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**THE RESONANCE OF DIFFERENT  
TEMPERAMENTS: NATURE IN  
TRANSCENDENTALISM AND  
TAOISM**

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by

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*For all those who retain their innocence and nature*

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## **AUTHOR DECLARATIONS**

1. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.
2. The program of advanced study of which this thesis is part has consisted of:
  - i) Research Methods course during the undergraduate study
  - ii) Examination of several thesis guides of particular universities both in Turkey and abroad as well as a professional book on this subject.

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## **ABSTRACT**

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### **The Resonance of Different Temperaments: Nature in Transcendentalism and Taoism**

Little research has been done in comparative study of American Transcendentalism and Chinese Taoism, although their affinity is striking, especially in their attitudes toward nature. This thesis systematically compares their thoughts about nature and locates seven similarities and three differences. Chapter 1, the Introduction, states the main arguments and the background of Transcendentalism and Taoism. Chapter 2 clarifies the concepts of nature in Transcendentalism and Taoism. Chapter 3 illuminates seven similarities: the unity and oneness of the world; the inherent relation between humanity and nature; life and creative power in nature; the relation between nature and childhood in perceiving the wholeness and beauty of nature; deficient understanding of morality in relation to nature; how greed for property destroys human nature; and the experience of Being in nature. Chapter 4 analyzes three differences: the divinity of God versus the objective Tao; Self-reliance versus doing nothing; and going to nature versus meditation. Chapter 5 concludes and recapitulates the similarities and differences.

#### **Key words:**

Nature, Transcendentalism, Taoism, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu

## **KISA ÖZET**

**Jingyuan QIU**

**Haziran 2013**

### **Farklı Tabiatların Rezonansı: Transandantalizm'de ve Taoizm'de Doğa**

Özellikle doğaya bakış açısındaki çarpıcı benzerliklerine rağmen, Amerikan Transandantalizmi ve Çin Taoizmini karşılaştırmalı olarak inceleyen çok az sayıda araştırma yapıldı. Bu tez onların doğa hakkındaki düşüncelerini sistematik olarak karşılaştırır ve yedi benzerlik ve üç farklılık tespit eder. Birinci bölüm, giriş, ana tartışmaları, Transandantalizm ve Taoizmin arka planını ele alır. İkinci bölüm Transandantalizm ve Taoizm'de doğa kavramını açıklar. Üçüncü bölüm yedi benzerlik üzerinde durur: dünyanın bütünlüğü ve birliği; insanlık ve doğa arasındaki yaratılıştan gelen ilişki; doğadaki yaşam ve üretken güç; doğanın bütünlüğü ve güzelliğini algılamada tabiat ve çocukluk ilişkisi; doğaya dair yetersiz ahlak anlayışı; insan tabiatına zarar veren açgözlülük; ve doğa içinde var olma tecrübesi. Dördüncü bölüm üç farkı inceler: Nesnel Tao karşısındaki tanrının kutsallığı; Öz güvene karşılık boş durma; ve doğayla bütünleşmeye karşılık meditasyon. Beşinci bölüm bu benzerlik ve farklılıkları yeniden özetler ve sonuçlandırır.

#### **Anahtar Kelimeler**

Doğa, Transandantalizm, Taoizm, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu

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## **PREFACE**

In an age of science and rationality, reading the poetic texts of mystical Transcendentalism and Taoism is inspiring and easily catches one's imagination. In spite of the differences in time, place, and culture, the similarities in attitudes toward nature in Transcendentalism and Taoism are striking. Their similar devotion to nature – abiding in nature to keep one's innocence, simplicity, and integrity – is attractive to many readers. This thesis is a result of reading and examining attentively the basic texts of these two schools. Through juxtaposing the similar thoughts of nature in their poetic language, the resonance is automatically produced by their similarities. In reading the original texts from both schools simultaneously, readers will be immersed in the original great ideas of these schools and enjoy the resonance from the similarities of their thoughts about nature. Although their different cultural and intellectual traditions are the result of different temperaments in their attitudes toward nature, both traditions are especially valuable for their variety and vitality to world culture.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

American Transcendentalism and Chinese Taoism originated from totally different cultures and intellectual traditions – modern America and ancient China. In history, they have little direct contact (scholars' research shows that Emerson and Thoreau received influence from some Chinese ancient thought, which mainly includes Confucianism and possibly Taoism<sup>1</sup>). However, in spite of the disparate background of time, culture, and tradition, when we read or listen to them attentively, we find similarities, or hear the “resonance” of such different schools despite the different temperaments.

After examining the basic texts of Transcendentalism and Taoism attentively and comparing their thoughts of nature systematically, this thesis generally locates seven similarities and three differences between these two schools in their attitudes toward nature. The similarities include: 1) the Unity of the World: both schools accentuate the unity and oneness of the world. In Transcendentalism, it is the unity of man, nature, and God through the Over-soul; in Taoism, it is the unity of heaven, earth, the human, and myriad things in the world through Tao; 2) the inherent and original relation between humanity and nature can be discovered by intuition; 3) both argue that humans can benefit and get life and creative power from nature, which supplies humans with both physical and spiritual sustenance; 4) both emphasize the wholeness of nature and the beauty of the natural world. Those who retain their innocence and integrity can perceive this wholeness: the innocence and harmony of the infant enable the apprehension of beauty and truth; 5) both argue the deficiency of intellectual understanding and secular morals, which are artificial, go against one's nature, harm individual innocence, and create a human civilization that alienates the individual; 6) both argue that greed for property destroys one's innocence and nature, and therefore both advocate living a simple life; and 7) finally, both Transcendentalism and Taoism urge people to go to nature and experience being. In this way, people can keep the innocence and integrity of their nature, and then they

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<sup>1</sup> Transcendentalists' contact with literature of Taoism will be illustrated later.

can realize or become God through the oversoul, or reach the Tao through Te. With the different times, cultures and intellectual traditions, their similarities are not completely the same. The Transcendentalists' nature is more specific and perceptible, whereas, the Taoists' nature is more philosophical and imaginable. The differences in their thought concerning nature include: 1) the Transcendentalists' Oversoul endows human nature with divinity, whereas, the Taoists' Tao from the objective universe levels humans and myriad things; 2) with great confidence and power from the Oversoul, the Transcendentalists advocate more self-reliance and individual genius, whereas, abolishing the self before the universe, the Taoists advocate more being or existence; 3) in retaining one's innocence and integrity to reach God or the Tao, the Transcendentalists place greater emphasis on going to the natural world, whereas the Taoists place greater emphasis on meditation – heart-fasting and sit-forgetting.

