in determinism. Thus, he held that personality is the product of irrational forces, unconscious motivations, biological and instinctual drives, and certain psychosexual events during the first five years of life (Corey, 1982). He assumed that events in the mind are not random, haphazard, accidental, unrelated phenomena, but rather form a chain of causally related phenomena resulting from antecedent experiences in the life of the individual which, through appropriate methods of investigation, can be connected to these past experiences (Arlow, 1979). Psychoanalysis is a theory of conflict. Intrapsychically, the conflict is between the conscious and the unconscious; socially, it is between humans as biological animals and as social beings (Arlow, 1979; Gilliland, James, Roberts, & Bowman, 1984).

Behaviorism was a reaction against what some saw as the softness of the psychoanalytic school, which posited such constructs as the unconscious and the id, ego, and super ego to explain behavior.

Behaviorism is grounded on a scientific view of human behavior that stresses a systematic and structured approach to therapy (Corey, 1982). It is concerned primarily with observables--antecedent events, behaviors, and consequences (Gilliland et al., 1984). The behaviorist school's major theory is the radical behaviorism of B. F. Skinner. Skinner was chiefly concerned with the question of how behavior can be regulated by the manipulation of rewards (Nordby & Hall, 1974). He viewed most emotional problems as either reactions to overcontrolling, punitive environments or as occurring from a lack of control (Arlow, 1979). Radical behaviorism rules out the possibility of self-determination and holds to a strict environmental view of human nature based upon a stimulus/response model (Corey, 1982).

Humanistic psychology grew in response to both the psychoanalytic and the behavioral schools and their deterministic, reductionistic, and mechanistic views; it emphasizes the complexity of human nature, in reaction against attempts to reduce human behavior to unconscious forces, instincts, irrational drives, or sociocultural conditioning (Corey, 1982). The humanist school's major theory is the person-centered psychology of Carl Rogers. According to Rogers, each person is unique and has the ability to reach his or her full potential. Such ability and potential is seated in an inherent wisdom of the organism which is present from birth. This inherent wisdom is the source of the organismic valuing process, through which the individual is capable of distinguishing what is healthful and growth-producing (actualizing) from what is not (nonactualizing). Also present from birth is the actualizing tendency, an inherent force whose drive is the development of those of

the individual's capabilities which are directed toward the maintenance and enhancement of life (Gilliland et al., 1984). Thus, psychologically well-adjusted people are open to experience, trusting of their organismic self, accepting of their subjectivity as evaluators of their phenomenal experience, and willing to be open to continual change (Rychlak, 1981).

The practice of psychotherapy is a specialty area within psychology. Psychotherapy is a process in which a person who wishes to relieve symptoms or resolve problems in living or who is seeking personal growth enters into an implicit or explicit contract to interact in a prescribed way with a psychotherapist (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 1984). It is the treatment of mental or emotional disorder or maladjustment by psychological means especially involving verbal communications, as in psychoanalysis, nondirective psychotherapy, reeducation, hypnosis, or prestige suggestion; it encompasses any alteration in an individual's interpersonal environment, relationships, or life situation brought about especially by a qualified therapist and intended to have the effect of alleviating symptoms of mental or emotional disturbance (Webster's, 1981).

The focus of the present work is upon the integration of the teachings of the Tao Te Ching with psychotherapy theory and technique. In Chapter IV, following the model created by Corey (1982), I examine the Tao Te Ching as if it were a psychological theory and compare it to each of the three major schools of psychological thought as a psychotherapy system, focusing upon its basic philosophy, key concepts, goals of therapy, conception of the therapeutic relationship, therapy techniques, and applications and contributions. I will now examine Taoism as it is

expressed in the Tao Te Ching, and will introduce the concept of integrating the teachings of the Tao Te Ching with psychotherapy theory and technique.

### Taoism

At the same time as the Greek philosophers began their rise in the West, the roots of Taoism were born in China. Taoism is a Chinese system of thought the founding of which is traditionally attributed to Lao Tzu in the Sixth century B.C. and which taught conformity to Tao by nonconfrontative action and retirement from society to achieve a pristine simplicity (Webster's, 1981).

### Taoism: Philosophy or Religion?

In China Taoism is considered to be a way, a term which means both the principle that governs all things and the practices that an individual should follow to be in accord with this principle. Taoism began as tao chia, the school of the Way (Izutsu, 1968) or the Taoist school (Chan, 1963b), or tao tê chia, the school of the Way and Virtue (Izutsu, 1968). Tao chia is also referred to as philosophical Taoism (Chan, 1963b; Izutsu, 1968). Taoistic elements were later combined with native Chinese religions to form a syncretistic religion, tao chiao, the teaching of Tao (Izutsu, 1968) or the Taoist religion (Chan, 1963b), which was greatly concerned with obtaining longevity and immortality often by magical or alchemical means (Webster's, 1981). As Chan (1963b) stated, "the Taoist religion and Taoist philosophy are entirely different things, called by different names in Chinese. ... Unfortunately, they are

both called Taoism in the West, thus confusing the two and giving rise to wrong interpretations of Taoist philosophy" (p. 26). The term Taoism denotes not a single, simple phenomenon, but rather a whole series of doctrines, ranging from pure speculative philosophy to arcane sexual practices and alchemy in the service of a search for immortality.

Despite the fact that it is referred to as philosophical Taoism, tao chia is not a philosophy as this term is defined in the West. Philosophy is the search for the underlying causes and principles of reality through logical reasoning rather than factual observation (Webster's, 1981). Tao chia can be more accurately described as a theory of mystical knowledge (Webster's, 1981), since at its core is the belief that direct knowledge of ultimate reality is attainable through immediate intuition, insight, or illumination in a way differing from ordinary sense perception or logical reasoning. By contrast, tao chia is a religion (Webster's, 1981), since it encompasses the personal commitment to and serving of a god or gods with worshipful devotion, conduct in accord with divine commands especially as found in accepted sacred writings or declared by authoritative teachers, a way of life recognized as incumbent on true believers, and the relating of oneself to an organized body of believers. Thus tao chia, the Taoist school, is neither a philosophy nor a religion, but rather a theory of mystical knowledge, the aim of which is direct apprehension of ultimate reality.

It is beyond the scope of the present work to address the entire range of this complex topic. I will restrict myself to tao chia only, and, following Welch (1965), when using the term Taoism or Taoist will be referring to the doctrines of the Tao Te Ching alone, and not to



those of Chuang Tzu or other writers. Although the present work will address only tao chia, and only as it is represented in the Tao Te Ching, a brief explication will be given below of both tao chia and tao chiao to clarify the distinctions between the two.

#### Tao Chia: The Taoist School

To quote Van Over (1973), "In its highest manifestation, philosophical Taoism presents a complex conceptualization of the individual and the world based upon an intense identification with nature" (p. 12). Tao chia refers to several thinkers and their schools who claim Lao Tzu as their founder or who were considered to have taken the Tao Te Ching as their main inspiration (Izutsu, 1968). Tao chia was historically far from being a unified school, but rather was comprised of a divergent group of thinkers and their followers. The principal school, however, was that of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu. Tao chia was further subdivided by Creel (1970) into contemplative Taoism and purposive Taoism. The former, he said, is concerned with noncontention, selflessness, and inner strength attained through union with Tao; the latter is concerned with these things as means to power and control.

According to Chan (1963b) and Creel (1970), Chinese philosophies grew out of the deplorable conditions of their times. Taoism in particular arose in opposition to existing practices and systems, especially those of the Legalists, and offered a new way of life and government, making Taoism "the philosophy of the minority and the suppressed" (Chan, 1963b, p. 6). Lao Tzu launched attacks on the political institutions and social mores of his times. As a result,

secret societies have revolted against oppressive rulers in the name of Taoism at various times in Chinese history.

Lao Tzu. There is a great deal of controversy as to whether or not Lao Tzu was a real person, and if he was, whether or not he wrote the Tao Te Ching. Legend holds that "his mother dreamed of a falling star entering her bosom and later became pregnant--a pregnancy which lasted for over 80 years! Finally, from her left side, her baby came out--an old man with snow-white hair" (Wei, 1982, p. 2). The Chinese characters for Lao Tzu's name mean, literally, "Old, Ancient, or Venerable" (Lao), and "Sir, Master, or Worthy One" (Tzu) or also "Boy or Son" (Tzu), giving the meanings "Venerable Master," honoring Lao Tzu's wisdom, or "Old Boy," honoring the peculiar conditions of his birth. Lao Tzu may also have been known as Li Erh (from the Li or "Plum" clan, and given the name Erh or "Ear" because he had long ears, a sign of intelligence and wisdom), or as Lao Tan ("the venerable Long-Lobed," big lobes being considered a mark of virtue). Lao Tzu is said to have been born in 604 B.C. (Medhurst, 1972, p. 16) or in 570 B.C. (Bahm, 1958, p. 72) or 571 B.C. (Yutang, 1948, p. 8). He is said to have been the Custodian of the Imperial Archives for the House of Chou, to have become disenchanted with the decadence of Court life, and to have left the capital to travel into the Western Desert to become a recluse. At the frontier, an official, Yin Hsi, recognized Lao Tzu as a sage and asked him to write down his learnings before departing into seclusion. The text which he produced was, in the ancient Chinese fashion, originally named the Lao Tzu after its author. The title Tao Te Ching, which I

will use to reduce confusion between the text and its author, first appeared in the second century B.C. Although it will perhaps never be definitively known whether there was a real person named Lao Tzu who wrote the Tao Te Ching, it cannot be denied that the text has had a tremendous impact on Chinese culture, politics, religion, and government, and that it contains many profound comments on the nature of existence and the conflicts of human living which are just as relevant now as they were when the text was first written.

For ease of reference in the present work all quotations from the Tao Te Ching, unless otherwise specified, are taken from Chan (1963b), which is generally recognized as being both historically accurate and linguistically close to the original text (Creel, 1970; Girardot, 1983; Izutsu, 1968). Following Chan (1963b) I employ the older traditional Wade-Giles system of Romanization for Chinese terms.

Chuang Tzu. Chuang Tzu, or "Master Chuang," born Chuang Chou, is alleged to have come from what is now Honan province and to have lived in the fourth century B.C. (Kaltenmark, 1969). Chan (1963b) believed Chuang Tzu to have been a historical person, unlike Lao Tzu, whom he took to be legendary or semi-legendary. Chuang Tzu wrote a treatise, the Chuang Tzu (Feng & English, 1974), named in the ancient Chinese fashion after him, part of which represents his own thoughts and ideas, with the remainder being an interpolation by others.

The Chuang Tzu is considered by some to be superior to the Tao Te Ching in its presentation of Taoism. Chan (1963b), for example, stated that "in every aspect Chuang Tzu carried Taoism to a higher stage of

development" than Lao Tzu (p. 19). He added, "It can readily be seen that the arena of Chuang Tzu's philosophy is much greater than that of Lao Tzu" (p. 21). While eventually it would be fruitful to expand the consideration of Taoism's applications to psychotherapy to include the writings of Chuang Tzu, at this early stage it would be best to confine such a task to the primary, core text of Taoism: the Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu.

#### Tao Chiao: Religious Taoism

Religious Taoism, or tao chiao, according to Chan (1963b), refers to the practices of divination, astrology, faith healing, witchcraft, meditation, dietary techniques, medicine, breathing exercises, bathing--including sun bathing, yoga, sexual techniques, and alchemy, all directed to the search for the preservation of life and for immortality.

In about 150 A.D. a rebel named Chiang Ling, who later became known as Chang Tao-ling, a practitioner of faith healing and magic, attracted a large group of followers and established a semi-independent state within China. He charged five bushels of rice for membership, so the movement became known as the "Way of Five Bushels of Rice." His grandson, Chang Lu, spread the movement. Both advocated prohibition, gave away food and practiced other charities, encouraged moral deeds, especially filial piety, prescribed repentance, meditation, and the use of charms to heal illness, exhorted people to honor Lao Tzu, and taught novices to read the Tao Te Ching (Chan, 1963b). Alchemy, medicine, and the pill for immortality eventually failed of their promise, and so Taoist priests

concentrated their efforts on seeking longevity through physical health and spiritual tranquility.

### A Summary

Taoism is a complex system of thought with roots in ancient China which developed into both tao chia, or the Taoist school, and tao chiao, or the Taoist religion. For purposes of the present work the term Taoism shall be considered to mean tao chia, or the Taoist school, as represented in the Tao Te Ching. Taoism aims at conformity to Tao, or an intense identification with ultimate reality, through nonconfrontative action and a life of pristine simplicity. It is neither a philosophy nor a religion, but rather a theory of mystical knowledge. Since Taoism is a Chinese system of thought, it does not share the basic beliefs of the hypothetico-deductive scientific tradition, and thus offers a system of thinking about and operating within reality which is not available through this tradition. The present work examines the Tao Te Ching as a yet untapped source of information with application to psychotherapy theory and technique.

### Combining Psychological Knowledge With the Tao Te Ching: An Integrated Psychotherapy System

Existing psychotherapy systems have been derived from schools of psychological thought based upon the hypothetico-deductive scientific tradition. The limitations of the hypothetico-deductive scientific tradition are the limitations of these psychotherapy systems. In the present work, in an effort to increase the applicability, effectiveness

and efficiency of psychotherapy, I will consider the concepts of the Tao Te Ching in their psychological meanings and examine ways in which these concepts can be applied to psychotherapy. To this end I will first review the literature for existing applications of the Tao Te Ching to psychology and then examine the concepts of the Tao Te Ching for the etymological derivations of their ideographs, the meanings they carry in the Tao Te Ching, and their psychological meanings. I will then consider these concepts in terms of their applications to psychotherapy theory and technique.

In the present work I address two tasks: first, I propose a synthesis of the information of the Tao Te Ching with the information of existing psychotherapy systems to form an integrated system of psychotherapy; and second, I propose applications of the concepts and techniques of the Tao Te Ching to existing psychotherapy systems. The former allows me to expand both the theoretical foundations and technical repertoire of psychotherapy by adding information based upon the worldview of the Tao Te Ching to information based upon the hypothetico-deductive scientific tradition upon which existing psychotherapy systems are founded. The latter allows me to expand the technical armamentarium of existing psychotherapy systems without the necessity of radical alterations in their underlying philosophical foundations.

In the next chapter I examine the literature for ways in which Taoism and the Tao Te Ching have been considered in psychology in the areas of psychotherapy theory and technique, cyclic change, scientific

paradigms, the concept of the Self, and organizational relations, and applications of Taoism to psychology in modern China.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the psychological literature indicates that Taoism has been mentioned most frequently with regard to psychotherapy theory and technique. Applications of Taoism to scientific paradigms and the Taoist concept of polarities or cyclic change have also been examined by a number of authors. Taoism has been discussed in connection with the concept of the Self, organizational relations, and the status of Taoist concepts in modern Chinese psychology. The literature in each of these areas is presented below.

#### Taoism and Psychotherapy

Taoism has been considered in application to psychotherapy by a number of authors. However, it has usually been considered along with Buddhism, Confucianism, and Zen Buddhism, from which it has not been sufficiently differentiated in the past. Nonetheless, each of the authors below has made a significant contribution to the integration of Taoism and psychotherapy.

#### C. G. Jung

Credit for the earliest investigation of Taoism by a Western psychologist goes to C.G. Jung, who examined Eastern religions in general and Taoism in particular as part of his exploration of the many ways



humankind has through the ages attempted to integrate the Self (Jung, 1967, 1968a, 1968b, 1969, 1970, 1976, 1982). Jung's earliest involvement with Taoism may have been when he read the I Ching (Wilhelm, 1950) in the early part of the Twentieth century. His beliefs about the collective unconscious and synchronicity were affected by his studies of this most ancient of texts. Since everything comes from Tao and consists of Tao, seemingly differing only in form, it made sense to Jung that the collective unconscious could be explained through the linkage Tao provided between all things. The concept of synchronicity (Bolen, 1979; Proffoff, 1974), an early-developed but late-promulgated concept of Jung's which held that supposedly coincidental events which are of meaning to one or more of the participants are in fact manifestations of an acausal connecting principle, could also be understood through the use of Tao as the linkage. Both the collective unconscious and synchronicity, Jung believed, were illustrated by the use of the I Ching to foretell events.

Jung later worked with Wilhelm on The Secret of the Golden Flower (Wilhelm, 1931), which he described as "not only a Taoist text of Chinese yoga but also an alchemical tract" (Wilhelm, 1931, p. xiv). One of Jung's interests was in the symbolic meaning of Taoist alchemical studies for the integration of the Self. Jung's interest in Taoist alchemy was spurred by his interest in the alchemical studies of Western Gnostics during the Middle Ages. Although religious Taoism purported to believe in the literal truth of the alchemical formulae supposed to result in elixirs which could bestow immortality, Jung realized the symbolic meaning of the formulae: immortality was truly attained only through

achieving harmony--unity, even--with eternal Tao, or in Jung's terms, through integration of the Self (Blofeld, 1973, 1978). Jung eventually chose "The Way" as his descriptor for the individual's search to integrate the Self, which he described as "the conscious way to union of the opposites" (Moore, 1983, p. 120).

### Alan Watts

Probably the next person to introduce Taoism to the West was Alan Watts who, while he was not a psychologist, certainly wrote with the psychological life of his readers in mind. Even Watts' earliest works (1951, 1957, 1958a, 1958b) contained references to Tao and the Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu, although it was not until just before his death in 1973 that he started to write TAO: The Watercourse Way (Watts, 1975), a book entirely devoted to Taoism as separate from Zen Buddhism. Watts at first emphasized Zen Buddhism. Most Westerners who turn to the East for enlightenment concentrate on Zen Buddhism because it is more widely known, there are more Zen teachers and practitioners to guide neophytes, and, unlike Taoism, Zen presents beginners with a well-established repertoire of techniques with which to pursue enlightenment.

Watts, who held both a master's degree in Theology and a doctorate in Divinity, believed that Western religions interfered with rather than aided the individual's relationship to his God. He felt that our beliefs and cherished preconceptions about the truth blocked the unreserved opening of mind and heart necessary to the accurate perception of reality. He believed instead, as did Lao Tzu, that those that justify themselves do not convince, that to know truth one must get rid of

knowledge, and that nothing is more powerful and creative than emptiness, from which men shrink (Watts, 1951).

Even when writing about Zen Buddhism, Watts could not avoid reference to its Chinese roots. It is interesting that Watts, who early in his career wrote about Zen Buddhism as "the fulfillment of long traditions of Indian and Chinese culture" (1957, p. 3) and who was writing a book on Taoism at the time of his death, said of Taoism:

[It is] generally a pursuit of older men, and especially of men who are retiring from active life in the community. Their retirement from society is a kind of outward symbol of an inward liberation from the bounds of conventional patterns of thought and conduct. For Taoism concerns itself with unconventional knowledge, with the understanding of life directly, instead of in the abstract, linear terms of representational thinking. (1957, p. 10)

Although his initial concern was with the relationship between the individual and God, Watts later came to redefine or expand his focus in light of his readings on Zen Buddhism and Taoism. He became concerned with the relationship between the individual and all that exists, including God (Watts, 1958a). It should be noted that this is a Western framing of an Eastern concern, since to a Taoist "all that exists" and Tao are the same, and the individual in relating to Tao is, in fact, only relating to him- or herself. But, that isn't it either, since to a Taoist there can be no differentiation between the individual and Tao such that one can relate to the other. This paradox is what Watts had in mind when he said that abstract, linear, representational thinking cannot lead to a true perception of reality.

In his thinking about how Taoism applied to the totality of life, Watts anticipated later applications of Taoism to modern physics. As early as 1958, Watts wrote:

I have sometimes said that if we could translate the modern Western theory of relativity into experience, we should have what the Chinese and the Indians call the Absolute--as when they say that everything which happens is the Tao, or that all things are of one "suchness." What they mean is that all things are in relation, and thus that--considered simply by itself--no thing, no event has any reality. (1958b, p. 53)

Fritjof Capra dedicated The Tao of Physics (1983) to Alan Watts, among others. This book introduced the idea that modern particle physics and Eastern mysticism are converging as explanations for the nature of the universe. Another book, by Gary Zukav (1979), stated that "there is nothing but space-time and motion and they, in effect, are the same thing. Here is an exquisite presentation, in completely western terms, of the most fundamental aspect of Taoist and Buddhist philosophies" (p. 179). The psychological implications of this assertion are immense. If there is nothing but space-time and motion, then people do not exist as separate from everything else from which they choose to perceive themselves as separate. The whole of Western psychology is founded, directly or indirectly, upon the subject-object dichotomy, which is the one illusion that Eastern philosophies aim at purging from one's experiencing.

It is in Psychotherapy East and West (1961) that Watts most directly addressed the psychological life of the individual. He saw psychotherapy and ways of liberation, including Taoism, as having two interests in common: first, the transformation of consciousness, of the inner feeling of one's own existence; and second, the release of the individual from forms of conditioning imposed upon him or her by social institutions. He stressed that liberation does not mean the loss or destruction of the ego, but rather seeing through the ego, or surpassing

it. That from which the ego has to be freed are social institutions-- language and logic and their constructs--which modify our perceptions of the world. The aim of Taoism, which I believe should also be the aim of psychotherapy, is the overcoming of the duality of the ego and the world. Life ceases to seem problematic when one understands that the ego is a social fiction. This can be accomplished in psychotherapy by aiding clients to examine their false premises consistently--to the end. Watts felt that, to some extent, the postulates of Existential analysis are more consistent with the ways of liberation than are those of either Freud or Jung. He did admit, however, that Freud and Jung seem in some ways to be wiser than the Existentialists in seeing that death is the goal of life, that nonbeing fulfills being rather than negating it, since each is the condition for the reality of the other. This paradoxical dependency of opposites on each other for their existence is the core of the Taoist yin/yang cycle. The technique of therapy, according to Watts, consists of the application of wu-wei to clients' neurotic assumptions such that the more they hold to them the more they find themselves in a double-bind. To escape from the trap into which they have put themselves, clients can only stop defending themselves against themselves, and in dropping their defenses they cease to identify themselves with their egos. A Taoist would say that the client then becomes one with Tao, since that is all that's left when the ego is surmounted.

### Erich Fromm

Fromm, who is generally considered to have branched off from psychoanalytic theory into social-psychological theory, examined Eastern philosophies and their relation to Western psychology in Psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism (Fromm, 1960). He felt that Eastern religious thought--Taoism and Buddhism and their blending in Zen Buddhism--were important to the West because they had a rationality and realism superior to that of the Western religions, and could see people realistically and objectively and help them to find an answer to the question of their existence. Fromm saw the mystic religions--Taoism and Buddhism in the Far East, Akhenaton's religious revolution in Egypt, the Zoroastrian religion in Persia, the Moses religion in Palestine, and the Quetzalcoatl religion in Mexico--as means by which people could achieve unity on a new level: that unity which can only be arrived at after people have experienced their separateness, after they have gone through the stage of alienation from themselves and from the world, and have been fully born.

### Sheldon Kopp

Trained as a mainstream traditional psychotherapist, Kopp came to incorporate Eastern thinking into his world-view. Kopp used Taoism to present metaphors for what he saw to be essential truths about the therapeutic relationship and the techniques of therapy. He was less concerned with the meaning of Taoism for the conduct of life in general and more concerned with its meaning for the conduct of psychotherapy in

particular. He saw in Taoism the paradoxical approach of the Zen master, Milton Erickson, Jay Haley, and the Judo expert, all of whom help their partners to conquer themselves by teaching them that their strengths are the very weaknesses which limit their ability to achieve their goals (Kopp, 1974). Kopp was Existentialist in his interpretation of Taoism as saying that each person must start out by becoming who he or she is, that it is the striving after those things that are not really our own nature that costs us our happiness (Kopp, 1971). This is not an easy truth to teach or to accept, especially in a world used to logical debate as the way to truth. Figurative language, symbolism, and paradox are vehicles by which such truths can be made available to people in ways that can be absorbed without arousing defenses. The Tao Te Ching is a text the purpose of which is exactly the presentation of such truths, and Kopp drew upon this work for its rich imagery of a world beyond the limitations of ego-bound logical thought, a world in which life can be understood as a totally free and purposeless journey.

#### Carl Rogers

Rogers, like Kopp, spent his life talking like a Taoist, but unlike Kopp, didn't know until the end that he was doing so. In his early works on psychotherapy (1951, 1961) Rogers espoused views very similar to those of the Tao Te Ching: people have an inherent tendency to develop in ways that serve to maintain or promote growth; there should be no dissonance among a person's acting, thinking, and feeling states; experience consists of all the cognitive and affective events within the person that are available or potentially available to awareness; there

should be no difference between a person's real and perceived self; and the touchstone for truth is the organismic satisfaction experienced by the person (Gilliland et al., 1984). At the time that he wrote Psychotherapy East and West (1961) Watts felt that Rogers' approach to therapy exemplified the Taoist approach to life, in that Rogerian therapists trusted in the wisdom of the positive growth potential of their clients to work out the solutions to their own problems, and so concerned themselves solely with helping their clients to clearly and consistently state their problems. As Watts (1961) expressed this:

The therapist himself is therefore "stupid" and "passive" like a Taoist in that he has no theory of what is wrong with his client or what he ought to become in order to be cured. If the client feels that he has a problem, then he has a problem. If he feels that he has no problem, he stops coming for therapy. And the therapist is content in the faith that if the problem is really unsolved, the client will eventually return. This is exactly the attitude of a Taoist sage to any would-be student, but its success would seem to depend on whether the therapist is applying a mechanical technique or whether he is genuinely at peace within himself. (p. 73)

It was only in his last major work before his death, A Way of Being, (1980) that Rogers actually mentioned Taoism, saying that it was first brought to his attention many years ago by Leona Tyler, who pointed out that his thinking and action seemed to bridge Eastern and Western thought. Rogers professed an enjoyment of Buddhism and Zen, but especially of Lao Tzu's works, which he said contain the sort of truth which we have not yet appreciated in our Western culture. His favorite passage from the Tao Te Ching, which actually does encapsulate his theory of psychotherapy surprisingly well, is as follows:



If I keep from meddling with people, they take care of themselves,  
 If I keep from commanding people, they behave themselves,  
 If I keep from preaching at people, they improve themselves,  
 If I keep from imposing on people, they become themselves.  
 (Rogers, 1980, p. 42)

### Ron Kurtz

Ron Kurtz is the founder and director of the Hakomi Institute, where he and his staff train therapists and future trainers in the methods of Hakomi Therapy. Hakomi is a Hopi Indian word meaning "How do you stand in relation to these many realms?" which is their way of saying "Who are you?" The Hakomi Method of Body-Mind Therapy recognizes that mind and body jointly express and reflect the most deeply held beliefs about self and the outside world, and uses this body/mind connection to bring core beliefs to conscious awareness. It gains information about a person's self-image and general way of being in the world from his or her body structure, chronic tension patterns, movement quality, sensations, and impulses.

There are three main foundations to Hakomi: first, the body-centered therapies of the Twentieth century, like Gestalt, Bioenergetics, Reichian work, Rolfing, Feldenkrais, Rogerian Person-Centered Therapy, and Psychomotor Therapy; second, Eastern philosophy and religion, particularly Taoism and Buddhism, but also Yoga and Chinese and Japanese medicine; and third, General Systems Theory and the Twentieth century paradigm shift (Kurtz, 1985a, 1985b). From the body-centered therapies Kurtz derived techniques for working with the body. From Taoism and Buddhism he derived five main principles. From General Systems Theory he derived the view that all living things exist

through interchanges of energy, and that information controls the flow of energy.

The five main principles, which form a set of philosophical concepts which underlie the work and guide all Hakomi therapists, are unity, mindfulness, nonviolence, organicity, and mind/body holism. The unity principle states that the universe is fundamentally a web of relationships in which all aspects and components are inseparable from the whole and do not exist in isolation. This Taoist view contrasts sharply with the atomistic and Newtonian vision of indestructible, indivisible, isolated bits of matter afloat in an otherwise absolutely empty container called "space." The mindfulness principle describes a state of consciousness in which a person attends to present experience, observes present experience without interfering with it, and turns his or her attention inward. This meditative state is used to study the organization of experience. The nonviolence principle, or wu-wei, means going with the grain and staying with what is natural, simple, effective, and easy. Specifically, it means working with rather than against a person's defenses, and emphasizing experience rather than theory, advice, or interpretation. The organicity principle recognizes that living systems are capable of maintaining their own integrity and organization in the face of a changing environment, of repairing themselves, of reproducing themselves, and in some cases of transcending themselves. It asserts a respect for life and, like Rogerian Therapy, a faith in the healing power of the individual. The principle of mind/body holism recognizes that mind and body influence and interact with each other. It advocates working at the mind/body interface, whether from the body

to experiences, memories, and meanings, or from a belief system to its effect on bodily experience.

The major focus of Hakomi Therapy is on what Taoism and Buddhism refer to as the illusion that we are all separate entities. The primary and most destructive illusion is the false distinction between self and other--the me/not me illusion. This gives rise to the many other false dichotomies from which spring the psychological ills that so many people suffer: the shadow/self split, the good/evil split, and the love/hate split, for example. Hakomi Therapy endeavors to repair the split--to help the person become one with Tao again.

#### J. B. Fabry

Fabry (1975) told how American audiences hailed Viktor Frankl as offering a new approach to mental health, while Indian and Japanese audiences informed Frankl that what he was saying were old truths one might find in the ancient Vedas, in Zen, or in the writings of Lao Tzu. In writing of the Eastern roots of Logotherapy, Fabry pointed out that the meaning of Tao contains the pivotal concepts of Logotherapy. First, as Tao is the way of ultimate meaning, Logos is the unreachable Ultimate Meaning or Supra-Meaning about which Frankl wrote. Second, though Tao is ultimately transcendent, it is also immanent, and thus is the way of the universe, the norm, the rhythm, the driving power in all nature, the ordering principle behind all life. This is similar to the noetic dimension in man that stretches toward and thirsts for Logos, and uses its will to meaning to allow the individual to find his place in the principle behind all life. Third, Tao refers to the way people should

order their lives to fit in with the way the universe operates. Tao points the way to practical living, what in Logotherapy is called the meaning of the moment, which every person can find and must respond to if he or she wants to be in tune with the universe and lead a meaningful life. To be in tune with the universe, Taoism advocates wu-wei, or creative quietude, which paradoxically combines supreme activity and supreme relaxation. Logotherapy believes that a person can find meaning in creative activity and in receptivity to experience, but also in surrender to and acceptance of an unchangeable fate.

#### Thomas Hora

Hora (1983) discussed the process whereby one overcomes existential alienation from the awareness of one's true self and attains authenticity. He pointed out that the questions one must deal with in the pursuit of authenticity are: first, "What is the meaning of what seems to be?" and second, "What is what really is?" He used an example from Chuang-Tzu to show that we are not people with egos of our own, minds of our own, and opinions of our own, but that we are manifestations of Tao. The realization of this is the key to authenticity.

#### D. K. Doelger

The work of Doelger (1978) systematically compared Gestalt therapy and the philosophy of Lao Tzu as presented in the Tao Te Ching. The comparisons were based on philosophical Taoism as represented by three recognized translations of the Tao Te Ching, and those Gestalt writings

for which Fritz Perls was sole or primary author. Doelger performed a direct content analysis of information contained in the chapters of the Tao Te Ching and in Perls' writings. The comparison was a means by which to identify and clarify material common to the Tao Te Ching and Gestalt therapy. Doelger (1978) concluded that, although portions of their teachings were dissimilar, the teachings of Perls and Lao Tzu had much in common.

#### D. L. Knoblauch

Knoblauch's (1982) work was unique in approach. An empirical action research design, it focused on the application of Taoism to psychotherapy. Knoblauch applied fundamental precepts of Taoism to the development of a personality theory, derived five practical constructs from the theory, applied the constructs with two psychotherapy clients, and evaluated the results through a case-study analysis. The constructs were: Nowness, or a trust in the here-and-now situation; Not Trying, or the ability to swim with the current; Ego De-emphasis, or an emerging sense of self that is larger than the ego; Guilt Desensitization, or a less judgmental attitude; and Acceptance, or a feeling of letting go. The evaluation indicated that clients experienced positive change in response to application of these Taoist psychotherapy constructs.

## Taoism and Cyclic Change

### C. G. Jung

Jung (1968a) saw Taoism as being relevant to his concepts of the animus and the anima. The Taoist concepts of yin and yang helped Jung to expand upon his use of polarities as part of personality structure and the archetypes, specifically as exemplified by the animus and anima. The alternating, cyclical nature of yin and yang Jung (1982) also found relevant to his concept of the archetypes and their appearances and disappearances from the mental life of the individual.

### Ken Wilber

Ken Wilber (1979) is one of the foremost thinkers in the modern study of consciousness research. He presented a new view of human consciousness and a guide to the types of psychologies and psychotherapies available in both the West and the East. In his discussion of the nature of consciousness, Wilber used the words of Lao Tzu to illustrate how we trap ourselves in our own egos by behaving as if the dualities which we perceive did in fact exist. He pointed out how the Taoist concept of yin and yang allows opposites to exist together, rather than in mutual self-exclusion, as they are perceived to do in the West. In addition, he stressed, the Taoists realized that opposites are mutually self-creating and maintaining. Wilber emphasized that it is these false boundaries between opposites that we create in our minds that separate us from true reality. He claimed that in the East this problem does not arise because the East never took boundaries

seriously, and thus was never separated from Tao. As did Capra (1983) and Zukav (1979), Wilber maintained that everything which exists is simply a different form of a single Energy, and that it's quite beside the point whether we call that Energy Brahman, Tao, God, or just plain Energy.

### Ilza Veith

Ilza Veith presents an unusual combination of qualifications to address the interface of Western psychology with Eastern medicine. She possesses, in addition to a Ph.D., the degree of igaku hakase, or Doctor of Medical Sciences, from the Juntendo University School of Medicine in Japan. Veith mentioned Taoism prominently in her article "Psychiatric Foundations in the Far East" (1978). She pointed out the conclusions drawn by the Chinese from the concept of yin and yang: first, that disease is rarely localized but generally affects the entire human being; and second, that disease is often associated with behavior--i.e., the infringement of a natural law. These two conclusions anticipated modern holistic theory. Veith pointed out that in Chinese philosophical and medical texts the spiritual requirements of Tao were simply life in accord with the laws of nature or, perhaps somewhat more concretely, the fulfillment of the requirements of the regular pattern of changes embodied in the seasons. As the laws of nature are in everything which exists, it is simply necessary for each thing to look within itself to know what to do and when to do it. This is similar to Rogers' approach to psychotherapy, which holds that the client has the solution to his or her own problems, even though he or she may not be aware of this.

### Frank MacHovec

In a paper which compared the contents of several current theories of individual, group, and family therapies to "seed ideas" in ancient Eastern religions and philosophies, Frank MacHovec (1984) traced concepts of Gestalt, existential, psychoanalytic, transactional-analysis, cognitive, and family therapy to ancient Taoist, Zen, Confucian, and Buddhist source materials. MacHovec pointed out the cyclical nature of change presented in Taoist writings, and asserted that this indicated that the ideas of modern psychotherapy are not new after all, having instead arisen from the ashes of these earlier sources.

### Taoism and Scientific Paradigms

Several authors have considered Taoism in relation to the scientific paradigms employed in the West. They have pointed out how science, by its basic beliefs, filters out certain aspects of reality, and how alternate paradigms can expand our ability to operate in the world.

### Abraham Maslow

"Toward a Humanistic Biology" (Maslow, 1969), which is an excerpt from a series of memoranda for the Salk Institute of Biological Studies that were intended to help in the move away from a value-free technologizing toward a humanized philosophy of biology, urged a shift of scientists toward a Taoistic image of man. Maslow proposed a new objectivity for science, a Taoist objectivity, which takes recognition of the fact that the observer is part of the experiment, and that his or



her person is inextricably intertwined with the work that he or she does. Applying wu-wei, Maslow suggests that, far from being a problem, this fact can be utilized to improve science and its ability to understand people, by enlarging the arena of observation to include self-observation on the part of the scientist.

H-M. Chiang

Chiang (1971) investigated the implications of Taoism for modern psychology by contrasting what the author referred to as Taoistic psychology (Taoism, Confucianism, and Zen) and Western psychology along a broad spectrum of psychological issues including learning, motivation, development, cognition, psychotherapy, and practical problems of human control. Comparisons revealed fundamental differences in the premises, research strategies, analogical thinking, and practical applications of the two. The sharpest contrasts appeared between the Taoist approach and Skinnerian neo-behaviorism. The author suggested that the paradigm represented by Taoism has been undervalued in the Western scientific tradition and that its potential significance is grossly underestimated. He further suggested that Taoism can serve Western psychology by providing perspectives, meanings, and a common meeting-ground for the two paradigms, such that a coordination of the two will be likely to enhance rather than diminish the identity of psychology among the family of humanistic sciences.

R.D. Finley

Finley (1981) took a unique approach, generating an original translation of the text of the Tao Te Ching set in blank verse, with a running exegesis of the chapters that sought to relate the text to contemporary issues and contexts. He discussed several principles from the Tao Te Ching that appeared to have potential for resolving certain philosophical issues at the base of social science's nominalist-behaviorist-empiricist-positivist world view. The transcendence of this world view, the author suggested, can be accomplished by the adoption of a radical, unrelenting figure-in-ground subjective starting point. This provides a foundation for several self-validating principles, he maintained, including holism, ontological necessity, and the ontological imperative. The study developed a cosmogony based upon these principles as a holistic alternative to the prevailing images of social science and education. The study concluded with a discussion of some implications for the practice of education and psychology. While the approach taken by this author was a novel and exciting one, his interpretation of the Tao Te Ching and the accompanying exegesis are shallow and superficial, failing to make use of the depth or richness of the figurative language and symbolism contained in the work.

B. M. Colodzin

Colodzin (1983) developed a model of the self by synthesizing systems theory and Chinese Taoism. He reviewed the methods of inquiry of classical Western science and compared them with those utilized by

Taoism. He asserted that both the Taoist and systems theory models acknowledge the inclusion of subjective evidence. He then presented arguments that subjective evidence produces data which are essential to the development of a comprehensive model of the self. The study made a detailed comparison of the fundamentals of systems theory and Taoist thought. It examined the Taoist concepts of chi, the self, and wu-wei in terms of the systems view of the world, and used the systems concepts of boundary, boundary permeability, order through fluctuation, self-organization, and self-transcendence to describe the Taoist approach toward change and transformation in human experience. The systems terms optimization and resiliency and the Taoist term wu-wei were compared as qualitative measures of whole-system functioning and survivability. Colodzin concluded the study with a summary of Taoist and systems principles and their relevance to the model of the open-systems self.

#### Taoism and the Self

##### S. C. Chang

S. C. Chang (1982) is an Oriental by birth and a mental health professional by training. He investigated the concept of the Self as presented in Eastern philosophies, including Taoism. He observed that the key to understanding Taoism is wu-wei, or non-action, which he said means not a literal inaction but rather doing what is most natural or spontaneous. To know Tao is to realize that there is such a principle. To follow Tao is to allow this principle to operate. To become one with

Tao is to discard one's egotistic self, to abolish the "smaller self" so that the "greater self" may emerge.

#### Taoism and Organizational Relations

R. Stensrud & K. Stensrud

Stensrud and Stensrud (1979) applied the precepts of Taoism to organizational human relations. They claimed that Taoism teaches practical strategies by which people can become aware of themselves and their environments to a degree often unsuspected by Westerners, and that this awareness results in more authentic living and more effective relationships with others. The authors stated that a deepened awareness of ourselves as we live in the world and interact with it leads to a feeling of personal power, defined as the ability to blend empathy and assertiveness into a fluid and continually spontaneous openness to the world.

#### Taoism in Modern Chinese Psychology

D. S-F. Dien

Dien (1983) explored the modern Chinese concepts of Big Me and Little Me in light of historical Taoist influences on Chinese culture, and concluded that, in modern Chinese psychology, these terms refer to how the individual self is embedded within the state rather than to the dichotomy between the ego and the Self.

### A Summary of the Literature

In the past few decades there has been increasing mention of Taoism in the psychology literature. However, this has been in conjunction with Buddhism, Confucianism, or Zen Buddhism, or has not been restricted to the Tao Te Ching alone, instead including other Taoist works. Buddhism concerns itself with the salvation of the individual through the transformation of consciousness, Confucianism with group harmony, and Taoism with the rediscovery by the individual of his identification with all that exists. While Taoism shares certain beliefs in common with Buddhism, Confucianism, and Zen Buddhism, it is different enough that it has unique contributions to make to psychotherapy. The Tao Te Ching, the first and most central Taoist text, also deserves special scrutiny among Taoist writings.

Considerable attention has been given to applications of Taoism to psychotherapy, but this has largely been restricted to the concepts of wu-wei, or noninterference, and yin/yang, or cyclic change. There are other Taoist concepts which can contribute to the theory and practice of psychotherapy as well.

Those works which considered Taoism in relation to scientific paradigms failed to consider the different levels of reality addressed in the text, and the significance these have for theory construction and the application of knowledge through technique. All of the works reviewed, in fact, failed to address the symbolism, figurative language, and paradox employed in the text to simultaneously present multiple

messages to the reader, including messages about different levels of reality.

I will now consider the concepts of the Tao Te Ching in their etymological, historical, and psychological meanings, taking into account the multiple levels of meaning in the text and the different levels of reality addressed by the text. Following this I will consider the Tao Te Ching as if it were a psychological theory, relating these concepts to psychotherapy theory and technique both through a synthesis of existing psychological knowledge and Taoist concepts into an integrated psychotherapy system and through the application of these concepts to existing psychotherapy systems.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE TAO TE CHING OF LAO TZU: INTERPRETATION, MEANING, AND MYSTICISM

The Tao Te Ching presents the main tenets of Taoism. It is an anthology of "Taoist sayings, stories, and anecdotes" (Smith, 1980, p. 7) which is "designed to exert a practical impact on political and social theory" (p. 13). It is commonly held to consist of 81 rhyming verses, sometimes referred to as chapters, amounting to slightly over 5,000 characters of the Chinese language. Recently, doubt has arisen as to whether a single person or a group of people wrote the Tao Te Ching, and as to whether it was written all at once or over a period of years or perhaps even centuries. Waley (1958) did not believe that it was known, or ever could be known, who wrote it. Chan (1963b) devoted 32 pages to discussing various views as to the historicity of the text and its purported author, and concluded that the book embodies the basic ideas of Lao Tzu, but took a long time to become a written text. Welch (1965) thought that, except for a few interpolations, the book was written by one man, but didn't think that anything was really known about this man. Kaltenmark (1969) concluded that it was not known who wrote the book, or when, but was certain that it was, to a significant extent, a composite. Creel (1970) believed that the work was a collection of writings and sayings made by different persons in different times, rather than the work of one person. Wei (1982) held that Lao Tzu was an elder contemporary of Confucius and was indeed the

author of the Tao Te Ching. Bahm (1958) puts the issue in perspective: "What is important for us today is not who wrote the work but what it says--its profound and penetrating philosophy" (p. 71). For purposes of the present work I will assume that Lao Tzu did exist and that he was the author of the Tao Te Ching.

### The Meaning of the Title

The title of Lao Tzu's work has been translated variously as A Scripture of the Eternal and its Characteristics (Medhurst, 1972, p. 16), The Book of the Way and Its Power (Watts, 1975, p. xxiv), The Tao Virtue Book (Hoff, 1982, p. 4), The Way of Life (Blakney, 1955; Bynner, 1944), The Book of Tao (Yutang, 1948, p. 3), The Scripture of the Way and Its Virtue (Blofeld, 1978, p. 22), The Classic of the Way and Its Virtue (Wei, 1982, p. 4), The Way and Its Power (Blofeld, 1973, p. 23; Waley, 1958), Nature and Intelligence (Bahm, 1958, p. 3), The Book of How Things Happen or Work (Heider, 1985, p. xi), and The Tao of Power (Wing, 1986). Chan (1963b, p. v) maintained the traditional title, Lao Tzu, which he stated was the only title given to the work until the second century B.C. The Chinese characters of the title mean "Way or Path" (Tao), "Virtue or Power" (Te), and "Classic, Text, or Book" (Ching). Literally, then, the book's title can be rendered as "Way-Power-Book." The work is an attempt by Lao Tzu to convey his ideas about how people should conduct their lives so as to be in harmony with all that exists, and thus to be happy and fulfilled.



### Factors Which Affect Interpretation

Interpretation of the Tao Te Ching is strongly affected by certain aspects of the Chinese language and culture, and by the format and wording of the text as selected by the translator or commentator. Each of these factors will now be considered in turn, focusing on how each has contributed to the many meanings attributed to the text throughout the ages.

#### The Chinese Language

For someone whose native language is something other than Chinese, an understanding of Taoism and its concepts through an analysis of the Tao Te Ching can only follow from an understanding of the nature of the written form of the Chinese language and of how it differs from the written form of most other languages. I will restrict myself to considering the differences between Chinese and English. In the alphabetic English language each letter stands for a different sound, and the letters are combined to represent the sounds that are made when a word is spoken. The letters of the alphabet, then, are meaningless in and of themselves as conveyors of information. In the English language, and indeed in all alphabetic languages, meaning is conveyed through words, and not through the letters which comprise the words.