### **1.1 Transcendentalism**

Transcendentalism, or New England Transcendentalism, is an American literary, religious, political, and philosophical movement that flourished in New England from the 1830s to the 1850s. Although only prospering for twenty years, Transcendentalism has influenced American society and thought deeply for a long time, and constitutes a basic element of the American character and spirit.

In 1836, a little book, *Nature*, was published anonymously, whose author afterwards was proved to be Ralph Waldo Emerson. This book later became the unofficial manifesto for a number of like-minded intellectuals – the “Transcendentalists Club.” This group rejected John Locke's empiricism and endorsed the romantics' intuitive and creative mind. The participants, in addition to Emerson, included Amos Bronson Alcott, Theodore Parker, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau. They became the main representatives of an influential movement – American Transcendentalism.

Stimulated by European Romanticism, individualism, liberal Unitarianism, Hume's skepticism, and Kant's “transcendental philosophy,” Transcendentalists believe in the oneness of God, nature, and human beings, have faith in human beings' innate divinity and an oversoul, and emphasize the human mind's intuitive

faculty to feel the truth. Thus, Transcendentalists criticize unthinking conformity to social morals and religious dogmas and rituals, advocate self-reliance, and urge people to abide in nature, experience solitude, and maintain an original innocence.

## **1.2 Taoism**

Taoism (also pronounced and spelled Daoism, or “道家” in Chinese, Dao Jia in Pinyin), is a traditional philosophical school of China, dating to the late 4th century BCE. Taoism also denotes a Chinese traditional religion – “道教” (Dao Jiao), which is an organized religious movement sharing concepts or terminology derived from Dao Jia. In fact, the believers of religious Taoism did not become widespread in China. They are even much less prevalent than the believers of Buddhism and Christianity in today’s China. However, philosophical Taoism, which is not institutionalized, has spread extensively, especially in intellectuals, and made tremendous impact on Chinese society and culture. As one of the two main schools of Chinese philosophy, Confucianism and Taoism, Taoism has influenced China deeply and extensively throughout more than 2,000 years, especially in literature and art, and it pervades the Chinese character and spirit.

The keystone works of literature of philosophical Taoism are two main works: *Tao Te Ching* (or *Dao De Jing*) and *Chuang Tzu* (or *Zhuang Zi*), which build the philosophical foundation of Taoism. In general opinion, *Tao Te Ching* was written around the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE by Lao Tzu (or Lao Zi, “Old Master”), a record-keeper at the Zhou Dynasty court. *Chuang Tzu* was composed in the latter half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE by Chuang Tzu. However, the authorship and precise date of these two works are still under debate.

Tao (or Dao, “道”) originally means “way,” “path,” or “principle.” In Taoism, Tao denotes organic nothingness, or an obscure metaphysical force, which is nameless, formless, but produces the universe and everything, and is present in every creature and object. The Tao is the source and essence of everything, is the universal power and principle that all things live on, and is the eternal One and whole that unifies and is manifested on all things. Taoists believe in the oneness and equality of

all things in the world. They emphasize Zi Ran (spontaneity, naturally), Wu Wei (nonaction), simplicity and harmony between the individual and the cosmos.

### **1.3 Historical Contact**

There is no direct evidence showing that Emerson or Thoreau read Taoist literature and neither mentions texts of Taoism in their works. Scholars generally think that there is no direct path linking Lao Tzu to Emerson, since the *Tao Te Ching* was not translated into English until 1891, nine years after Emerson's death. Lyman V. Cady argues that "Certainly Thoreau makes no reference to this school [Taoism] or its representative directly or indirectly. It seems quite clear that Thoreau was unacquainted with this respect of China's ancient heritage" (Ch'en, 1972). However, according to David T.Y. Ch'en, there are several pieces of convincing evidence to prove that Emerson and Thoreau must, in one way or another, have had access to Taoist literature. Ch'en's research shows that Thoreau might have read French sinologist J.P.A. Rémusat's article which dealt with the parallels of Taoism, Plato, and Pythagoras, and the Taoist literature which was translated into French by G. Pauthier (Ch'en, 1972). Arthur Christy informs us that Emerson found in Rémusat's *Invariable Milieu* promising definitions for nature.

Whether the Transcendentalists read Taoist literature is still under debate. Nevertheless, the affinities between these two schools and similarities in their attitudes toward nature are obvious and striking, whether it results from coincidence or influence. Ch'en argues that "*Walden* is similar to a traditional Chinese government, Confucian in form and Taoist in spirit, for the book is full of quotations from the Confucian books, while its ideas are essentially Taoist." "Lyman V. Cady points out that there are profound similarities between *Walden* and *The Book of Tao*, namely, their nature mysticism, love of the simple and primitive, distaste for convention and governmental interference, and the repeated use of paradox" (Ch'en, 1972). In *The Tao of Emerson* (2007), Richard Grossman juxtaposes *Tao Te Ching* and Emerson's writings, illuminates how these two remarkable schools, from opposite sides of the world and separated by 2,500 years, are united in an inspired wisdom and common spirit.



## **1.4 Resonance**

The idea of nature and the relationship between man and nature are both central in American Transcendentalism and Chinese Taoism. Both these two schools pursue a direct and intimate relationship with nature: the individual can become one with nature, get life and creative power from nature, cure and elevate the self in nature, and can keep innocence, simplicity, and integrity in nature.

According to Transcendentalism, man, God, nature, and all things are unified as the eternal One, a wholeness, by the divine spirit, or sublime truth. The divine spirit, or sublime truth is manifested and present in each and every man and in all of nature. The oneness of the world and the presence of the divine spirit in both nature and the human soul make a direct understanding of God and an openness to the natural world. This demonstrates the divinity and oversoul of human beings, endows human beings with great power and confidence resulting self-reliance, and suggests that abiding in nature to retain or return to one's innocence, simplicity, and integrity is a way to reach the divine spirit or sublime truth. In Taoism, the cosmic unity, the "eternal One," is Tao, which produces the universe and everything in the world and is present in every creature and object. It is the universal power and principle that all things live on. Specifically, Tao is the original innate way in which everything evolves spontaneously, which is manifested in the initial state or nature of things. Tao unifies man, nature, and myriad things, and is manifested and present in all things. Through Tao, Taoists level and connect myriad things, especially man and things. Therefore, Taoists advocate humans behaving out of spontaneity according to their own nature, doing things naturally according to things' original ways (*Zi Ran*), and ultimately doing nothing or nonaction (*Wu Wei*).

The conception of nature in both Transcendentalism and Taoism refers to all objective things in the world, including a man's body, excepting the subjective mind and spirit. Nevertheless, nature mostly refers to the natural world, the opposite of the human artificial world of culture. In both Transcendentalism and Taoism, nature includes one's own inherent innocence and nature. Moreover, through keeping one's own inherent nature and its elevation through outside nature, individual humans can reach the Oversoul or the Tao.