The Chinese language was originally pictographic, but with time has become ideographic. Thus, written Chinese characters do not stand for the sounds of words, but instead are visual representations of the idea of an object or concept. Modern Chinese ideographs are adaptations of

ancient pictographs, and still contain in them the forms of the objects which they represented. Concepts, which have no representation in the real world, and complex objects which did not exist when the original pictographs were created are represented by combinations of ideographs. Written Chinese is thus a representation of the meanings of spoken Chinese, not of its sounds. The Tao Te Ching is Lao Tzu's attempt to convey in symbols, not in words, what was in his mind. Its content is images, concepts, and ideas, not words.

Other difficulties arise in pursuing an understanding of Taoism through the vehicle of the Tao Te Ching. The Chinese language, like almost all languages, has changed considerably in the more than 20 centuries since the Tao Te Ching was written. Ancient written Chinese--and for that matter the modern literary language--had no active or passive voice, no singular or plural, no case, no person, no tense, no mood, and no punctuation (Waley, 1958; Welch, 1965). Every sentence referred as much to the past as to the present. Worse yet, nearly every character could be used as any part of speech. Thus, when translated literally, ancient Chinese is extremely cryptic. According to Watts (1975, p. 10) a literal translation of the beginning line of Chapter 38 is as follows: "Superior virtue not virtue is its being virtue." He translates this as: "Superior virtue is not intentionally virtuous, and this is just why it is virtue." Other translators, however, were not necessarily in agreement:

The man of superior virtue is not (conscious of) his virtue,  
And in this way he really possesses virtue. (Chan, 1963b, p. 167;  
Wang, 249/1979, p. 108)

The man of highest 'power' does not reveal himself as a possessor of 'power';  
Therefore he keeps his 'power'. (Waley, 1958, p. 189)

The man of superior character is not (conscious of his) character,  
Hence he has character. (Yutang, 1948, p. 198)

Superior Power is never Powerful, thus it has Power. (Wing, 1986)

Superior virtue is not virtue-conscious,  
Therefore it has virtue. (Wei, 1982, p. 175)

A man of highest virtue  
Will not display it as his own;  
His virtue then is real. (Blakney, 1955, p. 91)

A man of sure fitness, without making a point of his fitness,  
Stays fit. (Bynner, 1944, p. 49)

Superior energy is non-action, hence it is energy. (Medhurst, 1972, p. 90)

Intelligent control appears as uncontrol or freedom.  
And for that reason it is genuinely intelligent control. (Bahm, 1958, p. 38)

Superior Teh does not reveal its Teh, thereby retaining it.  
(Cheng, 1981, p. 130)

High virtue has no virtue,  
Therefore it's virtuous. (Finley, 1981, p. 121)

A truly good man is not aware of his goodness,  
And is therefore good. (Feng & English, 1972)

As the above translations illustrate, the reader of an English version of the Tao Te Ching is very much dependent upon the translator to provide "the most accurate transmission of the intent of the work" (Wing, 1986, p. 9). Unfortunately, at least as far as the ancient versions of the Tao Te Ching are concerned, most of the existing texts are corrupt, in that copyists sometimes carelessly mixed commentary in with the text, and sometimes deliberately introduced new material to support their own ideas. These problems are not obviated by the use of

a more modern translation, most of which are based upon ancient translations and perpetuate ancient errors. Modern authors are not immune to the flaws of the ancient copyists, either. Blakney (1955), for example, explained his approach to translation as follows:

It is my belief that a finished translation should be free of all traces of the original language, especially when they mar English diction. If parts of the original are obdurately obscure, it is better, it seems to me, to omit them rather than to carry the obscurity over into English. (p. 10)

He was frank about the position into which this placed the reader:

If then the reader of a translation of the Tao Te Ching asks, "Is this really what they meant?", the translator can only reply humbly, "To the best of my knowledge, yes." But he will always be uncertain to some degree, since the original authors are unavailable to check his work. (p. 10)

The difficulties that I faced, and hence that you face, were summarized by Welch (1965):

The Chinese classics are deep waters indeed, and I think that we must recognize at the outset that of all of them the Tao Te Ching is the one least susceptible of a definitive translation. We cannot be certain of what it means. We never will be. While some texts are more corrupt, some more archaic, and some more esoteric, no text--certainly none of comparable importance--so nicely combines vagueness with all these difficulties. (p. 13)

Waley (1958) distinguished between what he called historical translations, or those which set out to discover what a work meant to start with, from scriptural translations, or those which aim only at telling the reader what such a work means to those who use it in the present. He also distinguished literary translations, or those which sacrifice detailed accuracy in order to preserve the beauty of the original work, from philological translations, which emphasize accuracy at the expense of beauty. To make reference to the text easier in the present work, I have chosen the Chan (1963b) translation as the standard

from which to take excerpts. Chan's work is historical and philological, to use Waley's categories, and contains almost no interpolations. In addition, Chan's text is very close to that of Wang (249/1979), which is recognized as the oldest, the first, and the most philosophical of the several hundred extant commentaries (Chan, 1963b; Kaltenmark, 1969; Waley, 1958; Wang, 249/1979). All quotations from the Tao Te Ching in the present text, unless otherwise specified, are from Chan (1963b).

### Chinese Cultural Elements

The Tao Te Ching, like all written works, was a product of its culture. Just as the Chinese language has changed in the more than 20 centuries since the Tao Te Ching was written, so Chinese culture has also changed. Lao Tzu wrote during troubled times. The Chou Dynasty had been pushed out of its capital by barbarians from the northwest. Over the next five centuries the Dynasty gradually decayed, until China became a place of warring states and ruin. Lao Tzu wrote of things which he hoped to influence with his writings: kings, emperors, princes, and dukes, armies and warring states, treasures of jade, and executioners. He addressed government, and attacked the excesses he saw around him every day--warfare, excess taxation, overregulation, and Court decadence, for example. He was a social reformer and advocate of the common people, as well as a philosopher.

Lao Tzu wrote using expressions and illustrations which he felt would be meaningful to his readers. Modern readers, even of Chinese heritage, do not share the common experiences that linked Lao Tzu and his contemporaries. Certain expressions used by Lao Tzu are meaningless

without an understanding of their connotation in the culture of his time. For example, Yutang (1948) pointed out that "the ten thousand things" was an expression used to mean everything that exists; "empty-heart" meant openmindedness or humility; the "mystic female" symbolized the principle of yin; and "heaviness" or "thickness" of character was associated with generosity or honesty.

Finally, a particular problem for the Western reader is the lack of a common Weltanschauung or worldview with the Chinese people, whether ancient or modern. Chinese culture is heavily steeped with the writings of Confucius and Lao Tzu, among others, which has led to a world-view quite different from that in the West. The major obstacle brought to a study of Taoism by a Westerner is his or her cultural history of rationality and materialism. The views propounded by Lao Tzu are so antithetical to these that an extraordinary openmindedness is called for on the part of a Western reader to avoid an out-of-hand rejection of Lao Tzu's beliefs.

As Blakney (1955) so eloquently stated:

I cannot pretend to see the world as Chinese of the third to the sixth centuries before Christ saw it, and I do not believe that any scientific sifting of the facts would enable a person of this century to do so. There will always remain a semantic gulf between them and us, one that must be bridged by adding insight and imagination to considered evidence. (p. 10)

#### Division of the Text Into Sections and Chapters

The Tao Te Ching was traditionally divided into two sections, variously at verses 37, 38, 39, or 40. Chan (1963b) divided the text at chapter 37, but pointed out that the Wang (249/1979) text contained no

such divisions. He commented that in ancient texts the first section was named "Classic of Tao" while the second was named "Classic of Te." Yutang (1948) characterized the first forty chapters as dealing with "the principles of philosophy, the rest with its applications in human problems" (p. 21). Wei (1982) divided the text at Chapter 37 and said the first part dealt with Tao, or that which is undifferentiated, universal, and absolute, while the second dealt with te, or that which is individual, particular, and relative. He acknowledged that the division was highly arbitrary, however. Medhurst (1972) characterized the first part as metaphysical and the second as moral, but admitted that the division was rough and not accurate.

Not all translators, ancient or modern, follow the traditional divisions of the text. Yutang (1948), while recognizing the traditional divisions, employed a new division of the text into seven parts, each containing chapters in numerical order starting with Chapter One: (1) The Character of Tao; (2) The Lessons of Tao; (3) The Imitation of Tao; (4) The Source of Power; (5) The Conduct of Life; (6) The Theory of Government; and (7) Aphorisms. Wing (1986) employed six divisions unrelated to the traditional ones and containing chapters from various parts of the text, not in numerical order: (1) Power in Projection; (2) Power in Leadership; (3) Power in Nature; (4) Power in Awareness; (5) Power in Noninterference; and (6) Power in Organizations.

It is commonly agreed that the text was not originally divided into chapters, but that this occurred later, perhaps in the sixth or seventh century A.D. (Chan, 1963b). There is disagreement both on how many chapters there should be, and on which lines belong in which chapters.

The lack of agreement about how the text should be--or originally was--divided into chapters means that different meanings can be derived simply by changing where a line is placed in the text. More than just where chapters are taken to start and stop, the issue of dividing the text in some cases includes dispute as to which chapters, sometimes widely separate in the text, lines belong in. Chan (1963b) noted that in Chapter 27, for example, Ma Hsü-lun thought that line six was originally the fifth line of Chapter 62 transposed to Chapter 27 by mistake.

#### Interpolations by Translators and Commentators

Interpolations have crept into the text through the ages, such that it is now impossible to say what lines were and were not in the original text. As only one example, Chan (1963b) noted that in Chapter 31 most commentators agree that the last 12 lines, if not the entire chapter, are a mixture of commentary and text. This problem recurs throughout the text. There are even two chapters, numbers 31 and 66, which, since they receive no commentary in the Wang (249/1979) version of the text, are thought not to even belong in the text, but to have been added centuries later by unknown translators or commentators.

#### Expressing the Inexpressible: Levels of Meaning in the Tao Te Ching

The Tao Te Ching, perhaps more than any other work ever written, has been subjected to many and varying interpretations. As Welch (1965) stated, "Such texts were for a variety of reasons fragmentary and ambiguous. They left ample room for manipulation, could be interpreted



literally or figuratively, could in fact within certain limits be made to mean whatever the interpreter desired" (p. 98). As was pointed out above, some of the vagueness of the text for the modern reader is due to the nature of the Chinese language, unfamiliarity with Chinese cultural history, and differences between translators and commentators in choice of format and wording. However, there are other even more important reasons for the vagueness and multi-interpretability of the text.

Lao Tzu was attempting to express what he did not really believe could be expressed: "The Tao that can be told of is not the eternal Tao/The name that can be named is not the eternal name" (Chan, 1963b, p. 97). Creel (1970) described the result as always terse and aphoristic, cryptic at best, and consequently interpretable in various and even contradictory ways. He concluded that few things in the text are stated so plainly as to leave no room for varying interpretations. Welch (1965), in the Foreword to his book, apologized to Lao Tzu for attempting to express unequivocally and directly, using logic and a systematic form, what Lao Tzu himself did not even believe could be put into words. He considered it very hard to decide what the text meant.

Kaltenmark (1969) noted that certain chapters were so obscure and ambiguous that a definitive interpretation was impossible, but went on to posit that this was perhaps intentional, with the level of interpretation varying according to the reader's level of advancement. Welch (1965) also believed that Lao Tzu's doctrines have a different look and a different application at different levels. He described these levels as being like a continuous grade rather than a series of steps,

and warned that it was an error to see the levels as discontinuous and discrete:

There is an illusion of abruptness ... that we must penetrate. This ... may tempt us to divide Lao Tzu's world into two--one hidden, accessible only by trance or analyzing the reports of trance ... and the other, quite separate world we see around us down here. To accept such a demarcation makes the Tao Te Ching impossible to understand. (p. 50)

He believed that Lao Tzu spoke to all levels simultaneously, blending individual development, the ideal social order, and the way of nature into one another: wu-wei, or nonaction, for example, was at the same time part of the way for the individual to achieve enlightenment, a technique for governing, and a characteristic of Tao. Welch also believed that this allowed the reader to take from the text what he wanted and needed, depending on his situation and degree of advancement: "Thus, in writing levels into the Tao Te Ching Lao Tzu did not seek to discourage people from reaching its highest level, but to entice them towards the highest level of which they are capable" (p. 85).

The presence of different levels of meaning in the text is the result of Lao Tzu's attempt to communicate a mystical experience and a world-view based on this experience through the vehicle of an ideographic language. Twenty-five centuries later, there is still dispute over what he intended to say. I will now examine three factors contributing to the existence of these different levels of meaning: (1) Lao Tzu's presentation of a mystical world-view containing different metaphysical levels of meaning; (2) Lao Tzu's use of various literary devices to communicate this world-view; and (3) Lao Tzu's simultaneous address to different audiences.

## Mysticism and Levels of Meaning in the Tao Te Ching

### The Tao Te Ching as a Theory of Mystical Knowledge

There has been continued dispute as to whether or not Lao Tzu intended to present an essentially mystical view of the nature of existence. Chan (1963b) felt that he did not: "There is very little mysticism in Lao Tzu, unless one considers union with Tao as necessarily a mystical experience. ... Every passage of it can be understood in terms of ordinary human experience" (pp. 21 & 22). Izutsu (1968) disagreed, and said "the reality of things as conceived by Lao-Tzû and Chuang Tzû is based on an extraordinary vision obtained in a peculiar kind of mystical experience" (p. 392). Creel (1970) thought that Taoism did involve mysticism according to some definitions of the term, but that since the Taoist conception of man's relation to the universe was quite different from that of the West, the mysticism involved was different from that of Christian and Muslim mystics. He referred to Taoist mysticism as "of a rarified philosophical order" (p. 43). Waley (1958) also thought that Lao Tzu was presenting a mystic view of reality, formulated as a reaction against the Realist or Legalist position. Girardot (1983) quite clearly believed that Taoism had an "admittedly mystic cast" (p. 38), as evidenced by the title of Chapter 8 of his book: "The Order of Chaos: Symbolic Aspects of Taoist Mysticism" (p. 257). He concluded that Izutsu and Waley both were generally correct in emphasizing a mystical frame of reference in their commentaries. Kaltenmark (1969) stated his position in a way which summarizes the issue nicely: "Insofar as it discards discursive knowledge in favor of

intuition, and asserts the possibility of reaching, through quietism, a superior reality, the thought of the Tao Te Ching is indeed a form of mysticism" (p. 64).

Chan seems to have presented a minority viewpoint, then, in his belief that Lao Tzu was not a mystic. However, his position may not be that divergent, since it permits one to consider Lao Tzu a mystic if the experience of union with Tao is taken to be necessarily a mystical one. The preponderance of opinion, then, is that Lao Tzu was presenting an essentially mystical apprehension of the nature of existence.

#### Levels of Metaphysical Meaning in the Tao Te Ching

Izutsu (1968) provided an excellent explanation of the metaphysical theory of existence which Lao Tzu was trying to impart. He distinguished two levels of reality: the level of Multiplicity, or the phenomenal level of forms and objects, and the level of Unity, or the noumenal level of the undifferentiated whole. The level of Multiplicity is the level of the ten thousand things. It is the level of ordinary experience and ordinary consciousness, at which we perceive "an infinity of things each of which, considered in itself and on this particular level, is an independent, self-subsistent entity clearly marked off from all others" (p. 399). At this level each thing is perceived as having its own boundary and by virtue of this as being clearly distinguished from all other things. Each thing is also perceived as having a clearly determinable beginning and ending to its existence.

The level of Unity is the level of Tao. It is the level of mystical experience and supra-ordinary consciousness, at which we perceive "a

vast and limitless ocean of 'undifferentiation'" (p. 398). Izutsu believed that the Unity level is apprehensible only through a particular kind of ecstatic intuition. At this level all things cease to be things and interpenetrate and intermingle with each other. There are no longer any boundaries between objects. Time ceases to exist: past, present, and future are no longer meaningful concepts, so there are no beginnings or endings. All things become relative: beauty and ugliness, good and evil, and right and wrong all lose their absolute meanings. Everything is One, and the One is everything:

There was something undifferentiated and yet complete,  
Which existed before heaven and earth.  
Soundless and formless, it depends on nothing  
and does not change.  
It operates everywhere and is free from danger.  
It may be considered the mother of the universe.  
I do not know its name; I call it Tao. (p. 144)

The Unity level is the level of hun tun, or chaos (Girardot, 1983; Izutsu, 1968), a concept of shamanistic origin referring to a primeval state of being preceding the birth of Heaven and Earth, a state of formless fluidity in which all of existence consisted of a single, uniform and identical primordial substance with no variability. The Unity level cannot be apprehended unless the perceiver's mind becomes as featureless and quiescent as chaos, thus becoming chaotic itself (Izutsu, 1968).

These two levels, Multiplicity and Unity, are two different aspects of one and the same reality which co-exist simultaneously. They are the levels of which Welch (1965) spoke above. Which one is perceived depends upon where one concentrates one's perception:

Therefore let there always be non-being, so we may  
 see their subtlety,  
 And let there always be being, so that we may see their  
 outcome.  
 The two are the same,  
 But after they are produced, they have different names.  
 (p. 97)

I believe that there is yet another way in which Lao Tzu may be thought of as addressing different levels simultaneously. At the Multiplicity level he speaks of everyday reality, or differentiation and form; at the Unity level, he speaks of Tao, or undifferentiation and formlessness. At the Multiplicity level he also speaks of both the level of things-in-general (the ten thousand things) and the level of particular individual things (the Sage or water or Heaven and Earth or a clay vessel). All three levels exist in every statement in the Tao Te Ching, because a particular individual thing is but a specific exemplar of the class of all-that-exists, or the Multiplicity level, and all-that-exists is but a manifestation of Tao, or the Unity level.

It is important to note that apprehension of the Unity level is not a religious experience, although it can occur through the vehicle of religious practice. Apprehension of the Unity level or identification with the Absolute or Union with Tao is something that an individual achieves through his or her own efforts rather than through the intervention of or by appeal to a divine entity. It is experiencing something that is and has always been present but unseen--a "forest-and-trees" phenomenon, and is potentially available to anyone who wants to put in the time and effort necessary. Enlightenment is the product of hard work--nothing more, nothing less.

### Literary Devices in the Tao Te Ching

Lao Tzu used various literary devices, including paradox, figurative language, and symbolism to help communicate the different levels of meaning which he addressed. Van Over (1973) stated that Taoist sages did not use analysis and rational argument to establish ideas, but rather relied upon parable, poetry, anecdote, verse, and tales. Many of these contained paradox, as Yutang (1948) and Medhurst (1972) pointed out:

Lao-tzu loves paradox, and his sayings are frequently as paradoxical as the sayings in the Gospels. ... The student must never forget that Lao-tzu, being a mystic, is no more susceptible to literal interpretation when he deals with the concrete than are the words of Jesus, "Cast not your pearls before swine." (Medhurst, 1972, p. 11)

Paradox, figurative language, and symbolism are subject to multiple interpretations. This was doubtless Lao Tzu's intention. He was, after all, attempting to communicate through words a mystical experience which cannot really be described, because it is beyond ordinary experience and understanding. He was also attempting to address multiple levels of meaning simultaneously. Welch (1965) pointed out that paradox has always been a working tool of religious teachers, since it allowed one to teach a complex truth more succinctly and to greater effect than straightforward exposition would. A neophyte who penetrated the hidden meaning of a cryptic paradox would remember the lesson better, since it came with a flash of intuitive understanding, and would value it all the more highly both because of the way he came by the knowledge and because possessing a hidden truth made him a member of an elite brotherhood.

### The Audience of the Tao Te Ching

As has been discussed, the text was traditionally divided into two sections: Chapters 1 to 37 or so, and Chapters 38 or so to 81. The first section appears to be philosophical or metaphysical and seems to be addressed to those who wish to become enlightened, whereas the second appears to be practical or applied and seems to be addressed to the King or to those who govern. However, as has been established above, Lao Tzu addressed multiple levels of meaning throughout the text. He spoke of the Multiplicity level and of the Unity level both at the same time. He also spoke at the Multiplicity level of both generalities and specifics at the same time. His words were addressed not only to all people, but also to different classes of people, and to all individual persons. Thus, when in the first section Lao Tzu said "The best (man) is like water" (Chan, 1963b, p. 113) he meant that the enlightened man and the good ruler recognize that Tao is humble, yielding, non-active, and calm and foster these qualities in themselves, and that anyone who wishes to become enlightened would do well to do so, too. When in the second section he said "Therefore the sage acts, but does not rely on his own ability" (Chan, 1963b, p. 234) he meant that the enlightened man and the good ruler recognize that Tao operates according to a pattern which is identifiable in all things, including themselves, and strive to achieve a state of quietude which allows the pattern to express itself spontaneously in their actions, and that anyone who wishes to become enlightened would do well to do so, too.



When Lao Tzu spoke to or of the Sage, he was simultaneously addressing those who had achieved enlightenment in the past, those who were enlightened, and those who sought enlightenment. Beyond Lao Tzu's intent to speak at more than one level at once, the Chinese language itself is structured in this way. According to Waley (1958):

In Chinese, as we have seen, tense is not usually expressed. Every sentence in the Tao Te Ching refers as much to the past as to the present [and the future]. 'The Sage does this or that' means that the Sages of the past did so and that anyone who wishes to possess their miraculous powers must do so again. (p. 92)

### The Tao Te Ching: A Summary

The Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu presents the teachings of tao chia, or the Taoist school. The text is a description of Tao, or the pattern which is present in all things, and is also an explanation of how to live in conformity to and identification with Tao. Understanding the text is difficult, because it was written long ago and in a language the structure of which leaves room for vagueness, ambiguity, and multiple meanings. In addition, Lao Tzu wrote in such a way as to address different audiences and different levels of reality at the same time.

The message of the text is that all is One and the One is all. That is, there is more than one level of reality, and the Multiplicity level, the level of ordinary objects and ordinary consciousness, is but a manifestation of the Unity level, or identification with Tao, the level at which all things coexist as One. The significance of this message varies according to the listener. To those who only see the Multiplicity level, there is no significance; to those who see or at least admit the

possibility of the Unity level, there is a great deal of significance indeed.

Combining Psychological Knowledge With the Tao Te Ching:  
An Integrated Psychotherapy System

In this work I address myself to two tasks. First, I propose a synthesis of the information of the Tao Te Ching with the information of existing psychotherapy systems to form an integrated system of psychotherapy. An integrated psychotherapy system would expand both the theoretical foundations and technical repertoire of psychotherapy by adding information based upon the worldview of the Tao Te Ching to information in existing psychotherapy systems based upon the hypothetico-deductive scientific tradition. It would not be intended to replace existing psychotherapy systems and their theories and techniques but would include these, adding to them the information of the Tao Te Ching to expand the arena of applicability of psychotherapy. Existing psychotherapy systems address only the Multiplicity level of reality. An integrated psychotherapy system would address both the Multiplicity level and the Unity level of reality, as dictated by the desires of the client and the demands of the service delivery setting. That is, an integrated psychotherapy system would be applicable to all of the problems addressed by current systems of psychotherapy, and could also address issues not within the purview of current systems. Such a system could serve as either a pragmatic and symptom-driven system or as an existential and total system.