However, the similarities of Transcendentalism and Taoism in their thoughts about nature are not completely the same. These two schools are derived from different times, natural environments, cultures, and intellectual traditions, which result in different characters in their conceptions of nature. Transcendentalism was generated on the new American continent in the early nineteenth century after the Industrial Revolution, and carried on the heritage of the European culture of Romanticism, Native American culture, and the courage and confidence of explorers and conquerors. The American Transcendental concept and idea of nature is based on Romanticism, individualism, a reaction to Locke's empiricism, Hume's skepticism, Kant's "transcendental philosophy," and liberal Unitarianism, which emphasize the human mind's power to perceive and its intuitive faculty to feel the truth. In contrast, Taoism was produced and propagated in ancient China on the mainland of eastern Asia more than 2,000 years ago, in the Warring States period, in which the long-lasting unitary regime of the Zhou Dynasty was broken, there were many states fighting each other, and the orders and manners of society collapsed. Taoist ideology is based on the primitive natural correlative cosmology of the "unity of the world" and the "unity of heaven and humans."

In Transcendentalism, the concept of nature denotes both the natural material world and the human and natural spiritual world. Nature connects the individual human being and God, and is a way to reach eternal truth. Humans' innate oversoul endows them with the power to feel the sublime truth and reach the divinity of God intuitively, in the way of abiding in the natural world, staying in solitude, and retaining their original state of nature: innocence, simplicity, and integrity. The term "nature" in Chinese is "Zi Ran" (自然). In Taoism, Zi Ran mostly refers to "naturally" and "spontaneity," which emphasize that people should do things naturally and behave spontaneously, according to things' innate natural ways. Another word for Nature in Taoism is "Tian" (天), which means the sky or the heavens. Tian denotes what things are originally like, referring to the outside natural world and human inner nature. So Taoists advocate that humans act naturally (Zi Ran, 自然) according to "Tian." Taoists praise the wisdom of water: weak, soft, staying at a low place, going forward naturally, never pursuing anything forcefully but

benefiting everything. In general, we can say that in the unity between man and nature, Transcendentalism accentuates the spiritual power of the human self, whereas Taoism accentuates the universal power of nature, although they both acknowledge the particular human faculty to perceive the world and reach the Oversoul or the Tao.

To examine the resonance and analyze the different temperaments in these two schools' nature thought is interesting and inspiring. How can these two systems of thought produce resonance when they are different expressions from different times, places, and cultures? They have some similar "notes," so they can sing together like a chord, not a chorus. They come from different natural environments, are based on different intellectual and cultural traditions, and have different temperaments and tastes – like American and Chinese cultures. It is surprising to find the same faith, devotion, and pursuit of nature and the same world and life values in these two different schools. This shows us that human hearts and feelings are shared across cultures. We should cheer the resonance of these two schools of human thought that manifest such a common goodness and vigor in nature and human life, and that attract and encourage humans to pursue and elevate the self. Whereas, the different characters and temperaments are especially valuable to all humans for their diversity and vigor.

### **1.5 Literary Rather Than Philosophical**

Although the philosophical spirit and features are apparent throughout the most fundamental ideology and thoughts of Transcendentalism and Taoism, the literary and poetic features of the texts and language of these two schools are also striking. In fact, Transcendentalism and Taoism both transcend reason or the rational understanding of mind, and rely more on intuition to reach truth directly and immediately. Indeed, the Taoists are "neither pro- nor antiphilosophical. They dwell in an open space where one thinks without being caught up in thought, and sees in a multifaceted 'perspectivist' way" (Pregadio, 7).

With their poetic ideas and language, this paper treats the works of Transcendentalism and Taoism more as literary rather than philosophical works. "I view the *Chuang Tzu* primarily as a work of literature rather than as a work of

philosophy and wish to present it to the reading public unencumbered by technical arcana that would distract from the pleasure of encountering one of the most playful and witty books in the world” (Mair, Preface, Xi). This paper tries to represent the original, whole and integrated poetic ideas rather than the strict philosophical or conceptual analysis of Transcendentalism and Taoism. Through juxtaposing their similar nature thoughts in their poetic language, they will automatically resonate with each other and produce beautiful music.

### **1.6 Phonetic Notation**

There are some details about Chinese phonetic notation in translation that should be illustrated here. Before the Chinese Pinyin Scheme was announced in 1958, Western people used the Wade-Giles Spelling System to phonetically note Chinese.<sup>2</sup> According to the Wade-Giles Spelling System, generally, “道” is rendered phonetically into “Tao,” “道家” into “Taoism,” “老子” into “Lao Tzu,” “道德经” into “Tao Te Ching,” “庄子” into “Chuang Tzu.” According to the Chinese Pinyin Scheme, these Chinese terms should be translated to Dao, Daoism, Lao Zi, Dao De Jing, and Zhuang Zi. Considering that the Chinese Pinyin Scheme has been applied for more than 60 years and that it is easier to pronounce Chinese in a single standard way, this paper follows the Chinese Pinyin Scheme of transliteration, except for some names of previously translated works.

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<sup>2</sup> See the Wade-Giles To Pinyin Conversion Table in the Appendix.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE CONCEPT OF NATURE IN TRANSCENDENTALISM AND TAOISM**

To some extent, both Transcendentalism and Taoism are naturalistic ideologies. In both schools, the idea of nature is the key and core from which evolved their whole system of ideas. Transcendentalism walks away from stale, rigid Christian doctrines and a fearful God, and elevates the status of the natural world and human inner nature equal to God. In philosophical Taoism, Tao, the eternal essence and universal natural way in which all things operate, is never a god. Taking nature as their core, both schools gained tremendous power and developed brilliant thoughts that greatly influence America and China to this day. However, produced and cultivated in such different places, ages, and cultures, their attitudes toward nature have developed their own nuances and ideology. Before we compare the similarities systematically of these two schools, to define and clear up the basic concepts is indispensable. The concept of nature in both Transcendentalism and Taoism is manifold and closely connects with other concepts in a whole system of thought.

#### **2.1 The Oversoul and Nature in Transcendentalism**

In the perspective of Transcendentalism, the world or universe is a unity, the eternal One, containing supreme truth. Everything is part of the unity and manifests the characters of the whole and supreme truth. This sublime truth resides in all things in the world, in various presentations. In God, it is the divinity of God; in the world, it is Nature; in human beings, it is the Oversoul. Therefore, God, Nature, and the Oversoul are innately and intimately connected with each other. Both are manifestations of the same thing, the eternal One and supreme truth. Humans, through the Oversoul within or behind nature can reach the divinity of God.

If we want to be clear about the concept of nature in Transcendentalism, first we should be clear about the central concept of the Oversoul. Emerson's essay "The Oversoul," first published in 1841 in *Essays, First Series*, elaborates his central idea of the Oversoul. However, the concept of the Oversoul is hard to define or describe clearly with words. As Emerson claims in his essay, "Yet I desire, even by profane

words, if I may not use sacred, to indicate the heaven of this deity and to report what hints I have collected of the transcendent simplicity and energy of the Highest Law” (Emerson, “The Oversoul,” 97).<sup>3</sup> Just in one sentence, Emerson uses three terms to describe the same Oversoul: “deity,” “transcendent simplicity,” and “energy of the Highest Law.” According to Emerson, “this pure nature,” another term describing the Oversoul, “Language cannot paint it with his colors. It is too subtle. It is undefinable, unmeasurable” (98). Language is deficient before the light and sublime of the Oversoul. Using language we just try to hint of that sublimity with any words we can find, or imply the way to the Oversoul, which one’s heart can feel intuitively and reach by itself. This thesis tries to shed light on this mystical and vague concept of the Oversoul through Emerson’s descriptions of his central concept.

Emerson argues that there is a human common soul, the Oversoul, universal, immortal, immensely vast, and beautiful, to which all people’s souls belong. It is the soul of the whole, the eternal One, a cosmic unity between man, God, and nature: “That Unity, that Over-soul, within which every man’s particular being is contained and made one with all other; that common heart [...]” (97). The Oversoul is a unity, the “common heart” of humans, which contains, levels, integrates all human beings: “the heart in thee is the heart of all” (105). In *Nature*, Emerson also illustrates this universal soul:

Man is conscious of a universal soul within or behind his individual life, wherein, as in a firmament, the natures of Justice, Truth, Love, Freedom, arise and shine. This universal soul he calls Reason: it is not mine, or thine, or his, but we are its; we are its property and men. (15)<sup>4</sup>

We all belong to this universal soul, which is within us and manifests all the excellent natures of humans.

For Emerson the term oversoul denotes a supreme underlying unity that transcends phenomenal duality or plurality, as he writes in “The Oversoul”:

We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related, the eternal ONE. And this deep power in which

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<sup>3</sup> Online Library of Liberty: *The Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Vol. 2 (*Essays, First Series*), <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1832>, generated 6 January 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Online Library of Liberty: *The Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Vol. 1 (*Nature, Addresses, and Lectures*), <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1831>, generated 6 January 2009.

we exist and whose beatitude is all accessible to us, is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object, are one. We see the world piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are shining parts, is the soul. (97)

According to Emerson, in the human world things are in division, in parts, and there are discriminations between the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object, the human beings, the animal, and the tree. But the Oversoul unifies all of them as one. This Oversoul is innate in man and all things, and is “wise silence” and “universal beauty,” which is all accessible to all things. Therefore, the Oversoul is the soul of the whole, the oneness of everything in the world, a cosmic unity unifying and leveling man, God, and nature.

Emerson also argues that the Oversoul is the Mother of all things and all persons, and the source of man’s being. The Oversoul is the Maker of all things: “For the Maker of all things and all persons stands behind us and casts his dread omniscience through us over things” (101). It stands behind us, casts its deity and power over us, nature, and all things. The Oversoul is the source of man’s being: “Man is a stream whose source is hidden. Our being is descending into us from we know not whence” (96). Our being is descending into us from the Oversoul, the flowing river of life: “When I watch that flowing river, which, out of regions I see not, pours for a season its streams into me, I see that I am a pensioner” (97). The Oversoul is the source of our life, endows us with deity and power, and flows all the time like a river. The revelation of the Oversoul to the individual “is an ebb of the individual rivulet before the flowing surges of the sea of life” (101).

As the source of human life, the Oversoul is the ground, master, and light animating and shining our life:

[...] the soul in man is not an organ, but animates and exercises all the organs; [...] is not a faculty, but a light; is not the intellect or the will, but the master of the intellect and the will; is the background of our being, in which they lie, – an immensity not possessed and that cannot be possessed. From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all. (97)

The Oversoul, as the ground and source of man’s being, animates human physical organs and body, and endows humans with vitality and man’s intellect and will with divine spirit and sublime truth, like a light within or behind us.

Accordingly, Emerson suggests that the Oversoul is a divine spiritual mind, similar to God, or that God exists within us. This spiritual mind is universal and sublime: “the heart which abandons itself to the Supreme Mind finds itself related to all its works, and will travel a royal road to particular knowledges and powers” (99). It is “impersonal; is God” (100). The Oversoul’s communication with the individual “is an influx of the Divine mind into our mind” (101). For a man nothing “can hinder him from being deferential to a higher spirit than his own” (103). “If he have not found his home in God, his manners, his forms of speech, [...] will involuntarily confess it [...] If he have found his centre, the Deity will shine through him” (103). The Oversoul is the divine spiritual mind, the deity of God, which shines in every man’s soul and is innate in every man: “the spirit of prophecy which is innate in every man” (97).

Essentially, the Oversoul, the “common soul” is the “common nature” innate in every man and all things, which, as a kind of spiritual being, is great, pure, and divine. In his essay, Emerson claims that “I am certified of a common nature” (99). “I see its presence” in persons and they “express a certain obedience to the great instincts to which I live” (99). This common nature is the great instinct present in every man and all things. According to Emerson, people’s experiences identify an identical nature, and people always subconsciously make reference to this common nature in conversation: “[...] the larger experience of man discovers the identical nature appearing through them all. [...] In all conversation between two persons tacit reference is made, as to a third party, to a common nature. That third party or common nature is not social; it is impersonal; is God” (100). This common nature is human common instinct, and also is the divine spiritual mind from God.

Emerson argues that the Oversoul is the great nature in which all humans rest: “The Supreme Critic on the errors of the past and the present, and the only prophet of that which must be, is that great nature in which we rest, as the earth lies in the soft arms of the atmosphere; that Unity, that Over-soul [...]” (97). This great nature is the “Supreme Critic” and the “only prophet,” who can identify and lead the ways of humans. The Oversoul is the pure nature pervading and containing humans: “Of this pure nature every man is at some time sensible. [...] we know that it pervades and



contains us. We know that all spiritual being is in man” (98). The Oversoul, the pure nature is a kind of spiritual being, or spiritual nature: “We lie open on one side to the deeps of spiritual nature, to the attributes of God” (98). This spiritual nature is the attributes of God and in the meantime, is innate in every man’s heart.