Second, I propose applications of the concepts and techniques of the Tao Te Ching to existing psychotherapy systems. This offers a means of expanding the technical armamentarium of existing psychotherapy systems without the necessity of radical alterations in their underlying philosophical foundations. This would permit more efficient and effective delivery of services through the use of ancillary techniques designed to improve the effects of current psychotherapy techniques.

In the next chapter I examine applications of the Tao Te Ching to psychotherapy theory and technique. I consider the text as if it were a psychological theory and examine it over the categories established by Corey (1982). I consider each category as it would impact the synthesizing of an integrated psychotherapy system and as it would impact the application of concepts and techniques of the Tao Te Ching to existing psychotherapy systems.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TAO TE CHING CONSIDERED AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY: ITS APPLICATIONS TO PSYCHOTHERAPY THEORY AND TECHNIQUE

The Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu will now be examined across the six categories established by Corey (1982) for comparing theories of counseling and psychotherapy. The Tao Te Ching is not and was never intended to be a psychological theory. Such an examination will, however, establish some common ground between the teachings of Lao Tzu and modern psychological theories. In each category consideration will be given to applications of the Tao Te Ching to psychotherapy theory and technique, both from the standpoint of integrating a new system of psychotherapy combining the Tao Te Ching with existing psychotherapy systems, and from the standpoint of supplementing existing systems of psychotherapy with concepts from the Tao Te Ching. The last category, Applications and Contributions, will summarize the various applications which have been found.

#### Basic Philosophy: Central Teachings of the Tao Te Ching

##### The Central Teachings

Chan (1963b) characterized Taoism as a profound philosophy which concentrates on individual life and on tranquillity through nonconformity and a transcendental spirit. Its central tenets are the generativity of

being and nonbeing, and the importance of taking no action which goes against the constant and regular pattern of nature. There is a peculiar emphasis on what is generally regarded as "negative morality": ignorance, humility, compliance, contentment, and, above all, weakness.

In his work comparing Sufism and Taoism, Izutsu (1967) emphasized what he saw as a very strong connection between Taoist philosophy and shamanism, characterizing Taoism as "a particular form of philosophy which grew out of the personal existential experience peculiar to persons endowed with the capacity of seeing things on a supra-sensible plane of consciousness" (p. 15). Taoist philosophers are people who exercise their intellect in order to elevate and elaborate their original mystic vision into a system of metaphysical concepts designed to explain the very structure of Being.

To Waley (1958) Taoism was a Quietist philosophy which held the idea of Tao as both the unchanging unity underlying a shifting plurality, and at the same time the impetus giving rise to every form of life and motion. The first great principle of Taoism, according to Waley, is the relativity of all attributes: in Tao all opposites are blended, all contrasts harmonized. The first step on the way to Tao is to be in harmony with, not in rebellion against, the fundamental laws of the universe.

Girardot (1983) conceived of Taoism as a way, a message and method, of rectifying, improving, harmonizing, healing, or saving the human condition. This is accomplished through addressing the primary existential questions of how to live in relation: with nature, with oneself, with other men and women both alive and dead, with superiors

and inferiors or, most fundamentally, how to become fully and authentically human in a world that is in process.

Yutang (1948) stated that the principle teaching of Lao Tzu is humility. He defined Taoism as:

a philosophy of the essential unity of the universe (monism), of reversion, polarization (yin and yang), and eternal cycles, of the leveling of all differences, the relativity of all standards, and the return of all to the Primeval One, the divine intelligence, the source of all things. (p. 14)

Blofeld (1978) believed that Taoism was concerned with the shedding by the individual of the final delusion of personal separateness, which he believed would allow direct perception of the fact that "death has no meaning. ... Thus nothing starts with birth or ends with death; the real is there all the time" (p. 162). What happens when this delusion is shed? "The mind of one who returns to the Source thereby BECOMES the Source. Your own mind is DESTINED TO BECOME THE UNIVERSE ITSELF!" (p. 164).

In his work comparing Taoism to systems theory, Colodzin (1983) emphasized the concept of no duality or undifferentiated unity as central: "Everything in the universe is of the essence of the Tao; the Tao is the primary essence underlying all form. ... The universe is understood as one thing, alive, connected, resonating" (p. 92).

Bahm (1958) believed that the message of Taoism is summarized in two passages of the Tao Te Ching. The first, Chapter 19, entreats the reader to be himself and act naturally. The second, Chapter 67, advises that one follow three precious principles of Nature: gentleness, frugality, and humility.

According to Smith (1980), "Taoists sought individual perfection, a deeper insight into the mysteries of nature, and union with a cosmic principle which they believed to underly all existence" (p. 3). They believed as follows:

Man, like all other creatures, must learn to conform to the spontaneous and natural processes of birth, growth, decay, and death, and become attuned to a cosmic rhythm. Freedom, peace, and happiness for all men could only be attained by conformity to natural and not man-made laws. (p. 4)

### Their Applications to Psychotherapy

#### As Part of an Integrated Psychotherapy System

Current psychology theories, and therefore current psychotherapy theories, recognize only the Multiplicity level of existence. The central teachings of the Tao Te Ching not only recognize but also emphasize the Unity level of Tao as being true reality, and advocate the abandonment or overcoming of the illusion of the separateness of things so that a realization of Tao can be achieved. An integrated psychotherapy system would study the relationship between people and both the Unity and Multiplicity levels of existence rather than just the Multiplicity level. Some psychological knowledge would have to be rewritten to take into account the Unity level, since consideration was not given to the Unity level in the formation of existing theories. It is difficult to say what would and what would not change as a result of such an integration. Large areas of psychological knowledge would remain the same, since they would be minimally if at all affected. For example, physiological psychology would probably not be affected at all, whereas other areas of

psychology, such as theories of personality and psychopathology, would probably change substantially. Psychopathology would have to be determined according to the degree to which an individual was aware of and able to accurately perceive both the Unity and Multiplicity levels rather than the Multiplicity level alone, as is the case at present. It is possible that the definition of psychosis, for example, would have to change as a result of the recognition of more than one level of reality.

Current psychotherapy systems aim at helping an individual function better and achieve a greater sense of fulfillment on the Multiplicity level of reality. An integrated psychotherapy system would also aim at this, but in addition would aim at helping an individual function better and achieve a greater sense of fulfillment on the Unity level of reality. Such a system would recognize the right of the individual to choose to live on the Multiplicity level alone, but would present to those who chose to attempt to attain a realization of the Unity level various methods and techniques to overcome the illusion of separateness and the self-object dichotomy.

#### As Applied to Existing Psychotherapy Systems

In application to existing psychotherapy systems, the central teachings of the Tao Te Ching can help stimulate awareness of issues of worldview and the relevance of clients' worldviews to the natures of their presenting problems and to what techniques are likely to be of help to them. The psychoanalytic system pays little attention to clients' worldviews, considering clients to be biologically driven. The humanist system already takes into account the worldviews of clients,



being basically a phenomenological system. The behaviorist system, like the psychoanalytic system, largely ignores clients' worldviews, but for different reasons; to a behaviorist worldviews don't exist, not being observable phenomena. It would be helpful for the psychoanalytic and behaviorist systems to recognize the narrowness of the hypothetico-deductive tradition and re-examine their basic beliefs and perhaps expand these to accommodate factors which lie outside the purview of this scientific tradition.

### Key Concepts

A consideration of the Tao Te Ching as a psychological theory is dependent upon an understanding of its most important terms and concepts. This section examines several such terms and concepts, including the etymological derivations of their ideographs and the meanings they carry in the Tao Te Ching.

#### Tao or the Way

##### The Meaning of the Concept

Perhaps most critical for an understanding of the Tao Te Ching is an understanding of the meaning of the character Tao and the concept for which it stands.

The character for tao (道) is composed of several ideographs. The square with two horizontal dashes inside it represents a head with little tufts of hair (丿) on top, the head of a leader (首). It is combined with the marks of feet running (彳) and stopping (止), which is now written in modernized script (辶), and means "to advance." Together they symbolize the higher mind, along with the feet, advancing on the same path. (Wing, 1986, p. 32)

The character Tao has been variously translated as literally path, road, way, (Chan, 1963a; Creel, 1970; Kaltenmark, 1969; Smullyan, 1977; Waley, 1958), God, Nature, the Absolute, that through which all things have come into being, the Great Void (Smullyan, 1977), the course or trend of the natural world, whose principle we discover in the flow patterns of water, gas, and fire (Watta, 1975), the Primeval One, the divine intelligence, the source of all things (Yutang, 1948), Nature or Existence (Bahm, 1958), the way of all life (Bynner, 1944), and the way of Ultimate Reality, the original undifferentiated Reality from which the universe is evolved (Blakney, 1955).

The concept of Tao has been extended to mean principle, system, truth, Reality (Chan, 1963a), a method, a course of conduct (Creel, 1970), a way to be followed, and, by extension, moral guidance or a code of behavior (Kaltenmark, 1969), and the way in which one does something, a method, principle, doctrine, the way in which the universe works (Waley, 1958). The writer is in agreement with Smullyan (1977) that one of the best definitions is the reason things are as they are.

According to Chan (1963a) Tao means "the One, which is natural, eternal, spontaneous, nameless, and indescribable. It is at once the beginning of all things and the way in which all things pursue their course. As the way of life, it denotes simplicity, spontaneity, tranquillity, weakness, and most important of all, non-action (wu-wei)" (p. 136). To quote Blofeld (1978):

The Tao is unknowable, vast, eternal. As undifferentiated void, pure spirit, it is the mother of the cosmos; as non-void, it is the container, the sustainer and, in a sense, the being of the myriad objects, permeating all. As the goal of existence, it is the Way of Heaven, of Earth, of Man. No being, it is the source of Being. It

is not conscious of activity, has no purpose, seeks no reward or praise, yet performs all things to perfection. (p. 2)

Characteristics of Tao. In Chapter 14 of the Tao Te Ching Lao

Tzu described Tao:

We look at it and do not see it;  
Its name is The Invisible.  
We listen to it and do not hear it;  
Its name is The Inaudible.  
We touch it and do not find it;  
Its name is The Subtle (formless). (p. 124)

The Invisible (i), The Inaudible (hsi), and The Subtle (wei) are also interpreted as dimness, soundlessness, and formlessness by Girardot (1983), as elusive, rare, and subtle by Blakney (1955), as elusive, rarified, and infinitesimal by Waley (1958), as the indistinct, the silent, and the subtle by Kaltenmark (1969), as colorless, elusive, and subtle by Medhurst (1972), as the unseen, the unheard, and the withheld by Bynner (1944), and as beyond form, beyond sound, and intangible by Feng & English (1972). All of these are attempts to convey that Tao is ultimately inaccessible to sensory knowledge, investigation, experimentation, and even naming or description because it is an undifferentiated whole: "These three things [i, hsi, wei] cannot be known further, therefore they are chaotically fused into the one [hun erh wei i]" (Girardot, 1983, p. 64). Tao is "universal Being before its differentiation among varied concrete forms" (Wei, 1982, p. 146). It can only be understood through apprehension of its unity, pervasiveness, and featurelessness.

Tao as Naturalism. Tao-chia, or the Taoist school, contains no concept of any special relationship between humankind and the universe,

no concept of the universe as human-centered or ruler-centered. In 1842 Stanislas Julien (cited in Creel, 1970) concluded that "the use and definition of the word Tao excludes any idea of intelligent cause. ... Lao Tzu represents the Tao as a being devoid of action, thoughts, or desires" (p. 30).

The whole universe and all things therein are the spontaneous manifestation of Tao, produced without anything resembling human calculation or ulterior motive. Hence it appears utterly indifferent to its own creations, making no effort to own them or make use of them. (Wei, 1982, p. 192).

"Heaven and Earth are not humane/They regard all things as straw dogs" (Chan, 1963, p. 107). Straw dogs, used in the sacrifices, were symbolic objects with no sentimental value. Tao is impartial, plays no favorites, and is neither humane nor inhumane. It is not planful or purposive, and does not work to accomplish anything. It is the pattern which governs all movements and occurrences everywhere, with no regard for anything that it affects. It simply is, but does not care or take pity or have compassion; it also doesn't not care or not take pity or not have compassion. These are human qualities which are meaningless in application to Tao. Consequently, while there may be human problems there are no natural problems, for Tao is not pursuing any purpose and therefore never meets with any difficulties (Watts, 1961).

#### Its Applications to Psychotherapy

As Part of an Integrated Psychotherapy System. In the West, psychotherapy systems do not claim to be ways of life; this is left up to the fields of philosophy and religion. Just as there is an illusion in the West of the separateness of the observer and the observed, so too

is there an illusion of the separateness of scientific and nonscientific fields of knowledge, and within these categories other illusions which compartmentalize knowledge into various specialty fields. Because of this, and with few exceptions, psychotherapy systems in the West avoid issues of the purpose of life or the nature of existence or morality and right and wrong. These illusions do not exist in the Tao Te Ching. An integrated psychotherapy system would recognize that Tao applies to all aspects of an individual's life, not just to certain areas. The concept of Tao presents a theory of the nature of existence as well as an explanation of the relationship of the individual to all that exists. It presents a way of life which applies to every activity of the individual in every situation. It contains concepts which are applicable to both the Multiplicity level and the Unity level, and therefore to the individual, to social groups such as couples and families, and to social organizations such as corporations, governments, and nations. The scope of the concept of Tao as applied to an integrated psychotherapy system far exceeds the scope of existing systems. However, it must be remembered that this scope will not necessarily be relevant to the majority of cases treated under such a system, just as at present the full scope of personality restructuring possible in, for example, the psychoanalytic system is irrelevant to the majority of cases treated from that perspective.

Existing psychotherapy systems serve as means to an end, in that therapy is never an end in itself but is motivated toward achieving certain goals, the achievement of which signals the termination of therapy (Needleman, 1989). In an integrated psychotherapy system, by

contrast, Tao represents something which can serve as an end in itself rather than merely as a means. Tao speaks to the reintegration of the individual into the unity from which he or she came; the attainment of Tao is the realization by the individual of the illusion of the self-object dichotomy and the shattering of this illusion through direct perception of Tao. Some clients would want to accomplish this, although most would not. An integrated psychotherapy system would be able to offer clients what existing psychotherapy systems offer, but would also be able to offer more to those who wanted to go further than is possible at present. It would be able to do so not as a religion, but rather as a system of knowledge about existence which was based on both scientific and trans-scientific methods.

As Applied to Existing Psychotherapy Systems. The concept of Tao does not seem to have much relevance to existing psychotherapy systems. It is a metaphysical concept, and consequently not applicable to systems based upon the hypothetico-deductive tradition, which has its foundations in Empiricism and Realism. This is an illustration of the difference between systems founded upon both the Unity and Multiplicity levels as opposed to those founded upon the Multiplicity level alone. The psychoanalytic system does not recognize the existence of levels of reality not readily perceptible through the five senses. The humanist system comes closest to doing so, by virtue of its phenomenological foundations, but even so does not recognize alternate realities. The behaviorist system, finally, does not attend to anything not behaviorally observable, and certainly not to alternate realities. Regrettably, there

seems to be no way to supplement existing systems through application of the concept of Tao.

### Yin/Yang or Cyclic Change

#### The Meaning of the Concept

Another key concept is that of cyclic change, also termed transformation, polarity, reversion, return, and alternation. The concept of cyclic change as a key element of nature/existence/reality first appeared in Chinese culture long before Lao Tzu or the Tao Te Ching. Perhaps as long as 5,000 years ago the I Ching or Book of Change, written as a divination tool, followed a doctrine of the interaction of yin and yang. The I Ching itself, old as it is, is most likely only the written compilation of a much older oral tradition. The I Ching is founded upon the idea of change: that individual things are merely transitory manifestations of something which is eternal and omnipresent and which operates in patterns which can be discerned through direct, mystic apprehension. The Tao Te Ching emphasizes understanding reality as "a dynamic system in which constant change and erratic complexity harbor an enigmatic principle of patterned regularity and regeneration" (Girardot, 1983, p. xii) which is manifested as "a cyclic interplay between creation and destruction, beginning and returning, or the rise and fall of yin and yang" (p. 69).

The Historical Origins of Yin/Yang Theory. The concepts of yin and yang and their operation as cyclic change can best be understood through an examination of Chinese cosmogony. The Chinese explanation of how the

universe came into being begins with Wu-Chi, called the "Ultimate Nothingness" or the "Ultimateless" (Wei, 1982, p. 83) (Fig. 1). Wu-Chi is primordial unity: infinite, undifferentiated, featureless, and formless. There is nothing else--no "things" or "manifestations." Wu-Chi produces T'ai-Chi, the "Supreme Ultimate" (Wei, 1982, p. 22). In relation to one another Wu-Chi is active and creative, while T'ai-Chi is passive and receptive. The production of T'ai-Chi by and from Wu-Chi results in the first, critical differentiation: this (Wu-Chi) and that (T'ai-Chi). The ideograph for T'ai-Chi, in fact, originally represented a ridgepole, which is a line in space (Wilhelm, 1950). This line gives rise to differentiation: there is the line, and there is that which is not the line--the space in which the line exists. From this first differentiation arise others: above and below the line; in front of and in back of the line; to the right and to the left of the line. T'ai-Chi contains, in their potential or undifferentiated forms, the two basic cosmic principles, yin and yang, which arise from and exemplify that first differentiation between Wu-Chi and T'ai-Chi. T'ai-Chi actualizes yin and yang, and the union of yin and yang then produces all that exists.

Lao Tzu expressed this process of creation in Chapter 42 of the Tao Te Ching:

Tao produced the One.  
 The One produced the two.  
 The two produced the three.  
 And the three produced the ten thousand things.  
 The ten thousand things carry the yin and embrace the yang,  
 and through the blending of the material force they  
 achieve harmony. (p. 176)



In this verse Lao Tzu identified Tao with Wu-Chi. From Tao, he said, T'ai-Chi arises. From T'ai-Chi come yin and yang. Yin and yang unite, and these two together with their union form all that exists. All things contain within them yin and yang, and harmony results from the union and balancing of the two.

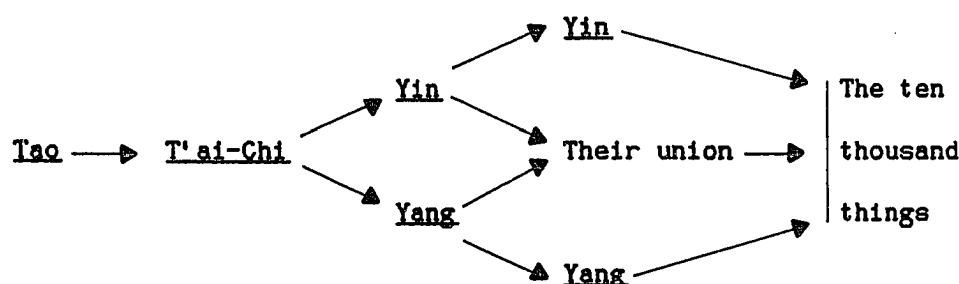


Figure 1. The process of creation according to traditional Chinese cosmogony.

An Explanation of Yin/Yang Theory. Cyclic change occurs through the operations of yin and yang. Watts (1975) posited that the ideographs for yin and yang originally represented the two sides of a roof leaning upon a ridgepole (the T'ai-Chi). According to Wilhelm (1950, p. 1v1) yin means "the cloudy" or "the overcast," and yang means "banners waving in the sun," or by extension something "shone upon" or bright. Waley (1958) stated that yin has come to mean the north, or the shady, side of a mountain or river, and is associated with femininity, yielding, weakness, darkness, falling, cold, negativeness, passivity, and the earth; yang, by contrast, has come to mean the south, or the sunny, side of a mountain or river, and is associated with masculinity,

firmness, strength, light, rising, heat, positiveness, activity, and the heavens.

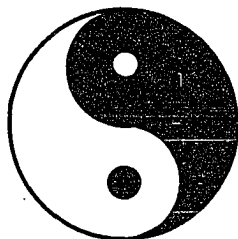


Figure 2. The T'ai-Chi circle.

The union of yin and yang is governed by certain principles which are illustrated by the ancient Chinese T'ai-Chi circle shown in Figure 2. The circle depicts how everything contains both yin and yang, and also how each contains the other within itself. The principles are:

1. All things consist of both yin and yang. A piece of steel seems solid to us, but in fact consists mostly of empty space (yin) enclosed by a patterned arrangement of solid matter (yang) in the form of molecules. Water seems soft and yielding to us (yin), but at times, as during a hurricane, can knock down buildings and alter coastlines (yang).

2. Yin and yang are relative concepts. The moon is yang compared to the night sky, but yin compared to the sun. Summer in Alaska is yang compared to winter in Alaska, but both are yin compared to even winter in Florida.

3. Yin and yang are mutually generative. Each exists only because the other exists. Thus, to do away with one is to do away with the other:

When the people of the world all know beauty as beauty,  
 There arises the recognition of ugliness.  
 When they all know the good as good,  
 There arises the recognition of evil.  
 Therefore:  
 Being and non-being produce each other;  
 Difficult and easy complete each other;  
 Long and short contrast each other;  
 High and low distinguish each other;  
 Sound and voice harmonize each other;  
 Front and back accompany each other. (p. 101).

4. Yin and yang transform into each other. They are not antagonistic, but rather act together in complete harmony. This is the source of the cyclical pattern of change which operates in all things: "In the process of change yang or yin might be in the ascendant, but an inevitable reversal [takes] place. Thus, when yang reaches its apogee at the summer solstice yin is already beginning to take over the ascendancy" (Smith, 1980, p. 18). Each acts upon the other so as to avoid excess and maintain a balance:

To hold and fill a cup to overflowing  
 Is not as good as to stop in time.  
 Sharpen a sword-edge to its very sharpest,  
 And the (edge) will not last long.  
 When gold and jade fill your hall,  
 You will not be able to keep them.  
 To be proud with honor and wealth  
 Is to cause one's own downfall.  
 Withdraw as soon as your work is done.  
 Such is Heaven's Way. (p. 115)

The aim of life is not the triumph of one force over the other, but rather the attainment of perfect balance between the two forces (Waley, 1956).