According to Emerson, “the announcements of the soul, its manifestations of its own nature” is termed “Revelation,” which is a communication between humans and the Oversoul, “an influx of the Divine mind into our mind” (101). This revelation of the Oversoul is the revelation of all nature According to Emerson, “More and more the surges of everlasting nature enter into me” (106). It shows humans that all nature and sources of nature are innate in their minds: “Let man then learn the revelation of all nature and all thought to his heart; this, namely; that the Highest dwells with him; that the sources of nature are in his own mind [...]” (105). This universal soul, the eternal One, as the divine spiritual mind and both instinctive and spiritual nature of humans, unifies man, God, and nature. Humans, through their own innocence or abiding in the natural world, can reach the divinity of God or become God: “Ineffable is the union of man and God in every act of the soul. The simplest person who in his integrity worships God, becomes God” (105).

To the Transcendentalists, the Oversoul is a cosmic unity unifying man, God, and nature. It is the oneness of all things, the mother of all things, the divine spirit or mind and the innate instinctive and spiritual nature of all things. It reflects the supreme truth, and is present in every individual human being and in all of nature. Each particular example of nature or of humanity manifests this oneness, nature, or divine mind, and the whole of the cosmos can be extrapolated from each particular. In each particular, man can discover and feel intuitively the oneness, the universal nature, or the divine spirit – the supreme truth. The presence of the divine spirit in both nature and the human soul afford humans direct understanding of God, nature, and self, which leads to the perception of supreme truth and the core idea of self-reliance.

The concept of nature in Transcendentalism is manifold and unites with the concept of Oversoul and the system of thought. After examining the texts and thoughts of Transcendentalism, with the comprehension of the concept of Oversoul,

we can find that Emerson's and other Transcendentalists' concept of nature denotes two levels of meaning. The first level refers to the natural objective material world, which Emerson divides into two grades: "common sense" nature, namely the natural material world: "Nature, in the common sense, refers to essences unchanged by man; space, the air, the river, the leaf" (*Nature*, 6); and "philosophical" nature, namely the objective world except human spirit and soul, the "not me":

Philosophically considered, the universe is composed of Nature and the Soul. Strictly speaking, therefore, all that is separate from us, all which Philosophy distinguishes as the not me, that is, both nature and art, all other men and my own body, must be ranked under this name, Nature. (6)

Emerson claims that he uses "nature" in both of these senses: "In enumerating the values of nature and casting up their sum, I shall use the word in Both senses; – in its common and in its philosophical import (6). In fact, these two grades both refer to the objective material world, opposite to the human spiritual world. For example, in *Nature*, Emerson argues that "All science has one aim, namely, to find a theory of nature" (6). In "The Oversoul", Emerson writes: "Before the revelations of the soul, Time, Space and Nature shrink away" (98). Here "nature" refers to the first level of meaning.

In this level, Emerson and other Transcendentalists use "nature" mostly referring to the original and harmonious natural world and the natural creatures and things in it: the mountain, the lake, the plants, the animals, which are in the original and natural state, separate from human society and artificial disturbance. This nature keeps the initial state where the deity of God and sublime truth are present. Abiding in this natural world, people can retain or return back to their innocence, the initial state of their nature, through which they can get life, vitality, creative power, and perpetual youth, find genius, and reach God and sublime truth. Therefore, Emerson urges people in his addresses and essays to go to the woods, go to nature, and Thoreau is the loyalest follower and realizer of Emerson's beckoning. He went to live in the natural world for two years at Walden Pond by himself. On this level, when we compare the Transcendental concept of nature to that found in Taoism, one point should not be ignored: the Transcendentalists' concept of physical nature is based upon the natural science of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, mainly

Locke's empiricism. The basic knowledge about creatures in the natural world, based on scientific findings, is common for people at that time and is revealed in the Transcendentalists' writings – for example in Emerson's chapter "Commodity" in his 1836 seminal essay, *Nature*.

Actually, Emerson and other Transcendentalists also use "nature" in the second level of meaning: the innate instinctive and spiritual nature of human beings and all things. This nature is innocence, simplicity, integrity, and the initial state of all things, including the wholeness, oneness, and unity of things and the world. In *Nature*, Emerson argues that "When we speak of nature in this manner, we have a distinct but most poetical sense in the mind. We mean the integrity of impression made by manifold natural objects" (7). In the Transcendentalists' opinion, humans, God, nature, and all things are one, which is unified by the Oversoul. This Oversoul is the divine spirit and also the innate universal nature of all things. As illustrated in the previous section, the Oversoul essentially denotes the "common nature," "great nature," and "pure nature" of humans. This nature is the manifestation of the Oversoul and God in humans, and is both instinctive and spiritual, as Emerson writes in "The Oversoul": "We know that all spiritual being is in man. [...] We lie open on one side to the deeps of spiritual nature, to the attributes of God" (98). This nature is God within humans, and manifested as the innocence and genius of humans. Retaining and following this nature, humans can reach the sublime truth and God. According to Transcendentalists, the Oversoul and sublime truth is present in nature (the natural material world), as well as in humans innate instinctive and spiritual nature. Thus, nature becomes a way of connecting the individual human being and God. Human beings, through abiding in nature – staying close to nature (the natural world), can retain their own nature (innocence, simplicity, and integrity) and reach the divinity of God and supreme truth.

## **2.2 Tao and Nature in Taoism**

According to Taoism, Tao is the original entity that produced the universe: it is the whole, the unity of all things in the world, and the invisible universal principle of the world. The concept of Nature in Taoism includes a series of related concepts: Te,

Tian, Tian Di Wan Wu, and Zi Ran, which will be illustrated in the following sections.

Similar to the Transcendentalists' Oversoul, the Taoists' concept of Tao (or Dao in Pinyin, 道 in Chinese) is also hard to define, or describe clearly with words. In the first chapter of *Tao Te Ching*, Lao Tzu claims that:

The Way [Tao] that can be spoken of  
Is not the constant Way [Tao]; (Lau, trans., 3)

Chapter 25 of *Tao Te Ching* describes Tao like this:

There was something undefined and complete, coming into existence before Heaven and Earth. How still it was and formless, standing alone, and undergoing no change, reaching everywhere and in no danger (of being exhausted)! It may be regarded as the Mother of all things.

I do not know its name, and I give it the designation of the Tao (the Way or Course). Making an effort (further) to give it a name I call it The Great. (James Legge, trans., 26-7)

According to Lao Tzu, there is something coming into existence before Heaven and Earth, which is universal transcending time and place, and produces all things. Lao Tzu just uses the word "Tao" to scantily designate this universal thing.