Tao Manifested as Cyclic Change. The concept of cyclic change has always been central to Chinese thought. This is apparent in both the I

Ching and the Tao Te Ching. According to Yutang (1948) the basic point of view of Lao Tzu is as follows:

The answer is to be found in the doctrine of universal reversion, of eternal cycles, of every end becoming a beginning, and things reverting to their original state. Since life is a constant flux and change, rise and decay alternate like day and night, and reaching the prime of one's strength marks the beginning of decline. (p. 12)

Smith (1980) described Tao as "the reality which gives to all phenomena their form and substance. It is unchanging, invisible and eternal, a unity which lies at the heart of a universal flux" (p. 16). He stated that to the Taoists "nature appears as a ... rhythmic pulsation, ever changing and transforming, coming to birth and dying. Wisdom consists in learning conformity to this universal rhythm" (p. 21). Wei (1982) pointed to Chapter 40 as evidence that through cyclic reversion "Tao, after reaching the climax in its movement, will revert from one pole to the opposite pole" (p. 13). Blofeld (1978) wrote at length about cyclic change, or "unending flux, everything being subject to unceasing change from moment to moment. Nevertheless, the changes proceed in orderly cycles, the outlines of each pattern being endlessly repeated" (p. 5).

Lao Tzu spoke of cyclic change and of the operations of yin and yang in various verses of the Tao Te Ching:

All things come into being,  
And I see thereby their return.  
All things flourish,  
But each one returns to its root. (p. 128)

The heavy is the root of the light;  
The tranquil is the ruler of the hasty. (p. 146)

In order to contract,  
It is necessary first to expand.  
In order to weaken,  
It is necessary first to strengthen.

In order to destroy,  
 It is necessary first to promote.  
 In order to grasp,  
 It is necessary first to give. (p. 164)

Reversion is the action of Tao.  
 Weakness is the function of Tao.  
 All things in the world come from being.  
 And being comes from non-being. (p. 173)

Heaven's Way is indeed like the bending of a bow.  
 When (the string) is high, bring it down.  
 When it is low, raise it up.  
 When it is excessive, reduce it.  
 When it is insufficient, supplement it. (p. 234)

Cyclic Change: A Summary. Lao Tzu emphasized the constancy of transformation or cyclic change. He saw change as resulting from the production of T'ai-Chi from and by Tao, which resulted in the first differentiation and the existence of forms as manifestations of Tao. He also saw change as occurring in a patterned or rhythmical fashion which achieved a balanced state by reversing when excess occurred. He believed that change occurred through the operations of yin and yang, which were present in all things, were relative rather than absolute concepts, were mutually generative, and could and did transform into each other. The wise thing to do, according to Lao Tzu, was to be aware of the pattern of change and to adapt to it rather than to resist it or attempt to control it. Lao Tzu's beliefs about change mean that people, too, are subject to change, as is their world, including their significant others and their relationships with their significant others. People, too, are subject to the reversals which are an inevitable part of change: decline and fall, perhaps most poignantly symbolized by the existential task of accepting the inevitability of death, but also the balancing hope that

comes with the understanding that even decline reverses to growth once more. People, too, can find advantage in being aware of and conforming to the patterns and rhythms of change.

### Its Applications to Psychotherapy

As Part of an Integrated Psychotherapy System. Yin/yang theory states that all things exist as a balance of polar opposites, that these polar opposites are mutually generative and can transform into each other, and that these polarities are relative rather than absolute. An integrated psychotherapy system would recognize that people also exist as a balance of polar opposites: individuals contain within themselves not only those traits in which they take pride, but also those of which they are ashamed; not only those of which they are consciously aware, but also those of which they are unaware; not only those which society lauds, but also those which it condemns. Unhappiness comes from denying or bemoaning this fact, tranquillity from embracing it.

Lao Tzu stated that change was an intrinsic part of existence. This would seem to make passive reactivity the optimal coping style, but this would only be true if change occurred randomly. In fact, though, Lao Tzu said that Tao was a pattern which could be observed in all things, such that change occurred in ways which could be categorized and predicted.

Western science has as goals, among others, the understanding, prediction, and control of natural phenomena. At first glance this seems to be what Lao Tzu was advocating. When Lao Tzu spoke of cyclic change, however, he was not restricting his remarks to what Western civilization

typically thinks of as the realm of natural phenomena: the weather, the seasons, and astronomical events, for example. He included all that exists, animate and inanimate, sentient and nonsentient, human and nonhuman, and on all levels of existence. In addition, Lao Tzu was not advocating control of nature, but rather an understanding of the pattern of existence, which then gives one the ability to anticipate change and either protect oneself from it or benefit from it by modifying one's actions so that they are in accord with the change. Western science attempts to control nature, which is typically defined as including everything that exists except people. Western psychotherapy systems attempt to provide people with the means to control themselves and their fellows, just as science attempts to control nature. Lao Tzu advocated that people live in accord with nature, and thereby in accord with themselves, since they are part of nature.

An integrated psychotherapy system would help clients become aware of the concept of polar opposites so that they could understand the nature of polar opposites and achieve acceptance of their own natures as human beings. Through this acceptance they could experience relief from the regret, distress, and self-recrimination which grip most people when they examine their self-perceived shortcomings. As Wei (1982) stated:

The law or theory of cyclic reversion could produce very beneficent effects on the health of mankind, especially at a time when the life ideal of most people is to work, struggle, compete, and go to extremes to reach their goal with feverish speed. Such a way of life may be very harmful and lead to some very serious diseases. Furthermore, when the inevitable reaction sets in, they are prone to become downcast and depressed and may suffer from psychosomatic ailments. People who listen to Lao Tzu will practice moderation and will be free from nervous tension and stress. And when the inevitable reaction or setback eventually arrives, they will accept it with equanimity, well knowing that it is the result of an immutable law. To be contented and to be able to accept the

inevitable philosophically will enable one to face life with poise and composure and to enjoy health as well as peace of mind.  
(p. 179)

As Applied to Existing Psychotherapy Systems. An understanding of the nature of opposites and their place in people's lives appears in the psychoanalytic system and the humanist system, although not in the behaviorist system. The psychoanalytic system recognizes certain polarities such as conscious/unconscious and libido/thanatos; the humanist system recognizes the struggle within people between openness versus closedness to experience, trust versus lack of trust in the organismic self, internal versus external locus of control, and process versus product in living. It is in Jung's psychotherapy system, though, that the concept of polar opposites has been most developed, in the form of such polarities as animus and anima, extraversion and introversion, thinking and feeling, judging and perceiving, and sensing and intuiting. Jung alone among the founders of the major existing psychotherapy systems understood the necessity for the individual to balance the opposites in the personality, and he felt confirmed in this by his exposure to Eastern thought, including Taoism. It is interesting to note that Wilber (1979) considered Jung's analytical psychology to be one of the few transpersonal therapies in the West. Finally, the behaviorist system ignores polarities and the concept of cyclic change, focusing instead upon observable behavioral phenomena.

It may be that the psychoanalytic system could develop its basic beliefs more fully by expanding them to include the concept of cyclic change. It seems that the humanist system already has integrated this



concept, and also that the behaviorist system has not and will not, given its basic beliefs.

### Tzu-jan or Naturalness

#### The Meaning of the Concept

Tzu-jan, literally self-so, (Chan, 1963b) means spontaneous, natural, genuine, unaffected, without prompting, and truly expressive of inner nature: "Things exist and transform themselves spontaneously and there is no other reality or agent to cause them. Things exist and transform according to principle, but each and every thing has its own principle" (Chan, 1963b, p. 23). To Wang (249/1979) tzu-jan was not merely following nature, but was the roots, the original substance, Tao in the highest sense. One achieves tzu-jan by becoming so still and tranquil both physically and mentally that Tao then manifests itself without interference from conscious thought or intention. Zen Buddhism expresses tzu-jan as "Munen muso," or "Where there is no thought, there is no intention of doing."

One of the most characteristic descriptions of the "life" of the Tao is that it is completely self-generated and returning in on itself, going out and coming back in a completely spontaneous and creative way. Its basic rule and pattern of life is its utter self-contained freedom of movement, its tzu-jan, which constitutes in Taoism one of the most important technical terms for the perfect freedom of pure spontaneity and naturalness attained through an identification with the Tao. To be tzu-jan is to have the wholeness and freedom that was present at the beginning, to be completely "self-so" in that all actions and thoughts are generated internally and spontaneously in harmony with the organic law of cosmic life itself. The important idea of wu-wei represents the individual Taoist's identification with, and emulation of, the cosmic life of spontaneity and naturalness (tzu-jan) of the Tao. (Girardot, 1983, p. 56)

### Its Applications to Psychotherapy

As Part of an Integrated Psychotherapy System. Despite the importance of this concept, it is mentioned infrequently in the Tao Te Ching. One mention has relevance to applications of tzu-ian to an integrated psychotherapy system:

The best (rulers) are those whose existence is (merely)  
known by the people.  
The next best are those who are loved and praised.  
The next are those who are feared.  
And the next are those who are despised.  
It is only when one does not have enough faith in others  
that others will have no faith in him.  
(The great rulers) value their words highly.  
They accomplish their task; they complete their work.  
Nevertheless their people say that they simply follow nature  
[tzu-ian]. (p. 130)

Following this principle a psychotherapist, like the great ruler, should work in such a way that when the work is done it is as if the client accomplished the goals entirely on his or her own. This can happen only if the psychotherapist is able to follow tzu-ian, or to be spontaneous and natural, and through this example help the client to become this way, too. To follow tzu-ian means to do nothing which is not in accord with who you are, and therefore to do nothing which is not in accord with Tao. This is comparable to following the organismic self and reducing incongruence (Rogers, 1961), or realizing the "Self" as distinct from the "self" (Jung, 1969). This means helping clients to be aware of every aspect of their experiencing, including their true feelings, through such techniques as mindfulness meditation (Kurtz, 1983) and focusing (Gendlin, 1981). This, of course, can only happen if the therapist is aware of the entirety of his or her self. Thus, therapists

would have to be fully self-aware, or self-actualized (Rogers, 1961), to be able to help others become tzu-ian. This means that therapists in an integrated psychotherapy system would have to undergo therapy themselves before being allowed to engage in therapy with clients, and would have to have attained a realization of the Absolute before being allowed to guide clients on a similar journey. First conceived of and implemented by Jung, this has long been a requirement in psychoanalytic training, although this model has largely been abandoned by other psychotherapy systems.

As Applied to Existing Psychotherapy Systems. Tzu-ian has applications to the person of the therapist, and also to the conduct of the therapy. In existing psychotherapy systems, its applications are to the training of therapists, as was discussed above, and to the goals and techniques of therapy. Tzu-ian is the outcome of a realization of the Absolute, to be sure, but it is also a way of being-in-the-world, a way in which one is true to one's innermost essence and processes. To apply tzu-ian to existing systems, then, would mean encouraging clients to have an awareness of and trust in their innermost essence and processes, through turning their awareness inward in a manner not typical of Westerners: mindfulness meditation (Kurtz, 1983), which is the practice of inward-turning, willfully passive attention to present experience, directed at studying the organization of that experience. This is a technique which could have application to psychoanalytic therapy, by virtue of enhancing the process of free association, and to humanist therapy, by enhancing clients' observations of their inner states, but

probably not to behaviorist therapy, which is not concerned with internal processes.

### Wu-wei or Noncontention

#### The Meaning of the Concept

Things which are tzu-ian act in accord with the principle of wu-wei, which is one of the most important concepts in the Tao Te Ching. According to Wing (1986) the ideograph for wu-wei originally consisted of an ancient pictogram of a female monkey with a human body scratching her head--"action"--combined with a pictogram of a luxuriant forest destroyed by a large number of people--"no more." Consequently, wu-wei has been interpreted as non-doing (Izutsu, 1968), taking no action (Chan, 1963b) or taking no unnatural action (Chan, 1963a), non-activity (Waley, 1958), not striving (Creel, 1970), not doing (Welch, 1965), without doing or absence of action (Kaltenmark, 1969), action through inaction (Smullyan, 1977), inaction (Girardot, 1983), non-action (Blofeld, 1973; Cheng, 1981; Watts, 1975; Wei, 1982; Wing, 1986), and non-interference (Chang, 1963; Wei, 1982). This concept was expressed by Blakney (1955) as wei wu wei, doing without doing or acting without acting. Wu-wei does not mean not doing anything in the sense of laissez-faire, but rather not doing anything which is not in accord with Tao--in other words, acting only in accord with what is expressive of one's true inner nature by being expressive of Tao. Wu-wei is characteristic of the Perfect Man (Izutsu, 1967), who doesn't act unless it is necessary to do so, and who then does only what needs to be done and only what is in

accord with Tao, being as a result both effective and efficient.

According to Blofeld (1973):

Wu-wei is based on the mystical concept that, if we keep still and listen to the inner promptings of the spirit, we shall act spontaneously, correctly, efficaciously, yet hardly giving the matter a thought, just as branches naturally bend towards the sun or as kittens make an untaught response to scratching noises. (p. 24)

Wu-wei means to be still, quiet, and passive, so that Tao may act through you without interference from intention or conscious thought.

Hoff (1982) commented:

At its highest level, Wu Wei is indefinable and practically invisible, because it has become a reflex action. In the words of Chuang-tse, the mind of Wu Wei "flows like water, reflects like a mirror, and responds like an echo." (p. 85)

In English, wu-wei is exemplified by such expressions as "going with the grain, rolling with the punch, swimming with the current, trimming sails to the wind, taking the tide at its flood, and stooping to conquer" (Watts, 1975, p. 76).

### Its Applications to Psychotherapy

As Part of an Integrated Psychotherapy System. Because it is such an important concept, wu-wei is mentioned in several of the chapters of the Tao Te Ching. Two chapters will be quoted here so that the applicability of wu-wei to an integrated psychotherapy system can be considered:

The softest things in the world overcome the hardest things in the world.  
Non-being penetrates that in which there is no space.  
Through this I know the advantage of taking no action.  
Few in the world can understand the teaching without words  
and the advantage of taking no action. (p. 178)

The pursuit of learning is to increase day after day.  
 The pursuit of Tao is to decrease day after day.  
 It is to decrease and further decrease until one reaches the  
 point of taking no action.  
 No action is undertaken, and yet nothing is left undone.  
 An empire is often brought to order by having no activity.  
 If one (likes to) undertake activity, he is not qualified to  
 govern the empire. (p. 184)

Many psychotherapy systems talk about resistance, which is defined as an individual's conscious or unconscious psychologic defense against bringing repressed (unconscious) thoughts to light (APA, 1984). The first verse above, Chapter 43, implies that resistance can best be dealt with by yielding rather than by confrontation. It also implies that therapists must be enlightened individuals who use wu-wei in their lives, including in their functioning as therapists, if they are to be of service to clients. Further, it implies that therapists are of service to clients through example rather than through direct instruction--that they manifest wu-wei in their interactions with clients, not that they instruct clients about wu-wei.

In current psychotherapy systems the goal in therapy is that clients gain more knowledge--about themselves, their pasts, their social relationships, and their behavior patterns. By contrast, as presented in Chapter 48, the goal in Taoism is that clients lose knowledge. There would be two applications of this teaching in an integrated psychotherapy system. First, in those instances where clients are being helped to attain symptom relief without going beyond this, losing knowledge means simplifying one's thinking and thereby simplifying one's life. This is in line with ecological thinking, for example, which holds that less is better and that progress is not necessarily desirable in

and of itself. Second, when the aim is attaining a realization of the Absolute, losing knowledge means being able to go beyond ordinary thought and consciousness to an apprehension of the unity of all things. It is only through losing knowledge that people can come to surmount the illusion of the self-object dichotomy and attain a realization of the Absolute. The last knowledge to be lost, in fact, is the knowledge of the existence of the self. This realization can be achieved through applying the principle of wu-wei, and once achieved enables individuals to apply wu-wei effortlessly and with no conscious thought or intention. Those therapists who do not act through wu-wei will find themselves frustrated and unsuccessful because their actions will not be in accord with their circumstances.

As Applied to Existing Psychotherapy Systems. In the psychoanalytic system resistance is confronted, for the basis of cure is the resolution of the transference neurosis through the confrontation of resistance. This can be a long and difficult process, because clients are naturally reluctant to confront that which they fear and from which they have protected themselves. In the humanist system resistance is largely moot, because the method of the system results in clients doing only what they want to do, so that conflict with the therapist doesn't arise. In the behaviorist system resistance is handled by a renegotiation of the goals and methods of the therapy, which defines resistance out of existence.

Wu-wei as applied to existing systems would emphasize working with a client's resistance rather than confronting it, making the process of

therapy a cooperative endeavor rather than an adversarial one. An application of wu-wei in an existing system is the use of paradoxical interventions in strategic family therapy or problem-solving therapy (Haley, 1963, 1976), where the intention of the intervention is to get clients to change in defiance of the therapist. Such an approach puts clients' energy to use for them instead of treating it as an impediment to progress.

### P'u or Simplicity

#### The Meaning of the Concept

P'u is represented by a character combining a pictogram depicting a tree, with its trunk, branches, and roots, with a pictogram depicting gathering wood into a bundle, which in its ancient form showed hands collecting twigs and branches (Wing, 1986). P'u therefore means "wood not cut" or "things in their natural state" (Hoff, 1982, p. 11), and is often translated as "uncarved block" (Wing, 1986). P'u is generally taken to mean "the uncarved, the unembellished, the natural goodness and honesty of man, simplicity, plainness of heart and living" (Yutang, 1948, p. 106), "honesty and sincerity" (Blakney, 1955, p. 40), and "natural, simple, plain, and honest" (Hoff, 1982, p. 11). To quote Izutsu (1968):

P'u means the natural simplicity of uncarved block. Psychologically it means the unperturbed state of mind, in which man is completely unified with the Absolute. Ontologically it refers to the ultimate state of "undifferentiation" or "equality", where all things repose in their original unity with the Absolute, where nothing is distinguished and differentiated from others by "essential" boundaries. (p. 438)



P'u is mentioned in a number of chapters of the Tao Te Ching. Chapter 28 emphasizes, in part, that Unity (Tao) is more important than Multiplicity (objects or phenomena), that the basic nature of a thing is more important than any single aspect of it, and that care must be given to consider the totality of a situation before acting. There is no claim that objects are not useful, but rather that there is more to be gained from focusing on Tao: "Amidst the infinite variety of names or phenomena, man is apt to get engrossed in the manifestations of Tao and forget its essence" (Wei, 1982, p. 169).

He who knows glory but keeps to humility  
 Becomes the valley of the world.  
 Being the valley of the world,  
 He will be proficient in eternal virtue,  
 And returns to the state of simplicity (uncarved wood).  
 When the uncarved wood is broken up, it is turned into  
 concrete things.  
 But when the sage uses it, he becomes the leading official.  
 Therefore the great ruler does not cut up. (p. 149)

Chapter 37 emphasizes the importance of p'u to the attainment of a realization of the Absolute. Unless one can become like uncarved wood--returning to the primordial state of undifferentiation and simplicity--one cannot achieve union with Tao or a realization of the Self (Jung, 1967, 1982). Simplicity leads to desirelessness, desirelessness leads to quiescence, and quiescence leads to noninterference (wu-wei).

Tao invariably takes no action, and yet there is nothing  
 left undone.  
 If kings and barons can keep it, all things will transform  
 spontaneously.  
 If, after transformation, they should desire to be active,  
 I would restrain them with simplicity [p'u], which has no name.  
 Simplicity, which has no name, is free of desires.  
 Being free of desires, it is tranquil.  
 And the world will be at peace of its own accord. (p. 166)

### Its Applications to Psychotherapy

As Part of an Integrated Psychotherapy System. P'u symbolizes the true essence of things, the original state of undifferentiated unity which is the source of everything. In relation to an integrated system of psychotherapy, p'u reinforces the concept that therapists must be individuals fully in touch with their true selves--or Selves (Jung, 1969)--through an awareness of and experience with the Unity level of reality, and that their task is to help clients achieve the same state if the clients choose to do so. This can be accomplished through a stilling and quieting of the mind and body so that the individual can practice mindfulness meditation (Kurtz, 1983) and achieve a felt shift (Gendlin, 1981) in his or her state of experiencing, and eventually attain a realization of Tao through a return to the primordial state of undifferentiation and hun-tun or chaos (Girardot, 1983).

P'u symbolizes the simplicity which must be attained in order to be able to experience the Unity level. It also symbolizes the simplicity that should be strived for in life in general, and in the course of psychotherapy in an integrated system. A typical American household might contain two parents and two to four children, and might own a house, a boat, a vacation cottage, a recreational vehicle, two or three cars, two or three TVs and a VCR, one or two stereos and numerous Walkman-type personal radios and tape players, a microwave oven, an electric oven and range, a washer and dryer, a home computer, central heating and air conditioning, several telephones (probably including a cordless 'phone) and an answering machine, and innumerable small

appliances like Dustbusters, hair dryers, and electric mixers. Life too often consists of earning the money to acquire these material goods, followed by earning the money to support owning them. This is stressful, as is the realization that many of these things, in the course of their manufacture and use, pollute the environment. P'u symbolizes a way of life in which it is not only not advisable but also not necessary to own all of these things. An integrated psychotherapy system would help people recognize this and realize that they can simplify their lives and reduce their level of stress.

As Applied to Existing Psychotherapy Systems. As with the concept of Tao, there does not seem to be much application of p'u to existing systems. The psychoanalytic system emphasizes the opposite of p'u: the increasing complexity of the self as it assimilates more and more information in an attempt to strengthen the ego. The humanist system comes closest to integrating the concept of p'u, with its emphasis on a return to trusting the organismic self. The behaviorist system contains no such concept and has no place for any application of such a concept. To paraphrase Lao Tzu, the pursuit of existing psychotherapy systems is to increase day after day; the pursuit of an integrated psychotherapy system is to decrease day after day.

#### Te or Power

##### The Meaning of the Concept

The original form for the ideogram for te signified stepping forward in such a straight line, guided by the heart, that ten men

couldn't find fault with the movement (Wing, 1986). Te therefore means power along with moral excellence, and thus virtue or character (Chan, 1963a). In relation to Tao, it means Tao endowed in all the individual things which exist, or what each thing has obtained from Tao that makes it different from other things: "Te is then the individualizing factor, the embodiment of definite principles which give things their determinate features or characters" (Chan, 1963b, p. 11). Te was interpreted by Blakney (1955) to mean "motivation by inward rectitude" (p. 38), by Watts (1975) as "power exercised without the use of force and without undue interference with the order of surrounding circumstances" (p. 121), by Waley (1958) as "potentiality, a latent power, a 'virtue' inherent in something" (p. 31), and by Kaltenmark (1969) as "a virtue or potency enabling a man to accomplish particular actions" (p. 27).

Tao is universal, while te is particular. As te is derived from Tao, it is naturally in conformity with Tao. Tao is hsüan, or profound and mysterious, and thus unknowable not only to the senses but also to the intellect. Its existence can be deduced through observations of te manifested in the ten thousand things, but it can be experienced only through direct mystic apprehension.