In Chinese, the term Tao, originally means "way," "path," or "principle." In Taoism, Tao denotes an obscure and ineffable metaphysical force, or the organic nothingness, nameless, formless, undefined, but is the mother and source of the world and all things. Chapter 1 of *Tao Te Ching* continues:

The name that can be named  
Is not the constant name.  
The nameless [Wu, nothingness] was the beginning of heaven and earth;  
The named [You, original One] was the mother of the myriad creatures. (Lau, 3)

In the opinion of Taoism, Tao is Wu (无), the organic nothingness, which produced You (有), the original One. Then the One produced the Two, Yin (阴, female force or principle) and Yang (阳, male force or principle), which interact with each other to produce all things in the world.

Tao is the mother and beginning of everything, but is invisible, formless, and without action. The chapter “The Great Supreme” in *Chuang Tzu* describes Tao like this:

For Tao has its inner reality and its evidences. It is devoid of action and of form. It may be transmitted, but cannot be received; it may be obtained, but cannot be seen. It is based in itself, rooted in itself. Before heaven and earth were, Tao existed by itself from all time. It gave the spirits and rulers their spiritual powers, and gave Heaven and Earth their birth. To Tao, the zenith is not high, nor the nadir low; no point in time is long ago, nor by the lapse of ages has it grown old. (Lin Yutang, Trans., 25-26)

According to Chuang Tzu, Tao exists by itself, is rooted in itself, and transcend time, place, and all limitations. It produces Heaven, Earth, and all things, and endows spirits and powers to humans and all things.

The Tao, nameless, formless, is present in every creature and object. It is the source and essence of everything, the universal power and principle that all things live on, and the eternal One and whole that unifies and is manifested in all things. The manifestation of Tao in all things and the natural world is Te. Te is the initial state of nature of all things. The way of Tao is Zi Ran (自然, naturally). Chapter 25 of *Tao Te Ching* writes: “Man takes his law from the Earth; the Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from the Tao. The law of the Tao is its being what it is [Zi Ran]” (Legge, 27). Tao does nothing intentionally and all things are done by themselves: “The Tao in its regular course does nothing (for the sake of doing it), and so there is nothing which it does not do” (Legge, 33).

The term and concept of nature in modern Chinese is Zi Ran (自然), which refers to the the natural material world, human inner nature, and the natural evolution of things. The Chinese word usually has no grammatical form transformation in a sentence. For example, “nature” in Chinese is “Zi Ran” (自然), which actually includes “nature,” “natural,” and “naturally.”

In fact, the concept of nature in Taoism includes a series of related concepts, mainly including: Tao, Te (德, 德), Zi Ran (自然), and Tian (天). The manifestation of Tao in the world of nature and all things is Te, which is the initial state of nature and the original state of everything in the world. Zi Ran, different from the Zi Ran in

modern Chinese, is the way of Tao, and means the natural evolution of things, or things moving with spontaneity. Tian means the heavens, and denotes nature (natural world, innate inner nature, and initial natural state), and the principle of the universe. With Tian, there are a series of concepts about nature: Tian Dao (Tian Tao, 天道), Tian Di (天地), Tian Di Wan Wu (天地万物), Tian Yun (天运), Tian Le (天乐), and so on. Tian Dao, which means the Tao of the Heaven, denotes the universal way and principle of the world. Tian Di, which means the Heavens and the Earth, denotes the natural world and the universe. Tian Di Wan Wu, which means Heaven, Earth, and ten thousand things (myriad things), denotes the whole world of nature. Tian Yun means the movement of the Heavens. Tian Le denotes the happiness of abiding with the Heavens – that is, the happiness from going to nature or keeping one’s own nature.

Te derives from and follows Tao, and stands for the initial state of nature. Te, Tao’s manifestation as nature, represents the unity and continuity between Tao, nature, and man.

Te stands for the initial state of nature, when nature, having emerged from Tao, returns to and abides by Tao, and when man, as a child of nature, keeps close to and abides by nature. As such Te represents the unity and continuity between Tao, nature, and man. (Ellen Marie Chen, 1973)

For Te (nature) derives and follows from Tao, primarily it characterizes the manner in which Tao is present in the world.

In Taoism, Te, the initial state of nature, is represented as the infant. Chapter 55 of *Tao Te Ching* says: “One who possesses virtue [Te] in abundance is comparable to a new born babe” (Lau, 60). Chapter 55 further describes the infant full of Te as absent from strife and possessing a strong life force:

Poisonous insects will not sting it;  
Ferocious animals will not pounce on it;  
Predatory birds will not swoop down on it;  
Its bones are weak and its sinews supple yet its hold is firm.  
It does not know of the union of male and female yet its male member will stir:  
This is because its virility is at its height.  
It howls all day yet does not become hoarse:  
This is because its harmony is at its height. (Lau, 60)

The infant, containing Te in fullness, is in the height of virility and harmony. Here, Te obviously stands for the perfection and harmony of original nature. According to *Tao Te Ching*, “the infant possesses Te in the fullest degree precisely because it has not developed the conscious distinction between good and evil, and the power of thought, thus its original goodness has not been spoiled by conscious exertion”. Therefore, Te, a initial state of nature in peace and harmony, “precedes and transcends the distinction between good and evil”, when “the heart, kernel, or mind, is yet enclosed within and protected by nature” (Chen, 1973).

Zi Ran (自然) denotes things evolving naturally, and doing things naturally as in Lao Tzu’s *Tao Te Ching*.

“故道大，天大，地大，王亦大。域中有四大，而王居其一焉。人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。”（二十五章）

One classic translation of this paragraph is:

Therefore the Tao is great; Heaven is great; Earth is great; and the (sage) king is also great. In the universe there are four that are great, and the (sage) king is one of them.

Man takes his law from the Earth; the Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from the Tao. The law of the Tao is its being what it is. (Legge, 27)

Here, James Legge rendered Zi Ran (自然) as “its being what it is”. There is another translated version from D.C. Lau of the last part of the previous paragraph: “Man Models himself on earth, Earth on heaven, Heaven on the way [Tao], and the way [Tao] on that which is naturally so” (27). Here, D.C. Lau translated Zi Ran (自然) as “which is naturally so”. Another translating version for the same part from R. B. Blakney is: “The Way [Tao] conforms to its own nature” (89). These three translating versions of Zi Ran all are correct.

Here is the interpretation of the paragraph from 陈鼓应 (Chen Guying):

Here the paragraph is saying that not only “Tao” takes its law from “Zi Ran (自然),” but the Heaven, the Earth and Man also take their law from “Zi Ran.” So-called “道’法自然” means that the way of “Tao” is according to its own situation. Its own inner cause decides the existence and function of Tao, which need not rely on external causes. Therefore, the word “自然” is not a noun but an adverb. That is to say, “自然” does not mean some specific existing entity

but describes a state of “being what it is.” [...] All the “自然” in *Lao Tzu*<sup>5</sup> denote this meaning. (陈鼓应, 49)

For example, *Tao Te Ching* describe the ideal Sage as “以辅万物之自然，而弗敢为也，” which is translated as “Thus he helps the natural development of all things, and does not dare to act (with an ulterior purpose of his own)” (Legge, 55).

In Taoism, Tian, which means the heavens, denotes the outside natural world, humans innate inner nature, and the universal principle of the world. For example, in *Chuang Tzu*.

Therefore it has been said that Heaven (the natural) abides within man, human (the artificial) without. Virtue [Te] abides in the natural. [...]

"What do you mean," inquired the Spirit of the River, "by the natural and the artificial?"

"Horses and oxen," answered the Spirit of the Ocean, "have four feet. That is the natural. Put a halter on a horse's head, a string through a bullock's nose. That is the artificial.

"Therefore it has been said, do not let the artificial obliterate the natural; do not let will obliterate destiny; do not let virtue [Te] be sacrificed to fame. Diligently observe these precepts without fail, and thus you will revert to the True." (Lin, 47)

Here, Tian is rendered as Heaven, the natural, opposite to the human and the artificial. According to Chuang Tzu, Tian is human innate inner nature inheriting from Heaven and abiding within humans. This Tian is what things are born to be. We should keep and follow our Tian, which is our destiny, and do not let it be sacrificed to secular pursuits, or let our will destroy our destiny; we should protect and follow all things' Tian, and do not let human artificial actions disturb or destroy the natural state and process. Therefore, Tao manifests itself in all things, Tian Di Wan Wu, which it produces, as Te. If things and humans have and retain Te, they can keep their Tian, and evolve in the way of Tao and Zi Ran that are evolving naturally. If humans follow Tian Dao, and do not disturb things' Tian Yun, that is doing nothing and just let things go in their own way, people will enjoy Tian Le.

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<sup>5</sup> Lao Tzu's classic Taoism work *Tao Te Ching* also often is named as *Lao Tzu*.



The concept and denotation of nature in Transcendentalism and Taoism in this chapter is the base of the comparative interpretation and analysis in the following chapters.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESONANCE: SIMILARITIES OF NATURE THOUGHT IN TRANSCENDENTALISM AND TAOISM**

Culture has its own character, which is the combination of the people's characters in that culture. American culture and Chinese culture are two cultures with very different characters. However, when we simultaneously read the two ideological representatives in these two cultures – American Transcendentalism and Chinese Taoism – we find they have surprising similarities in their ideas of nature. Both Transcendentalism and Taoism believe in the unity of the world which unifies spirit, man, and nature with the Oversoul or Tao, the universal essence or principle. This eternal One or universal oneness of the world – the Oversoul or Tao contains the supreme truth and is present in each individual of the world as the “common nature”. The presence of the universal essence as “common nature” both in humans and nature results in the inherent and original relation between humans and nature. With the common origin and essence, humans can benefit and get power from nature. The manifestation of the oneness of the world in nature and humans is the wholeness and integrity of nature and humanity. Only through maintaining one's integrity, can one appreciate the wholeness and beauty of nature. The integrity of nature and humans come from the Oversoul or Tao, and is manifested as innocence, simplicity, and initial state of nature and humans. For maintaining this integrity, both Transcendentalism and Taoism argue the deficiency of intellectual discrimination and criticize the artificiality of morals, the alienation of human civilization, and the greed for property. Finally, both Transcendentalists and Taoists convert to the natural world and innate nature. They advocate going to nature, living the life of a hermit, immersing in contemplation and doing nothing. Whereas, in these similar ideas of Transcendentalism and Taoism, there are differences resulting from the different characters and traditions of their cultures. Generally speaking, Transcendentalism unifies man and nature with the Oversoul, therefore emphasizes more on the divinity and power of humans; Taoism unifies man and nature with the Tao, therefore emphasizes more on the universal principle of nature. With their own time

background and intellectual tradition, Transcendentalists' nature is more specific and perceptible, whereas, Taoists' nature is more philosophical and imaginable.

### **3.1 The Unity of the World**

First, both Transcendentalism and Taoism have the basic idea that the world is a unity, the eternal One. Everything in the world, God, heaven, earth, humanity, nature, mountains, trees, grass, animals, are connected with each other, communicate with each other, and are the same in nature. They all come from one common fundamental entity, are unified in that entity, and manifest its sublime truth and universal law. The idea of the world's oneness is basic and central in both Transcendentalism and Taoism. It is the unity of man, nature, and God through the Over-soul in the former, and the unity of the heaven, the earth, the human, and myriad things in the world through Tao in the latter.

In Transcendentalists' opinion, the oneness of the world is the Oversoul. It is the eternal One, the universal unity and essence of the world. In *Nature*, Emerson argues that the universal essence is the eternal One and present in human souls and all things: "We learn that the highest is present to the soul of man; that the dread universal essence, which is not wisdom, or love, or beauty, or power, but all in one, and each entirely, is that for which all things exist, and that by which they are" (31). This universal essence gives existence to and defines all things, and unifies all things as one. In "The Oversoul", Emerson argues that the Oversoul is the universal unity unifying all human beings: "that Unity, that Over-soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other" (97). This eternal One also unifies the subject, the object, all actions, and all phenomena: "the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object, are one" (97).

Similarly, Thoreau also argues that all things, nature, and humans are one. More specifically, Thoreau represents that Humans are part of nature, and have sympathy with all natural things. In *Walden*, Thoreau describes his experience as part of nature: "This is a delicious evening, when the whole body is one sense, and imbibes delight through every pore. I go and come with a strange liberty in Nature, a part of herself" (143). When one's "whole body" becomes one, namely keeping one's integrity, one

can feel the oneness between self and nature. Thoreau thinks that human beings and all things in the world belong to one unity, and have sympathy and intelligence with each other:

... such sympathy have they ever with our race, that all Nature would be affected, and the sun's brightness fade, and the winds would sigh humanely, and the clouds rain tears, and the woods shed their leaves and put on mourning in midsummer, if any man should ever for a just cause grieve. Shall I not have intelligence with the earth? Am I not partly leaves and vegetable mould myself? (153)

These phenomena Thoreau described we all experienced in our lives. But they are impossible and even ridiculous in the perspective of modern science, which examines the world partly with microscope and proves its findings about the world with experiments so surely. However, as Emerson claimed in *Nature*: “All science has one aim, namely, to find a theory of nature. We have theories of races and of functions, but scarcely yet a remote approach to an idea of creation” (6), science cannot find or prove the truth of human creation and nature’s beauty. Even natural science also finds the same origin and essence of humans and nature, who can deny that humans perhaps have intelligence and sympathy with nature, which science has not found or would never find?