When Tê is achieved one is said to have returned to one's original nature. Thus a man of Tê when he sits has no thoughts; when he walks he has no worries; in the depth of his mind nothing is contained. In other words, the man of Tê has attained to a higher stage of psychic integration through contemplation.

(C-Y. Chang, 1963, p. 125)

### Its Applications to Psychotherapy

As Part of an Integrated Psychotherapy System. Te exists in all things, by virtue of their coming forth from Tao. In all that exists other than man, te is manifested naturally: a rock is nothing but a rock, and a bird is nothing but a bird. Only people have the ability to be unnatural, and indeed almost all people live lives far removed from Tao and te: "For a plant or stone to be natural is no problem. But for us there is some problem, indeed a big problem. To be natural is something we must work on" (Suzuki, 1970, p. 108). To be natural and thereby to manifest te is not easy. A major goal of an integrated psychotherapy system would be to engender te in clients--to help clients recover the naturalness (tzu-jen) and simplicity (p'u) necessary to living a life of contentment and fulfillment, and also to attaining a realization of the Absolute and to the possession and utilization of te.

As Applied to Existing Psychotherapy Systems. Te seems to be a concept foreign to existing systems, perhaps because it is a metaphysical concept. In the psychoanalytic system the concept of libido, the psychic drive or energy usually associated with the sexual instincts (APA, 1984), is similar, but libido is primarily a sexual energy and narrower in definition than te. Libido is also not something that is endowed in the individual by virtue of the individual having emerged from something noumenal, unlike te, which is the expression in the individual of Tao. The humanist system talks about what people would be like if they were self-actualized, but does not postulate the existence of a potency or force which individuals acquire as a result of becoming

self-actualized. The behaviorist system does not address constructs, which are not behaviorally observable, and thus has no concept like te.

It seems then that one application of the Tao Te Ching to existing systems would be consideration by these systems of what is accomplished as a result of positive change and growth in individuals: How do individuals change? Do they acquire something which they did not have before? Do they lose something which they did have before? Or, do they gain access to or control over something which they had all along but did not know that they had, like te?

### Sheng-jen or the Perfect Man

#### The Meaning of the Concept

A person who has achieved oneness with Tao is referred to as sheng-jen, which is depicted by a character representing an individual who stands in his place and listens with his ears and speaks wisely and humanely with his mouth (Wing, 1986). Sheng-jen has been translated as the Perfect Man (Izutsu, 1968), the Wise Man, the Sage, or the King (Blakney, 1955), evolved individuals (Wing, 1986), the intelligent man (Bahm, 1958), and the True Man or the Holy Man (Medhurst, 1972). As Izutsu (1968) described the Perfect Man:

Externally, all the members of the body have become "dissolved" and forgotten. Internally, all activities of perception have been "abolished." The consciousness of the "ego" as the center of the external and internal existence of man has totally been effaced. The disappearance of the "ego" naturally results in the disappearance of all "objects" from the consciousness. Things are still there, in a certain sense. But as "objects" which are distinguished from each other by their essential boundaries, they disappear completely from the consciousness. They are now there, totally transformed into an all-pervading Unity. (p. 418)

Girardot (1983) stated that Lao Tzu described the sage king in Chapter 15 of the Tao Te Ching as cautious, being at a loss, reserved, supple and pliant, genuine, open and broad, and merged and undifferentiated (Chan, 1963b). Such a person, according to Watts (1975), exhibits "a form of intelligence [which consists] of knowing the principles, structures, and trends of human and natural affairs so well that [the person] uses the least amount of energy possible in dealing with them" (p. 76). This is not a form of intellectual, logical, conscious, and rational intelligence, however, but rather the intuitive and spontaneous intelligence of the whole organism. One who is in conformity with Tao, then, will have "the unusual and thus remarkable naturalness of the sage--his or her unself-consciousness and uncontrived skill in handling social and practical affairs" (Watts, 1975, p. 107). He or she will be "less subject to the influence of external events and circumstances and more detached from the conventional values of the world, better in health, sharper and deeper in understanding, and clearer in spiritual vision" (Wei, 1982, p. 57).

Early Taoists often led solitary lives in remote reaches of the countryside, dedicating themselves to the values of individualism, personal freedom, and harmony with the processes of nature which were advocated by Lao Tzu in the Tao Te Ching. An anonymous Chinese folk song depicts the life of the sage:

When the sun rises, I go to work;  
 When the sun sets, I rest.  
 I dig a well for my drink;  
 I plow the fields for my food.  
 The power of the ruler cannot influence me;  
 I follow the rule of nature. (Liu, 1979, p. 13)

Very few descriptions of Taoist sages by people who actually met them in China have appeared in print. One such description is by Blofeld (1973):

I can list from first-hand knowledge certain general characteristics of Taoist recluses as I found them in the nineteen-thirties and nineteen-forties; theses [sic] to my mind, reveal them irrefutably as having been--among other things--true exponents of classical Taoist philosophy. Those characteristics were:

- 1 A healthy impatience with tiresome and restricting conventions, but not necessarily with conventions as such; for example, they clung to their distinctively antique garb, probably because it was loose, comfortable and exceedingly attractive without being fussy or expensive.
- 2 A taste for frugality which was by no means drab or puritanical, for they delighted in whatever simple pleasures their mountain retreats afforded.
- 3 A ready acceptance of life as it came, an absence of discontent that reminded me of Chuang-tzû's famous saying: "Since the sage does not have the feelings of a man, right or wrong cannot get at him. ... When I talk of his having no such feelings, I mean he does not allow likes or dislikes to get in and do him harm. He just lets things be the way they are instead of trying to help life along."
- 4 A preference for being inconspicuous, undemanding and uncombative, and the breadth of vision to submit gracefully to adverse circumstances when submit they must.
- 5 A care to avoid involvement in public affairs or civic duties, that was more than compensated for by their extreme hospitality and kindness both to travellers and to the local peasants.
- 6 A flair for running their communities with a bare minimum of regulations.
- 7 A readiness to laugh engagingly at mishaps as well as at what they took to be their own inadequacies and follies, so that grumbling and pomposity were scarcely to be found among them.
- 8 An inner stillness and a keen enjoyment of natural beauty, coupled with considerable powers of intuiting nature's processes and rhythms. (p. 169)

### Its Applications to Psychotherapy

As Part of an Integrated Psychotherapy System. The image of sheng-jen is a clear description of what a psychotherapist would be like in an integrated psychotherapy system, and what the client might choose



to become like eventually, too. The therapist would be an individual who had, at least once, attained a realization of the Absolute--a return to identification with Tao. Such an individual would be able to serve as a mentor to others seeking to do the same. He or she would be different from others who had not attained the same consciousness of the Unity level of reality, as Lao Tzu realized, and would function differently as a therapist:

I alone am inert, showing no sign (of desires),  
 Like an infant that has not yet smiled.  
 Wearied, indeed, I seem to be without a home.  
 The multitude all possess more than enough.  
 I alone seem to have lost all.  
 Mine is indeed the mind of an ignorant man,  
 Indiscriminate and dull!  
 Common folk are indeed brilliant;  
 I alone seem to be in the dark.  
 Common folk see differences and are clear-cut;  
 I alone make no distinctions.  
 I seem drifting as the sea;  
 Like the wind blowing about, seemingly without destination.  
 The multitude all have a purpose;  
 I alone seem to be stubborn and rustic.  
 I alone differ from others,  
 And value drawing sustenance from Mother (Tao). (p. 134)

Lao Tzu clearly realized that Tao and the sheng-jen would seem strange and unappealing to the masses:

When there are music and dainties,  
 Passing strangers will stay.  
 But the words uttered by Tao,  
 How insipid and tasteless! (p. 162)

When the highest type of men hear Tao,  
 They diligently practice it.  
 When the average type of men hear Tao,  
 They half believe it.  
 When the lowest type of men hear Tao,  
 They laugh heartily at it.  
 If they did not laugh at it, it would not be Tao. (p. 174)

It is clear that there are levels of enlightenment, just as there are levels of ignorance. An individual who had had one experience of direct perception of the Unity level would be different from one who had had many such experiences over many years. Consequently, therapists practicing an integrated psychotherapy system would vary in their characteristics based upon their development as sheng-jen. The Japanese word sensei, or teacher, which is applied to professors, doctors, martial arts instructors, and school teachers, among others, literally means one who has walked the path before. A sensei, then, is one who, having made the journey before, can serve as a guide to someone making the journey for the first time. This is the way in which a therapist in an integrated psychotherapy system can serve as a mentor to clients.

As Applied to Existing Psychotherapy Systems. In the psychoanalytic system, following Jung's practice in his analytic psychology, there is a requirement that analysts, while in training, undergo analysis themselves. The result is that analysts are sensei, having themselves made the journey on which they are now guiding the client. To that extent, they are sheng-jen of the analytic system, although clearly different from sheng-jen of an integrated psychotherapy system. In the humanist system there is no requirement that therapists have undergone humanist therapy themselves, but the implication is clear in this system that one who is not what the client is being guided to become cannot serve as a guide. In the behaviorist system there is no requirement that therapists have undergone any of the techniques which they employ with clients, and consequently they do not qualify as

sheng-ien of their own system. The major application of the concept of sheng-ien to existing systems, then, is that therapists should have already made the journey on which they propose to guide the client: continuing Jung's practice, therapists in training should be required to undergo therapy of the same system in which they are receiving their training.

### Yinism or the Paradoxical Power of Weakness

#### The Meaning of the Concept

"Yinism" (Scott, cited in Blakney, 1955) is "a peculiar emphasis on what is generally regarded as negative morality, such as ignorance, humility, compliance, contentment, and above all, weakness" (Chan, 1963b, p. 13). In the Tao Te Ching Lao Tzu encouraged people to avoid the extreme, the extravagant, and the excessive, to do away with desires, knowledge, competition, and things of the senses, to be contented with contentment and to know when to stop, to be humble and to accept disgrace, to be willing to live in places which others detest, to be low and submissive, and to be behind others but never ahead of them--in short, to be weak (Chan, 1963b). Weakness is a "basic virtue from the standpoint of Lao Tzu's philosophy, conducive to the growth and development of other virtues such as humility, noncontention, and Wu Wei or noninterference" (Wei, 1982, p. 221). Chan (1963b) believed that Lao Tzu advocated weakness for three reasons. First, weakness is a virtue in itself, that is, as necessary in life as strength. Second, weakness is

often an outward expression of real strength. And third, weakness overcomes strength in the long run.

Lao Tzu was the first to advocate the unassertive, the inconspicuous, the lowly, the imperfect, and the incomplete as metaphors for Tao (Waley, 1958). In particular, he used various symbols to convey the concept of weakness: water and the low ground in which water dwells; the valley, empty space, and the void; the female and the mother; and the infant and the uncarved block. Water benefits all things and does not compete with them; it dwells in lowly places; appearing soft and weak, it can nonetheless overcome the hard and strong. The valley, empty space, and the void all stand for non-being, vacuity, vastness, openness, all-inclusiveness, lowliness and humility, nothingness, and potentiality and creativity--all outstanding characteristics of Tao. The female symbolizes lowliness, meekness, and passivity; receiving semen from the male, she becomes the mother, producing and sustaining the infant, thereby being receptive and productive or creative; the mother was thus a prime symbol for Tao. The infant and the uncarved block both stand for simplicity and unity; the infant also symbolizes the return to the root--the unspoiled beginnings of things.

Lao Tzu emphasized that power comes from the feminine passivity that we all have to keep alive at the core of our beings. By being passive and empty, we become chaotified and receptive to Tao and its power. We must recognize that we are comprised of a basic duality--yin and yang--and that it is the yin, or the feminine, that is the more useful of the two (Kaltenmark, 1969). Cultivation of the yin aspect of

our beings--passivity, quietude, receptivity, humility, and emptiness or void--makes us like Tao.

### Its Applications to Psychotherapy

As Part of an Integrated Psychotherapy System. In an integrated psychotherapy system yinism would be manifested in a number of ways. It would show in the receptiveness of therapists to the client's phenomenological world, in their valueless and nonjudgmental way of working with the client, and in their application of wu-wei, the epitome of yinism, to the work, especially to the handling of resistance. Yinism means many things in therapy: it means therapists admitting that they don't have all the answers, and beyond that helping clients to understand that the answers are really within them, and have in fact been there all along; it means dealing with clients as peers rather than as inferiors; it means not having preconceived notions about what clients are like or how they need to change; it means maintaining balance in one's self and one's life, and helping clients to realize both the need to do so and how to do so; and it means helping clients to understand and value not doing and quietude, as means to an understanding of the true self and through this true reality.

As Applied to Existing Psychotherapy Systems. Like p'u, or simplicity, yinism seems to be the antithesis of the aim of existing systems, which work to strengthen the ego and bolster the ability of the client to operate through the use of conscious, rational, and assertive thought--in effect, to become yang. This is not surprising, given that

existing systems are derived from a yang worldview, in which activity and power are admired and sought after. An integrated psychotherapy system would value yinism--passivity and quietude as the route to understanding and a higher consciousness. Applying yinism to existing systems is impossible without a wholesale overhaul of the worldviews and basic beliefs of these systems. It seems then that yinism cannot be used to supplement existing systems, but can only be used if these systems are integrated with Taoist thought into a new system.

Goals of Therapy: Symptom Relief, Personality  
Restructuring, and Realizing the Absolute

#### The Meaning of the Concept

There would be three different levels of goals in an integrated psychotherapy system. First, the majority of clients, as is true in existing psychotherapy systems, would be seeking only relief from distressing symptoms of anxiety and depression, and would want to accomplish this in as few sessions as possible. This is in line with the policies of current managed health care systems, which typically offer a mental health benefit of 20 sessions and limit services to out-patient evaluation, crisis intervention, and short-term therapy. Such clients would be served in an integrated psychotherapy system much as they are today, except that concepts from the Tao Te Ching would be used in the therapy. Second, a minority of clients would be interested in either personality restructuring or individual or interpersonal growth. This goes beyond symptom relief, and consequently takes more time. Such clients would also be served much as they are today, except that there

would be more of an emphasis in therapy on the client's worldview than there is in existing psychotherapy systems, other than in the humanist system. Third, a very few clients would be interested in going beyond both symptom relief and personality restructuring to a realization of the Absolute, or union with Tao. Such clients would be served very differently than in existing psychotherapy systems. These clients and the type of therapy they would receive will now be considered.

The outcome of the proper practice of Taoism is the attainment of a state of union with Tao, or an experiencing of the true nature of reality, that has been called variously illumination, enlightenment, ecstasy, pure consciousness, and absolute joy. Illumination, or ming, refers to an apprehension of "the ultimate reality in which all attributes are united ... the unchanging unity underlying a shifting plurality, and at the same time the impetus giving rise to every form of life and motion" (Waley, 1958, p. 50). Izutsu (1967) stated that "the equalization of all things, or 'heavenly equalization' is not a mere matter of taking an intellectual position. It is basically a matter of metaphysical intuition" (p. 402). Realization of the Absolute is achieved only through making oneself chaotified like Tao itself--stilling the body and the mind such that one becomes receptive to that which is and always has been within oneself: Tao. In the highest extremity of ecstatic oblivion everything becomes undifferentiated, including the subject's knowledge of him- or herself as a subject. This is the state of being ego-less.

According to Izutsu (1967) very few people ever realize the Absolute "because of the 'ego' depriving man of the absolute spiritual

freedom with which alone he can attain to the level of the aforementioned "heavenly equalization" (p. 412). In part this is because the function of the ego, which is to protect the individual from the dangers of the world and to provide for his or her needs, leads the individual to perceive the Multiplicity Level as true reality. In part, too, this is because the very existence of the ego sets up a basic differentiation which orients the individual away from consideration of the unseen Unity Level: There is the ego (the "me") and there is that which is not the ego (the "not me"). This primary differentiation appears so self-evident that individuals readily entertain the notion that, since they themselves are separate from all other objects, these other objects must be separate and distinct as well, with no unseen underlying or unifying factor. Realizing the Absolute means realizing that all things are one, and that the individual does not really exist. Very few people are prepared to contemplate the possibility that they do not really exist!

Other writers are in agreement with Izutsu that the presence of the ego is the major impediment to a realization of illumination. C-Y. Chang (1963) put this very directly:

The understanding of Tao is an inner experience in which distinction between subject and object vanishes. It is an intuitive, immediate awareness rather than a mediated, inferential, or intellectual process. Tao does not blossom into vital consciousness until all distinctions between self and nonself have disappeared. (p. 19)

In this unity everything breaks through the shell of itself and interfuses with every other thing. Each identifies with every other. The one is many and the many is one. In this realm all selves dissolve into one, and all our selves are selves only to the extent that they disappear into all other selves. Each individual merges into every other individual. Here we have entered the realm of nonbeing. The dissolution of self and the interfusion among all



individuals, which takes place upon entry into this realm of nonbeing, constitutes the metaphysical structure of sympathy. (p. 36)

Kaltenmark (1969) was somewhat less direct, but was clearly addressing the same issue when he wrote about nei tan, meditation involving relaxed concentration and breath control:

The nei tan exercises go together with the elimination from consciousness of everything extraneous to pure self, which means expelling the social self in favor of a cosmic self--a unified, global, and potent consciousness instead of a plethora of lesser states of awareness. (p. 145)

This third group of clients, then, would be guided to a realization of identification with Tao and an experience of oneness with all that exists. This is clearly a goal which is not recognized by either the psychoanalytic or behaviorist systems, although it has been written about by some humanist writers.

### Its Applications to Psychotherapy

#### As Part of an Integrated Psychotherapy System

Attainment of a realization of the Absolute would be a prerequisite for being able to function as a therapist in an integrated psychotherapy system, and also would be a goal of therapy for some clients. It would be necessary for therapists in such a system to have experienced enlightenment themselves, because otherwise it would not be possible for them to serve as guides for clients on similar journeys. However, this would be only a necessary condition, not a sufficient one. In addition to the attainment of a realization of the Absolute, Taoist therapists would also have to possess an understanding of an entire system of

psychology based upon Taoist thought and existing psychological knowledge. Admittedly, such a system does not now exist, but one may be synthesized some day, incorporating the teachings of Lao Tzu into psychology theories and the practice of psychotherapy to form a complete body of knowledge.

A therapist in this integrated psychotherapy system would have to have achieved a different type of consciousness, based upon a direct perception of the Unity level of being. This can only be accomplished through the stilling of the ego, almost the lulling of the ego into a state of quiescence such that a new experiencing of existence can be achieved. However, this does not equate with the extinction or abolition of the ego. To quote Watts (1961):

It cannot be stressed too strongly that liberation does not involve the loss or destruction of such conventional concepts as the ego; it means seeing through them--in the same way that we can use the idea of the equator without confusing it with a physical mark upon the surface of the earth. Instead of falling below the ego, liberation surpasses it. (p. 19)

Here is, without a doubt, the major point of departure between an integrated psychotherapy system and existing systems: all existing systems implicitly or explicitly accept the dualistic nature of reality. As applied to metaphysics, this means the dualism of the observer and the observed. In therapy, this subject-object dichotomy is the last illusion standing between the individual and a realization of the Absolute. It is manifested in existing systems as other dualisms as well, including that of conscious/unconscious, mind/body, and thought/emotion. Therapy in existing systems means making these dual-

isms stronger; in an integrated psychotherapy system it means surmounting these dualisms.

From the perspective of the practice of therapy in an integrated psychotherapy system, it is only realistic to admit that not every client is going to want to achieve a realization of the Absolute. Not every client seeking therapy through existing systems necessarily wants to pursue therapy beyond the alleviation of the stress being felt because of a specific psychosocial stressor. Much of therapy as it is practiced now is problem-focused and symptom-specific, and this is due in no large part to the influence of managed health care systems. Just as there are psychoanalytic therapists today who refuse to do anything but a complete analysis, or who at least hold to this as the ideal, there may someday be integrated psychotherapy system therapists who will refuse to do anything but a complete transformation of the client's level of consciousness. Most of them, like most therapists now, however, would probably work to alleviate acute distress experienced in reaction to transient events.

#### As Applied to Existing Psychotherapy Systems

The concept of a realization of the Absolute, the major difference in goals between an integrated psychotherapy system and existing psychotherapy systems, clearly has little application to existing systems, except perhaps as a metaphor for helping clients to see options which had not occurred to them. Existing systems do not recognize any reality other than that of the Multiplicity level. However, they do recognize that clients typically do not see all the options that they

truly have, instead feeling trapped by the perception that they have only a narrow range of options available to them, none of which they see as acceptable. The concept of another level of reality may serve as a metaphor for alternatives outside those which have been considered by the client.

### The Therapeutic Relationship: The Master and the Disciple

#### The Nature of the Relationship

In tao chia, traditionally the master taught in silence and the disciples had to understand intuitively what was expected of them. This was only appropriate, given that what was being learned was something beyond words--a realization of the Absolute. It was necessary for the disciples to forget everything to prepare their minds for attunement with Tao: to forget things, to forget their master, and eventually to forget themselves. Instruction proceeded through the mechanism of wu-wei, with the master seeming wholly passive. It was the adepts who had to progress, stilling their minds and bodies, emptying themselves of ego to make themselves receptive to Tao. The master's role was to guide the progression of the disciples along the path to realization of what the disciples had known earlier but had lost the knowledge of--the presence within them of Tao. The disciples had to become like newborn children again (p'u) and re-experience the unity which was theirs at birth.

As Lao Tzu stated, "The Tao that can be told of is not the eternal Tao/The name that can be named is not the eternal name" (Chan, 1963b, p.

97), and "He who knows does not speak/He who speaks does not know" (p. 199). Clearly, Lao Tzu referred to a teaching without words (Kaltenmark, 1969) in which the master, or the sage, stood as an example to others, instructing them through his actions and way of living rather than by words and moral exhortations:

Therefore the sage manages affairs without action  
And spreads doctrines without words.  
All things arise, and he does not turn away from them.  
He produces them but does not take possession of them.  
He acts but does not rely on his own ability.  
He accomplishes his task but does not claim credit for it.  
It is precisely because he does not claim credit that his  
accomplishments remain with him. (p. 101)

To produce things and to rear them,  
To produce, but not to take possession of them,  
To act, but not to rely on one's own ability,  
To lead them, but not to master them--  
This is called profound and secret virtue. (p. 116)

Therefore the sage embraces the One  
And becomes the model of the world.  
He does not show himself; therefore he is luminous.  
He does not justify himself; therefore he becomes  
prominent.  
He does not boast of himself; therefore he is  
given credit.  
He does not brag; therefore he can endure for long. (p. 139)

Therefore the sage says:  
I take no action and the people of themselves are  
transformed.  
I love tranquility and the people of themselves become  
correct.  
I engage in no activity and the people of themselves  
become prosperous.  
I have no desires and the people of themselves become  
simple. (p. 201)

Teaching was living; living was teaching. What was taught was not a way to do something--not technique alone--but rather a way to be, a way of life which was all-encompassing and all-pervading. There was no distinction between what was believed and what was done.

## Its Applications to Psychotherapy

### As Part of an Integrated Psychotherapy System

The master-disciple relationship in ancient China was certainly different than the therapist-client relationship today. It was a relationship which went on 24 hours a day, every day, often for years or even decades, as opposed to the traditional fifty-minute once-a-week therapy hour of today. It was also a relationship in which the disciples gave themselves over totally to the authority of the master, such that the disciples typically cleaned the master's house, cooked the meals, chopped firewood and carried water. Modern-day therapy relationships, by contrast, are paid for with money rather than with labor, and almost never involve the client and therapist living together for extended periods of time.

The therapist-client relationship in an integrated psychotherapy system would probably come closer to the typical therapy arrangement of today than to the typical master-disciple relationship of centuries ago, because of the demands of modern life upon both the therapist and the client. The form of the arrangement would probably depend upon the aim of therapy, as well. If the aim were the alleviation of distress caused by a transient life stressor, the arrangement would probably be typical of most modern therapies. If, however, the aim were something more, up to and including the attainment by the client of a realization of the Absolute, then the arrangement would probably be more like that of a lay student of Zen meditation in Japan, who comes to the temple to meditate periodically throughout the week while continuing to live at home and

work every day, and who whenever possible participates in regularly-held extended periods of meditation (van de Wetering, 1973).

If the aim of therapy were the attainment by the client of a realization of the Absolute, then the content of the relationship would also be different from that of the typical course of therapy today. The relationship would focus not upon the pathology of the client, not upon working toward the absence of illness, but rather upon the cultivation of the presence of well-being (Fromm, 1960). This is akin to the human potential movement in modern psychology (Mann, 1979) which emphasizes increasing the ability of the individual to use all of his or her capabilities in the pursuit of personal development. The emphasis would be on becoming, on transformation through experiencing the entirety of the here-and-now, and the way to this would be the teaching-without-words offered by the therapist through his or her interactions with the client.

#### As Applied to Existing Psychotherapy Systems

Existing systems vary in their conceptions of the therapist-client relationship. In the psychoanalytic system the therapist remains remote from clients, to encourage clients to project fantasies onto the therapist based on their relationships with significant others while young. Therapy focuses on helping clients understand the nature of these fantasies and the effects they have on their relationships with people, especially intimate relationships. Therapy typically occurs on a schedule of one to five sessions a week, preferably five in classical analysis. The psychoanalytic therapist could not offer him- or herself

as a model for the client to adopt and could not alter the arrangement of therapy without upsetting the core of psychoanalytic therapy, the cure of the transference neurosis through regular and frequent sessions, so the master-disciple relationship in Taoism seems to have little application to the psychoanalytic system.

In the humanist system the therapist relates to clients as genuinely as possible, in the hope that they will eventually be able to reciprocate. The therapist uses him- or herself as a model, as in Taoism, but does so for different reasons. The therapist may also be flexible and innovative in how long, how often, and where he or she sees the client, as is appropriate to the circumstances. The applications to this system would seem to already be in place.

In the behaviorist system therapists do not use themselves as a tool of the therapy, relying instead upon technique. Further, they do not necessarily have to have ever undergone the techniques which they employ with their clients. According to the basic beliefs of this system, however, this is acceptable. Nonetheless, it would seem appropriate for behaviorist therapists to pay greater attention to their personal qualities and how these impact therapy, and also to the concept of the *sensei*--that therapists can only take clients as far as they themselves have gone.



Therapy Techniques: Methods of Symptom Relief, Personality  
Restructuring, and Realizing the Absolute

The Methods of the Tao Te Ching

"To regard the fundamental as the essence, to regard things as coarse, to regard accumulation as deficiency, and to dwell quietly alone with the spiritual and the intelligent--herein lies the techniques of Tao of the ancients" (Chan, 1963a, p. 136). C-Y. Chang (1963) described two such techniques, both of which are found in Lao Tzu's writings. The first, t'ien, quiescence or repose, is a method of gradual attainment whereas the second, chih, intuitive knowledge, is a method of sudden enlightenment.

T'ien: Quiescence Through Meditation

T'ien is the product of a gradual dissolution of the ego, a gradual abandonment of the illusion of the separateness of things and of the existence of the self. T'ien is achieved primarily through meditation and breath control, through a stilling of the mind and the body, through an abandoning of activity, through becoming receptive to Tao--through becoming yin, in other words. Through quietude one returns to the deep root of one's own being and becomes aware thereby of the deep root of all things (C-Y. Chang, 1963). T'ien is a "losing" method, through which layers of illusion are gradually peeled away until truth is arrived at:

The pursuit of learning is to increase day after day.  
The pursuit of Tao is to decrease day after day.  
It is to decrease and further decrease until one reaches the  
point of taking no action.  
No action is undertaken, and yet nothing is left undone. (p. 184)

There is nearly universal agreement that Lao Tzu described meditation and breath control in the Tao Te Ching. The Chinese term for meditation is ching tsuo, literally "sitting peacefully" (Liu, 1979, p. 91). Ching tsuo is regarded as the most central of all the techniques developed by the Taoists. Waley (1958) believed it beyond dispute that Lao Tzu practiced some form of self-hypnosis or self-induced trance arrived at through meditation, consisting of "slackening limbs and frame, blotting out the senses of hearing and sight, getting clear of outward forms, dismissing knowledge, and being absorbed into That which Pervades Everything" (p. 117). Lao Tzu taught that enlightenment was achieved through the application by the individual of suppleness and nonresistance, according to the principles of wu-wei (Kaltenmark, 1969). The method for achieving this seemed to be breath control, or concentration of the breath. Wei (1982) stated that Lao Tzu emphasized meditation as the way to achieve oneness with Tao. According to Chapter 1 of the Tao Te Ching, this meditation was practiced both to see the essence of Tao, and also to see the essence transformed into its many manifestations, although it is clear that the two were seen as merely different aspects of one and the same thing:

Therefore let there always be non-being, so we may  
see their subtlety,  
And let there always be being, so we may see their outcome.  
The two are the same,  
But after they are produced, they have different names. (p. 97)

Various chapters of the Tao Te Ching make reference, more or less directly and thus more or less arguably, to meditation as a technique for the attainment of enlightenment. Wei (1982) believed that in Chapter 10 Lao Tzu described meditation as having six components:

(1) undeviating concentration for an extended period of time; (2) natural, placid, and rhythmic breathing; (3) purification of the heart and mind against all inordinate affections and sensible images; (4) serene and effortless performance of one's daily duties through the practice of non-interference; (5) assumption of a passive, humble, and submissive attitude; and (6) the maintenance of perfect equanimity. These are as follows in the text:

Can you keep the spirit and embrace the One without  
departing from them?  
Can you concentrate your vital force and achieve the highest  
degree of weakness like an infant?  
Can you clean and purify your profound insight so it will be  
spotless?  
Can you love the people and govern the state without  
knowledge (cunning)?  
Can you play the role of the female in the opening and  
closing of the gates of Heaven?  
Can you understand all and penetrate all without taking any  
action? (p. 116)

Girardot (1983) believed that the process of attaining ecstasy was described by Lao Tzu in Chapter 15 of the Tao Te Ching. The text, he believed, suggests seven stages of a progressively profound mystical experience of union with Tao achieved through the use of meditation techniques of breath manipulation and yoga-like sitting in quietude:

Of old those who were the best rulers were subtly  
mysterious and profoundly penetrating;  
Too deep to comprehend.  
And because they cannot be comprehended,  
I can only describe them arbitrarily:

Cautious, like crossing a frozen stream in the winter,  
Being at a loss, like one fearing danger on all sides,  
Reserved, like one visiting,  
Supple and pliant, like ice about to melt.  
Genuine, like a piece of uncarved wood,  
Open and broad, like a valley,  
Merged and undifferentiated, like muddy water.

Who can make muddy water gradually clear through  
 tranquility?  
 Who can make the still gradually come to life  
 through activity?  
 He who embraces this Tao does not want to fill  
 himself to overflowing.  
 It is precisely because there is no overflowing that he  
 is beyond wearing out and renewal. (p. 126)

It was Girardot's belief that the descriptors applied to those who were the best rulers were in fact a description of the process of attaining enlightenment and detailed a seven-stage process through which an individual would have to pass before achieving a realization of the Absolute. Girardot saw the process as one of returning to a state of chaos (hun-tun) which was identical to that of Tao, which would then allow an identification with Tao.

Needleman (1989) described meditation as the process of becoming familiar with one's own real structure as a human being. According to Lama Govinda (cited in Kutz, Borysenko, & Benson, 1985):

Meditation means many things: It means turning inward; it means quiet observation, reflection and awareness of ourselves: It means to be conscious of consciousness, to become a detached observer of the stream of changing thoughts, feelings, drives and visions, until we recognize their nature and origin. (p. 3)

LeShan (1974) stated that there are two major common results reported by mystics the world over and that all mystical training schools aim toward: comprehension of a different view of reality than the one we ordinarily use, and greater efficiency in everyday life. The former brings a strong serenity and inner peace that remains stable even in the face of much adversity; the latter strengthens the will, purpose, goal-oriented behavior, and concentration, and facilitates the personality reorganization that is part of the slow, endless growth to real maturity.

Attaining a second view of reality does not mean that the two views are then kept separate. This would result in personality fragmentation rather than increased coherence and organization. The two views become integrated such that the knowledge of our separateness and differences is clarified and strengthened by the knowledge of our oneness.

Although it is clear that Lao Tzu advocated meditation, it is not so clear what type of meditation he advocated. The Tao Te Ching describes concentration and breath control, but does not clearly describe any other form of meditation. Therefore, for purposes of the present work meditation will be considered to mean concentration of thought and breath control. In actuality, however, meditation includes such practices as contemplation, breath counting, chanting, dancing and other rhythmic movement, yoga, and such Jungian practices as the use of active imagination to communicate with the Self through painting, modeling, sandplay, singing, and dancing.

#### Chih: Intuitive Knowledge Through Circumventing Rational Thought

Chih is the private awareness of one's innermost being. It is "pure self-consciousness through immediate, direct primitive penetration instead of by methods that are derivative, inferential, or rational" (C-Y. Chang, 1963, p. 40). Thus chih, which aims at the abolition of all barriers between things, including between self and object, is entirely different from ordinary knowledge. It occurs in an instant, like a flash of lightning, when conventional thinking is swept aside to allow reality to be experienced unfiltered by the ego.

Lao Tzu used figurative language--including simile and symbolism--and paradox to by-pass everyday conscious, logical, rational, and analytical thought. He did so in part to avoid the normal dichotomy of the knower and the known, which only reinforces the illusion of separateness which he wished to shatter. His idea of teaching without words anticipated the Buddhist tradition of silent transmission of the mystic doctrine (Chan, 1963b), especially in the Zen (Ch'an) school, where frequent use was made of the method of wen ta (in Japanese, mondo), or the question-and-answer method of teaching enlightenment (Chang, 1963).

The Tao Te Ching abounds with figurative language. In Chapter Three, for example, Lao Tzu wrote: "Therefore in the government of the sage/He keeps their hearts vacuous/Fills their bellies/Weakens their ambitions/And strengthens their bones" (p. 103). Lao Tzu has been accused by some of advocating a cruel form of despotism in which his ideas are used to subjugate the masses to a life of misery and labor. A literal reading of this verse might support this accusation. A figurative reading, however, concludes that what Lao Tzu was advocating here was teaching the masses the Way, so that they, too, can find fulfillment in a realization of the Absolute. Hsu, or vacuous, is a Taoist term which Chan (1963b) pointed out is not to be taken in its literal sense of being empty, but rather as a description of a state of absolute peacefulness, purity of mind, and freedom from worry and selfish desires, undisturbed by incoming impressions or the interference of the contents of the mind on what is coming into the mind. As Wang (249/1979) commented:

The heart harbors wisdom and the belly harbors food. Vacuity means wisdom and to be full means to be without cunning. Bones means to act without cunning. Ambition means to create activities so as to disturb (oneself). When the heart is vacuous, ambition becomes weak. (p. 11)

Lao Tzu spoke here about providing the people with what they really needed--guidance in attaining the Way--rather than with what are usually thought of as the necessities of life.

Lao Tzu also used simile to great effect. In Chapter 58 he enumerated some of the qualities of the sage:

Therefore the sage is as pointed as a square but does not pierce.  
He is as acute as a knife but does not cut.  
He is as straight as an unbent line but does not extend.  
He is as bright as light but does not dazzle. (p. 203)

Figurative language is, of course, open to multiple interpretations. Waley (1958) understood Lao Tzu to mean that the sage reaches his ends without the use of means--that the sage has available to him a power (te) unavailable to ordinary men. Wei (1982) understood the verse to mean that the sage doesn't interfere in the lives of the people, but rather cultivates himself as a model for the people to follow. In other words, the sage applies wu-wei to his interpersonal relationships.

Symbolism also figured strongly in Lao Tzu's teaching method. The Tao Te Ching contains many symbols for Tao: an infant, water or a river or the sea, a female, a valley or a ravine, an uncarved block, a bellows, the Mother, the One, and a bowl. All of these symbols attempt to communicate a part of the apprehension of Tao which comes to one who achieves enlightenment: that Tao is non-being but not nothingness; that it is inexhaustible; that it is the source of all things; and that it is undifferentiated. Lao Tzu used other symbols as well: government

sometimes stood for the pattern of Tao; the hub of a wheel, a clay utensil, doors and windows all stood for non-being or void; muddy water stood for the confusion of daily living and its concentration on phenomena; and baggage stood for the fundamental or the essential.

By his use of paradox Lao Tzu conveyed that Tao is beyond all conventional thinking. Tao contains contradictions, but at the same time reconciles all contradictions. The cultural tradition of the West teaches that a thing can only be itself, and not something else as well: a person is either male or female, but not both at once. The Chinese cultural tradition allows a thing to be itself, its opposite, all things, and nothing, and all at the same time. Operating from a perspective in which the Unity Level is more important than the Multiplicity Level, Lao Tzu said things which don't make sense to Westerners if taken literally. "Therefore the sage manages affairs without action/And spreads doctrines without words" (p. 100) and "Tao invariably takes no action, and yet there is nothing left undone" (p. 166) seem nonsensical at first glance, unless one knows that Lao Tzu was referring to wu-wei and to a level of reality unseen by ordinary eyes.

Chapter 22 offers an illustration of how Lao Tzu employed chih, in the form of paradoxical and figurative language, to jolt people into enlightenment:

To yield is to be preserved whole.  
 To be bent is to become straight.  
 To be empty is to be full.  
 To be worn out is to be renewed.  
 To have little is to possess.  
 To have plenty is to be perplexed.  
 Therefore the sage embraces the One  
 And becomes the model of the world.  
 He does not show himself; therefore he is luminous.  
 He does not justify himself; therefore he becomes prominent.



He does not boast of himself; therefore he is given credit.  
He does not brag; therefore he can endure for long.

It is precisely because he does not compete that the  
world cannot compete with him.  
Is the ancient saying, "To yield is to be preserved whole,"  
empty words?  
Truly he will be preserved and (prominence and credit)  
will come to him. (p. 139)

At the literal level this entire verse seems to make no sense. However, at the figurative level the verse is an explanation of how one can achieve realization of Tao, and what such a realization will bring. Yielding, for example, means the passive and receptive state which allows one to realize Tao. Empty means the state of egolessness which comes from becoming chaotified like the void. Lao Tzu here advocated the practice of stillness through meditation which results in attaining a state of enlightenment.

### Their Applications to Psychotherapy

#### As Part of an Integrated Psychotherapy System

Chih is a sudden "flash" of insight, like a bolt of lightning against the sky; t'ien is the gradual dissolution of the ego, like the wearing away of rocks by the action of waves against a shore. Both are routes to enlightenment; both are techniques which Lao Tzu employed in the Tao Te Ching. To read the text is to be exposed to the actions of both t'ien and chih: frequent reading has the effect of gradually altering one's cognitive "map," while at the same time creating the conditions for sudden intuitive insight; the practice of meditation, which Lao Tzu clearly advocated in the text, gradually wears away the ego,

leaving one empty and yielding. In an integrated psychotherapy system t'ien and chih, in the forms of mindfulness meditation and paradoxical statements and other intellectual puzzles, would be the primary techniques. Both would be employed with someone who was seeking the attainment of a realization of the Absolute; both could be employed with someone seeking lesser goals, such as the resolution of a stressful life circumstance or the improvement of a relationship. It is likely that in the latter instance there would be a greater emphasis on chih because of the slowness of the results which are attained with t'ien.

Because meditation developed primarily in religious settings while psychotherapy developed primarily in scientific settings, the possibility of integrating the two has only rarely been considered. T'ien, or the meditative approach, is a procedure that one follows largely by oneself, with only periodic guidance from a master; psychotherapy, by contrast, typically involves a strong interpersonal interaction, and the agent of change is the interpersonal relationship between therapist and client. The goal of meditation is to help the individual reach a level of being not generally attained; the goal of therapy is usually to restore the client to his or her premorbid level of functioning. The primary concern of meditation is with the structure of the individual's awareness or experiencing, on the assumption that as the structure is strengthened the content will reorganize itself in a healthier manner; the primary concern of psychotherapy is with the content of the personality, on the assumption that as the content is reorganized the structure will become better integrated and balanced. Based on the above, there do not seem to be any fundamental contradictions between the two which would

preclude their integration in a new psychotherapy system. In fact, teachers of meditation should welcome new techniques from psychotherapy for exploring and re-evaluating unconscious content that distorts structure, enabling structure to be strengthened more easily; psychotherapists should welcome new techniques from meditation for increasing ego strength and cognitive flexibility, enabling content to be reorganized more easily. Examined in this light, it can be seen that both meditation and psychotherapy aim for inner growth and development, and are designed to help people reach their fullest potential.

Meditation is, in fact, currently used by some psychotherapists who integrate Western and Eastern approaches in their work with clients (Kutz et al., 1985; Walsh, 1979, 1983; Welwood, 1979a, 1979b). Kutz et al. (1985) believed that meditation is a form of cognitive therapeutic technique, in that both alter a person's attitudes and beliefs about his or her world. Meditation is practiced in the East as a life-long pursuit. Change is slow, and the focus is on the process of meditation itself rather than upon its effects. The use of traditional meditation as the sole technique with psychotherapy clients, almost all of whom are interested in quick relief of specific symptomatology, is ill-advised. However, meditation can be and is useful to teach clients mindfulness, which allows them to become detached observers of their own mental activity, so that they can see patterns of denial and distortion. This ability greatly aids the success of cognitive and insight-oriented psychotherapies aimed at the alteration of mental processes.

A person's world-view can also be altered instantaneously by an insight achieved through exposure to something which circumvents ordinary consciousness, such as a paradoxical statement or a koan or similar intellectual puzzle. Chih, or intuitive insight, was employed liberally by Lao Tzu in the Tao Te Ching. It is also employed in strategic and problem-solving therapy (de Shazer, 1985; Haley, 1976; L'Abate, Ganahl, & Hansen, 1986; Weeks & L'Abate, 1982). Lao Tzu's intent was to make Tao accessible to people by presenting it to them in ways which permitted bypassing of the conscious mind; a modern therapist's intent is to make alternate ways of behaving accessible to clients in ways which permit bypassing the conscious mind. Chih, in the form of paradoxical statements and similar intellectual puzzles, would clearly be a major technique of an integrated psychotherapy system.

#### As Applied to Existing Psychotherapy Systems

Meditation is not used in the psychoanalytic system, but could be used to increase ego strength and the coherence of personality organization. It could also be used to help a client relax and be better able to free-associate and accept interpretations. Meditation as an adjunct to psychoanalytic therapy would help the client think more clearly, be able to focus better, and be able to handle negative feelings better, all clearly abilities of benefit to the conduct of insight-oriented therapy. Meditation would also have applications to the humanist system, through its effects of enabling clients to feel more themselves and more integrated to and in command of their internal situations. Meditation does not seem to have any application to the

behaviorist system, however, because of its disregard for internal processes.

Paradox and similar intellectual puzzles, which are intended to leap past the conscious mind and directly address the unconscious mind, would seem to have little application to the psychoanalytic system, because of its orientation toward strengthening the ego and increasing the client's ability to deal rationally with the world through bringing into consciousness what has hitherto been unconscious. These techniques might have some application to the humanist system, however, because of their ability to directly impact the organismic self, although humanist therapists might have ethical problems with using techniques which change clients without the clients being aware that they are changing. There appears to be no applicability of these techniques to the behaviorist system, however, again because of its disregard for internal processes.

#### Applications and Contributions: A Summary

This section summarizes the applications of the Tao Te Ching to psychotherapy theory and technique which have been discussed above. It presents summaries of applications to an integrated psychotherapy system and to existing psychotherapy systems, and then addresses applications of these findings to the training of psychotherapists.

##### As Part of an Integrated Psychotherapy System

An integrated psychotherapy system, amalgamating existing psychological knowledge with the concepts of the Tao Te Ching, would

differ from existing systems in two major ways. First, it would acknowledge the existence of more than one level of reality. Second, it would acknowledge the cyclic pattern of change manifested in all things. Each of these is now considered in turn.

### Single vs. Multiple Levels of Reality

The principal point of departure between an integrated psychotherapy system incorporating the teachings of the Tao Te Ching and existing psychotherapy systems founded upon the hypothetico-deductive scientific tradition is that of levels of reality. The Tao Te Ching presents a worldview which conceives of two levels of reality: the Unity level, or Tao, the level of mystical experience and supra-ordinary consciousness at which all things merge into "a vast and limitless ocean of 'undifferentiation'" (Izutsu, 1968, p. 398) and the Multiplicity level, the level of ordinary experience and consciousness at which we perceive "an infinity of things each of which, considered in itself and on this particular level, is an independent, self-subsistent entity clearly marked off from all others" (p. 399). Izutsu (1968) believed that the Unity level is apprehensible only through a particular kind of ecstatic intuition. At this level all things cease to be things and interpenetrate and intermingle with each other. There are no longer any boundaries between objects. Time ceases to exist: past, present, and future are no longer meaningful concepts, so there are no beginnings or endings. All things become relative: beauty and ugliness, good and evil, and right and wrong all lose their absolute meanings. Everything is One, and the One is everything. By contrast, at the Multiplicity

level, the level of ordinary sensory perception, each thing is perceived as having its own boundary and by virtue of this as being clearly distinguished from all other things. Each thing is also perceived as having a clearly determinable beginning and ending to its existence.

An integrated psychotherapy system would acknowledge both levels of reality and would accommodate both in its theories and techniques. This would involve rethinking and rewriting large portions of the body of present psychological knowledge to accommodate the existence of the Unity level, including rethinking and rewriting psychotherapy theory and technique. This work is a start toward this process, and, it is to be hoped, an encouragement to others to engage in the same process.

Existing psychotherapy systems focus on returning clients to their premorbid levels of functioning--on taking them from a sick to a healthy condition, or from an abnormal to a normal state. While in most cases this is the function which an integrated psychotherapy system would perform for clients, such a system could also aim at enhancement and perfection of the personality by elevating various capacities of the individual from average normality to a supranormal standard (Yuasa, 1987), if this were the client's goal.

The need to integrate the Unity and Multiplicity levels of reality, or the Eastern and Western approaches to life, has already been recognized by some psychology theorists. Welwood (1983) believed that humans have two kinds of awareness available at any given moment: a focus on personal problems, needs, and feelings, and at the same time access to a larger awareness that allows them, if only briefly, to step out of their problems, take a larger perspective on them, and experience

some freedom from entanglements as a result. He believed that most Western therapies focus on the former and that most Eastern traditions focus on the latter, but that real change and growth in therapy happen only when both levels of awareness are addressed. An integrated psychotherapy system would address both levels.

Fromm (1960) stated his position as follows:

The question is: How can we overcome the suffering, the imprisonment, the shame which the experience of separateness creates; how can we find union within ourselves, with our fellow men, with nature? Basically, there are two answers. One is to overcome separateness and to find unity by regression to the state of unity which existed before awareness ever arose, that is, before man was born. The other answer is to be fully born, to develop one's awareness, one's reason, one's capacity to love, to such a point that one transcends one's own egocentric involvement, and arrives at a new harmony, at a new oneness with the world. (p. 87)

I hope that an integrated psychotherapy system would make possible the attainment of either or both of Fromm's answers by every individual struggling with Fromm's question.

#### Cyclic Change: Balancing Yin and Yang

A second point of departure is the incorporation into an integrated system of psychotherapy of the concept of cyclic change, or transformation, which occurs in a patterned or rhythmical fashion and which achieves a balanced state by reversing when excess occurs. Cyclic change occurs through the operations of yin and yang, which are present in all things, are relative rather than absolute concepts, are mutually generative, and can and do transform into each other. In an integrated psychotherapy system the concept of cyclic change would be manifested through the incorporation of such concepts as yin and yang and their



alternation, wu-wei, p'u, and yinism, or the emphasis on the lowly and humble. Clients would be provided with an awareness of the concept of cyclic change and of how the concept operates in their lives intrapsychically and interpersonally, as well as in the universe as a whole; they would be provided with an awareness of wu-wei and of how to operate through wu-wei in all areas of their lives; they would be provided with an awareness of p'u, and helped to learn how to become still and quiet again so that they could encounter their true selves and observe the structure and contents of their consciousnesses; and they would be provided with an awareness of the importance of the humble and the yielding and of the need to attain a balance between the two polarities that make up all things.

The incorporation of the concept of cyclic change into an integrated system would occur in part through an emphasis on yin, which can be characterized as unassertive, inconspicuous, lowly, imperfect, incomplete, ignorant, humble, compliant, contented, weak, passive, quiet, receptive, and empty or void. Such an emphasis is alien to the Western orientation toward yang, which can be characterized as active, progressive, growing, enlarging, aggressive, powerful, strong, assertive, perfect, complete, knowing, proud, struggling, and substantive. The Eastern and Western approaches to existence, in fact, are nowhere more opposed than on this factor.

It must be made clear that an integrated system would not replace the Western over-emphasis on yang with a corresponding over-emphasis on yin, but rather would incorporate both concepts while putting greater emphasis on yin. Just as the West is out of balance because it

emphasizes yang so strongly, an integrated system would be out of balance if it were to emphasize yin too strongly. As Lao Tzu wrote, the proper way is to "carry the yin and embrace the yang" (Chan, 1963b, p. 176). When it is appropriate to be yin, one should be yin; when it is appropriate to be yang, one should be yang. One should, in fact, be able to switch back and forth between the two flexibly, adaptively, and intuitively, as is warranted by the pattern of change which one observes in one's circumstances. Such flexibility is the epitome of wu-wei, or effortless action in accord with Tao.

One of the major means through which cyclic change would be implemented in therapy would be meditation. Meditation emphasizes yin, and can help to bring about a balance in those individuals who have over-emphasized yang. Meditation brings about an increase in ego strength and in the coherence of personality organization; it helps clients to feel at ease with themselves and with their environments; it teaches them to regard their own beings as something of real value and to pay attention to the totality of their own beings; and it is almost a necessity for attainment of a realization of the Absolute (LeShan, 1974). Considered specifically as a psychotherapy technique, meditation brings to the surface the complexes and emotions sunk in the unconscious region, freeing them and ultimately dissolving them by slowing the conscious activities connected with the cerebral functions (Yuasa, 1987). It is therefore useful as a therapy tool apart from its utility in attaining a realization of Tao.

Just as is true of existing psychotherapy systems, it would be important for a psychotherapist in an integrated psychotherapy system to

communicate to the client that there is no easy or magic way to serious growth and development, and that whether or not meditation is used, the road is a long and hard one. It would also be important to communicate that the purpose of meditation in psychotherapy is not to make the client feel better, although it will have this effect. The purpose is to enable clients to feel more themselves, more integrated to and in command of their internal states.

Certain general principles would govern the use of meditation with clients in an integrated psychotherapy system, and indeed in existing psychotherapy systems (LeShan, 1974). First, psychotherapists using meditation with clients should have substantial experience in meditation themselves, just as they should have substantial experience as psychotherapy clients before engaging in psychotherapy with others. Second, psychotherapy progress can best be aided by having clients meditate to build areas of strength and coherence initially. Third, meditation must be done as a daily discipline for at least a couple of weeks to have an effect. Fourth, meditation can be used just before and/or just after the therapy hour to help clients be clearer about, more focused on, and better able to handle their feelings. Fifth and last, a meditation program must realistically take into account how much time clients can and will devote to it.

#### As Applied to Existing Psychotherapy Systems

Existing psychotherapy systems incorporate the concept of polarities into their basic beliefs, although not so comprehensively as an integrated psychotherapy system would. The psychoanalytic system

recognizes certain polarities and the humanist system recognizes others, but the behaviorist system appears to have no such concept in its basic beliefs. Jung's analytic psychology incorporates the concept most extensively, both in terms of psychotherapy theory and technique. Jung appears to have understood the necessity for the individual to balance the opposites in the personality, and he later was confirmed in this by his exposure to Eastern thought, including Taoism.

While the psychoanalytic system and the humanist system recognize the concept of polarities, they do not seem to recognize the alternation of these polarities and the cyclic change which results. Like other existing psychotherapy systems, they emphasize yang and undervalue yin. They therefore fail to recognize and to utilize the concept of transformation or cyclic change. An application of the Tao Te Ching to psychotherapy theory in these systems would be a recognition on their parts of the concept of cyclic change and their utilization of this concept in psychotherapy.

Existing psychotherapy systems, in particular the psychoanalytic system and the humanist system, could incorporate the concept of cyclic change into psychotherapy technique through the use of meditation by the client as an adjunct to traditional insight-oriented psychotherapy and through the use of wu-wei, particularly when dealing with resistance. Meditation, through its emphasis on yin, helps to bring about a balance in those individuals who have over-emphasized yang; it can also make the work of psychotherapy easier by strengthening the structure of the client's psyche and aiding in the reorganization of its contents. Wu-wei can make the work easier by reducing the frequency of resistance on the

part of the client and by enabling the psychotherapist to deal with resistance more easily when it does occur.

### Incorporating the Tao Te Ching In Psychotherapy Training Programs

#### In An Integrated Psychotherapy System

The major focus of this paper has been on synthesizing the concepts of the Tao Te Ching with existing psychological knowledge to create an integrated psychotherapy system which would have application to both the Unity level of reality and the Multiplicity level. In such an integrated system the training of psychotherapists would differ from that typical of existing psychotherapy systems in two major ways. First, the training program would present information about both the Unity and Multiplicity levels of reality, incorporating existing psychological knowledge about the Multiplicity level with knowledge from the Tao Te Ching about the Unity level. Second, it would require of trainees not only that they undergo psychotherapy themselves but also that they undergo training in meditation.

The former would include information about the various concepts from the Tao Te Ching which I have already presented: Tao, yin and yang, tzu-jan, wu-wei, p'u, te, sheng-jen, yinism, the realization of the Absolute, and the use of meditation and intellectual puzzles as ways to enlightenment. This information would be presented through study of the Tao Te Ching and other Taoist writings such as those of Chuang Tzu, which were outside the scope of the present work. In addition, trainees would study the writings of other mystical traditions such as Zen,

Hesychasm, Yoga, Sufi, Christian mysticism, Hindu mysticism, and Jewish mysticism (LeShan, 1974). Didactic information alone is not sufficient for an understanding of these concepts, however, so an important part of this training would be the experiencing of these concepts directly through meditation. In addition to this purpose, meditation training would also be intended to help the trainees attain a realization of the Absolute themselves, so that they could later serve as guides to others seeking the same experience. For this same reason the trainees would undergo psychotherapy themselves, for they could not guide clients into territory with which they themselves were unfamiliar.

#### In Existing Psychotherapy Systems

There are two major applications of the Tao Te Ching to the training programs of existing psychotherapy systems. First, existing systems could teach the use of meditation as an adjunct to traditional verbal, insight-oriented psychotherapy. Second, they could require that trainees undergo psychotherapy, or perhaps psychotherapy and meditation, as part of their training. As has already been discussed, meditation can be used as an adjunct to psychotherapy, making the psychotherapy easier and briefer. It can serve to teach clients to relax and to focus better on internal processes and images, making verbal psychotherapy more efficient and effective. It is also something that clients can do in between sessions which can keep them focused on the process of psychotherapy even when they are not with the psychotherapist. Such task assignments have been shown to increase the effectiveness and decrease the duration of psychotherapy. Finally, meditation helps people

to feel better, which is of great relevance to psychotherapy, since most clients enter treatment because of subjective feelings of distress.

Existing psychotherapy systems could also follow the model of the master-disciple relationship illustrated in the Tao Te Ching, which requires that the master have undergone that in which he or she is proposing to guide the disciple. Currently only certain psychotherapy systems, chiefly those with a psychoanalytic orientation, still require their trainees to undergo psychotherapy themselves. These systems believe that psychotherapists can only take clients as far as they themselves has gone. This is a valid concern, especially for those systems for which the person of the psychotherapist is a critical element of the psychotherapy. It follows that psychotherapy for trainees is a necessary component of any such training program. This is a requirement which is very much in line with the teachings of the Tao Te Ching.

#### The Tao Te Ching Considered as a Psychological Theory: A Summary

The Tao Te Ching presents a worldview in which two levels of reality are acknowledged: the Multiplicity level, or the level of ordinary consciousness, and the Unity level, or the level of ecstatic identification with all that exists. It depicts a life of simplicity and humility, both as a means to attainment of a realization of the Absolute and as the result of such an attainment. It teaches respect for all that exists and recognition of the alternation of yin and yang, and puts forth spontaneity, naturalness, and noncontention as ideals.

The Tao Te Ching can be applied to existing psychotherapy systems in such a way as to improve the operations of these systems without the necessity of radical alterations in their basic beliefs. It can also be synthesized with such systems to create an integrated psychotherapy system. Such a system, combining the teachings of the Tao Te Ching with existing psychological knowledge, would widen the scope of applicability and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of psychotherapy. It would apply to those problems which are currently dealt with by existing psychotherapy systems, but in addition would apply to those few clients who wish to go beyond symptom relief or personality restructuring to an attainment of a mystical worldview.

An integrated psychotherapy system would combine knowledge attained through the objective, systematic experimentation of the hypothetico-deductive scientific method with knowledge attained through the subjective, introspective methods of the mystical tradition. Its intent would not be to do away with the accomplishments of the Western scientific tradition in the field of psychotherapy, but rather to add to these accomplishments and expand the ability of psychotherapists to help those in need. It would do so by emphasizing the use of paradoxical interventions and figurative and symbolic language, but especially by emphasizing the use of meditation as a training aid for psychotherapists and as both a primary and adjunctive psychotherapy technique.

In this chapter I explored the feasibility of synthesizing the teachings of the Tao Te Ching with existing psychological knowledge. An examination of the Tao Te Ching as a psychological theory indicates that such a synthesis is, indeed, feasible. The conclusions drawn by the



present work remain to be put into application by future researchers and practitioners.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Tao Te Ching is a 2,500 year old work of metaphysical psychology which takes the reader far beyond the social or biological factors which have been the main concern of modern psychology. It helps the reader see how the fundamental forces of the cosmos are reflected in all that exists, but especially in the inner structure of each individual. It invites people to try to live their lives in direct relationship to these forces by seeing truly and living fully, and thus being authentically human. It speaks to people at their own levels of understanding, while at the same time inviting them to search for levels of insight and experience not yet within their comprehension. The Tao Te Ching communicates so enduringly over such enormous reaches of time and cultural diversity because it addresses the essence of human nature and the human condition. It speaks of a possible inner greatness and an equally possible inner failure, both of which are inherent in our structure as human beings (Needleman, 1989). As Medhurst (1972) put it, "the thought of the book is a buried thought, the connections of its sentences spiritual rather than grammatical" (p. 9).

The Tao Te Ching presents people with a challenge: to see truly and to live fully. This is an extremely difficult challenge, as much if not more so for modern humankind as for the ancient Chinese to whom the book was addressed. Modern humankind tries in vain to live a full life

without understanding what it means to see; people presume to act, to do, and to create without opening themselves to a vision of ultimate reality. This opening and the way to experience it are what the Tao Te Ching addresses (Needleman, 1989).

Metaphysically, the term Tao refers to the way things are; psychologically, it refers to the deep, dynamic structure of human nature; ethically, it refers to the way human beings should conduct themselves with each other; spiritually, it refers to the methods of searching for the truth that have been handed down by the sages of the past--the way of inner work. All these meanings of Tao are ultimately one. The Tao Te Ching relates the flowing structure of the universe to the structure of the individual, both in itself and as it is manifested in his or her every action (Needleman, 1989).

Realization of the metaphysical truth contained within the Tao Te Ching lies in the opposite direction from the way people usually conduct their lives. The metaphysical doctrine of the Tao Te Ching is that there is an unformed, ungraspable, undifferentiated and invisible principle which is at the heart of all things and which forms the visible and tangible world around us. The secret of living is for people to be open within themselves to this principle. This can only be done by achieving a state of openness within that makes one receptive to the principle as it is manifested in the self. This requires an effort which is unlike anything else which we understand by that term.

The Tao Te Ching presents a metaphysical worldview which contains more than one level of reality: the Multiplicity level of ordinary consciousness and the Unity level of supraordinary consciousness (Izutsu,

1968). Existing psychological theories and the psychotherapy theories and techniques derived from them do not admit the existence of multiple levels of reality and consequently are incomplete and inadequate. Because of this they do not have application to the entire scope of human existence and experience.

In the present work I have presented information about the Tao Te Ching both to acquaint psychologists and other psychotherapists with the concepts of the Tao Te Ching and to show how these concepts can be integrated with existing psychological knowledge to create a new psychotherapy system with applicability to both the Unity and Multiplicity levels of reality. I have also shown how some of these concepts can be utilized within existing psychotherapy systems without fully integrating the Tao Te Ching with these systems. I have done so by considering the psychological meanings of various concepts from the Tao Te Ching and by examining these concepts in relation to representative existing psychotherapy systems.

An integrated psychotherapy system, combining existing psychological knowledge with the concepts of the Tao Te Ching, conceives of the Unity level as the level of true reality and of the Multiplicity level as the level of illusion and advocates the abandonment of illusion for truth. However, it also recognizes and accepts that most people choose to live in illusion, and therefore has as its aims both the alleviation of psychological distress and the attainment of a realization of Tao by those who desire such an experience. Integrating the Tao Te Ching with existing psychological knowledge results in a complete psy-

chological system with applicability to the full spectrum of human existence and experience.

Certain conclusions and recommendations follow from the above. First, efforts to acquaint psychologists and other psychotherapists with the Tao Te Ching and other mystic writings need to continue. The present dissertation, like those of Chiang (1971), Colodzin (1983), Doelger (1978), Finley (1981), and Knoblauch (1982), serves as one such effort and will, it is to be hoped, stimulate further work by others. Second, psychology needs to broaden its worldview to include concepts which are not valid under the basic beliefs of the hypothetico-deductive scientific tradition. Growth in any field of thought occurs when ideas which violate or contradict established beliefs are brought in from other fields. Third, efforts to study meditation as a psychotherapy technique need to continue. These efforts should employ true experimental designs as well as the quasi-experimental designs which have been used to date. And fourth, efforts to study figurative and symbolic language and paradox as psychotherapy techniques need to continue. This research, at present primarily anecdotal in nature and performed mainly in the area of family treatment, should be broadened to include individuals and groups and should also employ true experimental designs as well as the quasi-experimental designs which have been used to date.

I have focused on three psychology systems--the psychoanalytic psychology of Sigmund Freud, the radical behaviorism of B. F. Skinner, and the person-centered psychology of Carl Rogers--as being respectively representative of the three main schools of psychological

thought: psychodynamic psychology, behaviorist psychology, and humanist psychology. Doelger (1978) and Gagarin (1976) compared the Tao Te Ching to Gestalt therapy; Colodzin (1983) compared Taoism to systems theory. There is a need for the Tao Te Ching to be compared with other schools of psychological thought and their associated psychotherapy theories and techniques as well. The strategic and problem-solving systems of family therapy, for example, utilize symbolism, metaphor, and paradox much like the Tao Te Ching and much more than other systems.

This is nothing more than a start toward a full integration of the concepts of the Tao Te Ching with existing psychological knowledge. I intend to continue to work toward this end, and hope that others will join me in this endeavor. There is much to be gained by such efforts, both in terms of an expansion of psychological knowledge and in terms of greater hope for enlightenment and fulfillment for all mankind.

Appendix  
A Comparison of Representative  
Psychological Theories

## APPENDIX

### A COMPARISON OF REPRESENTATIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES

#### The Psychoanalytic School

##### Basic Philosophy

Human beings are driven by irrational sexual and aggressive impulses. Early development is of critical importance, and later personality problems have roots in repressed childhood conflicts. Thus, unconscious motives and conflicts are central in determining behavior.

##### Key concepts

Normal personality development depends upon successful resolution and integration of psychosexual stages of development. Faulty personality development results from inadequate resolution of one or more psychosexual stages. The id, ego, and superego constitute the structure of personality. Anxiety results from the repression of basic conflicts. Ego defenses develop to control anxiety. Current behavior is largely determined by unconscious processes.

##### Goals of Therapy

Therapy is intended to reconstruct the basic personality by bringing unconscious elements into consciousness and thus assisting the



client to relive earlier experiences and work through repressed conflicts.

### The Therapeutic Relationship

The analyst remains anonymous, and the analysand or client develops projections toward the analyst. The focus is on working through the resistances that develop because of the transference neurosis, thus establishing more rational control. Therapy consists of frequent sessions and lasts for an extended period of time, typically several years. Analysands engage in free association and gain insight as the analyst uncovers conflicts and interprets them to show the relationship between present behavior and past conflicts.

### Therapy Techniques

The key techniques are interpretation, dream analysis, free association, analysis of resistances, and analysis of the transference neurosis. These are designed to enable the analysand to gain access to unconscious conflicts, achieve insight, and assimilate new material into the ego. Diagnosis and testing are often performed. A case history is developed through questioning.

### Applications and Contributions

The psychoanalytic approach provides a basis for understanding unconscious dynamics, the relationship between early experience and present difficulties, anxiety and ego defenses as ways of coping, and the nature of transference and countertransference.

## The Behaviorist School

### Basic Philosophy

Humans are shaped by sociocultural conditioning. Existence is deterministic, and behavior is the product of learning and conditioning.

### Key Concepts

Normal behavior is learned through reinforcement and imitation. Abnormal behavior is the result of faulty learning. Present behavior is stressed; there is little concern for past history or the origins of disorders. Therapy is based on the principles of learning theory, and focuses on overt behavior, precise specification of the goals of treatment, the development of specific treatment plans, and objective evaluation of outcomes.

### Goals of Therapy

Therapy is intended to eliminate maladaptive behavior patterns and replace them with constructive patterns. Specific goals are chosen by the client. Broad goals are broken down into specific subgoals.

### The Therapeutic Relationship

The therapist is active and directive and functions as a teacher or trainer in helping clients learn more effective behavior. Clients must be active in the process and experiment with new behaviors. The personal relationship between the client and therapist is not emphasized,

but a good working relationship is necessary for implementing behavioral procedures.

### Therapy Techniques

The main technique is operant conditioning, although systematic desensitization, implosive therapy, assertive training, and aversion therapy are also used. All are based on principles of learning, and all are geared toward behavior change. Diagnostic, data gathering, and testing procedures are frequently used.

### Applications and Contributions

The behaviorist approach has wide applicability to individual and group therapy, institutions, and schools and other learning environments. It is a pragmatic approach based on experimental validation of results. Progress (or lack of it) can be continually assessed and new techniques applied if needed.

## The Humanist School

### Basic Philosophy

Humans have an inclination toward becoming fully functioning. Clients in therapy experience feelings that were previously denied to awareness. This enables them to actualize potential and increase awareness, spontaneity, trust in self, and inner directedness.

### Key Concepts

The client has the potential to become aware of problems and of the means to resolve them. Clients possess the capacity for self-direction, although this is often only latent. Normal personality development results in and from congruence between ideal self and real self. Faulty personality development results in and from a discrepancy between what one wants to be and what one is. The focus is on the present moment and on the experiencing and expressing of feelings.

### Goals of Therapy

Therapy is intended to provide a safe climate conducive to self-exploration, so that blocks to growth can be recognized and aspects of self that were formerly denied or distorted can be experienced. Clients are helped to move toward openness to experience, greater trust in self, willingness to focus on on-going experience, and increased spontaneity and aliveness.

### The Therapeutic Relationship

The relationship is of prime importance. Stress is placed upon the qualities of the therapist--genuineness, warmth, accurate empathy, respect, and permissiveness--and the communication of these attitudes to clients. Clients use this real relationship with the therapist to translate self-learnings to other relationships.

### Therapy Techniques

This approach stresses the attitudes of the therapist over the use of techniques. Basic techniques include active listening and hearing, reflection of feelings, clarification, and being there for the client. Support and reassurance are used when they are appropriate. This model does not employ diagnostic testing, interpretation, taking a case history, or questioning and probing for information.

### Applications and Contributions

The humanist approach has wide applicability to individual and group counseling and therapy and student-centered teaching. The unique contribution of this approach is that it has the client take an active stance and assume responsibility to direct the course of his or her own therapy. This approach challenged the role of the traditional therapist, who commonly used techniques of diagnosis, probing, and interpretation, and challenged the view of the therapist as expert.

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