Similar to the Transcendentalists, the Taoists also argue that all things, including humans, are born together from Tao, are inherent in its wholeness, and are united as one. In the wholeness, the universe is the same as any individual. Each individual manifests the wholeness of the universe. Only through retaining the wholeness of one’s nature, can one comprehend the wholeness of the world, and reach the Tao. In “On the Equality of Things”<sup>6</sup> in *Chuang Tzu*, we read, “Heaven and earth were born together with me and the myriad things are one with me” (Mair, trans., 18). Chuang Tzu thinks that the heaven and earth – the universe and the natural world, and humans were born together, and united as one. In the same chapter, Chuang Tzu claims that “Heaven and earth are the same as a finger; the myriad things are the same as a horse” (Mair, 16). The universe and myriad things are the same as any individual thing. Each individual contains or suggests the wholeness of the world.

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<sup>6</sup> This chapter “齐物论” (Qi Wu Lun), is rendered into “On the Equality of Things” by Mair, and “On Levelling All Things” by Lin Yutang.

This point is similarly argued by Thoreau in *Walden*: “the Maker of this earth but patented a leaf” (340). In a leaf there is the whole world. Chuang Tzu continues to argue that all the myriad things and humans are leveled together by Tao: “Therefore take, for instance, a twig and a pillar, or the ugly person and the great beauty, and all the strange and monstrous transformations. These are all leveled together by Tao” (Lin, trans., 7). In the Tao or the oneness of the world, there are no discriminations of the “twig” and the “pillar”, or the ugly and the beautiful. In essence, they are all the same.

Similar to Thoreau’s argument that humans have sympathy and intelligence with nature, Chuang Tzu shows us the transition and communication of humans and nature with stories and fables. At the end of the chapter “On the Equality of Things,” Chuang Tzu describes one vivid and vigorous story:

Once upon a time, I, Chuang Chou, dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither, to all intents and purposes a butterfly. I was conscious only of my happiness as a butterfly, unaware that I was Chou. Soon I awaked, and there I was, veritably myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly, dreaming I am a man. Between a man and a butterfly there is necessarily a distinction. The transition is called the transformation of material things. (Lin Yutang, trans., 12)

In this vivid way, through a transformation dream, Chuang Tzu shows us the limit of our consciousness, punctures the arrogance of human-centered epistemology, and levels all things in the world.

Along with the oneness of the world, there is a universal principle or grand law from the unity of the world, from the Heaven and Earth, that all things should abide by. The Transcendentalists argue that there is an universal law present in and determining all things: “It proceeds on the faith that a law determines all phenomena” (Emerson, *Nature*, 27). There is a sublime power producing human beings and executing the grandest law on humans and all things: “Nearest to all things is that power which fashions their being. Next to us the grandest laws are continually being executed. Next to us is [...] the workman whose work we are” (Thoreau, *Walden*, 148). In Transcendentalists’ further illuminating, we find that this grand law can be a spiritual power of human mind, and it is both truth and beauty: “That law, when in the mind, is an idea. Its beauty is infinite. The true philosopher

and the true poet are one, and a beauty, which is truth, and a truth, which is beauty, is the aim of both” (Emerson, *Nature*, 27). With this sublime power or after knowing the grand law, humans can puncture the phenomena and feel the sublime truth intuitively: “which being known, the phenomena can be predicted” (Emerson, *Nature*, 27). In this process, it emits excellent grace and beauty, and humans experience an agitating delight. This grand law or spiritual power actually is the Oversoul present in man, the deity of God within man, and the innate nature of humans, as Emerson writes in “Self-reliance”: “No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature” (21). With this innate nature and spiritual mind, man becomes the center of the universe and casts his nature and mind as the highest law to all things in the world. As Emerson writes in *Nature*:

Man is the dwarf of himself. Once he was permeated and dissolved by spirit. He filled nature with his overflowing currents. Out from him sprang the sun and moon; from man the sun, from woman the moon. The laws of his mind, the periods of his actions externalized themselves into day and night, into the year and the seasons. (*Nature*, 34)

There is the same grand law in the natural world and within humans. It comes from the same Oversoul and eternal One.

Similarly, the Chinese Taoists also argues the existence and presence of the universal law or principle in the universe and all things. Actually it is more emphasized by the Taoists than the Transcendentalists. In Taoism, the grandest law is Tian Dao (Tian Tao, 天道), the Tao of the Heaven, which denotes the natural evolving way of all things and the universe. Chuang Tzu claims that the evolving ways of all things are uniform: “Although heaven and earth are great, their evolution is uniform. Although the myriad things are numerous, their governance is unitary” (“Heaven and Earth,” Mair, trans., 102). According to Taoism, the Tian Dao, the universal law of all things, which is a manifestation of Tao, is a way of doing things naturally without artificial interference, or doing nothing but being beneficial to all things, so everything will be done. In the Chapter 73 of *Tao Te Ching*, Lao Tzu argues: “It is the way of Heaven not to strive, and yet it skillfully overcomes; not to speak, and yet it is skillful in obtaining a reply; does not call, and yet men come to it of themselves” (Legge, 60). In Chapter 8 and 78, Lao Tzu describes the excellence of water, which he thinks is close to Tao:

The excellence of water appears in its benefiting all things, and in its occupying, without striving (to the contrary), the low place which all men dislike. (Legge, 16-17)

Nothing is Weaker than water,  
But when it attacks something hard  
Or resistant, then nothing withstands it,  
And nothing will alter its way. (Blakney, trans., 154)

The way of water – benefiting all things, occupying the low place without striving, but overcoming everything and nothing can change its way – this is the way of Tao, and the Tao of the Heaven – Tian Dao, the universal law in the world.

With the concept of Tian Dao (the way of Heaven), the Taoists also illuminates the concept of Ren Dao (人道, the way of man). Chapter 77 in *Tao Te Ching* compares Tian Dao and Ren Dao: “It is the Way of Heaven to diminish superabundance, and to supplement deficiency. It is not so with the way of man. He takes away from those who have not enough to add to his own superabundance” (Legge, 62). Tian Dao is the universal way and sublime truth in the world; however, Ren Dao often conflicts with Tian Dao. Chapter 81 depicts the sage following Tian Dao:

The sage does not accumulate (for himself). The more that he expends for others, the more does he possess of his own; the more that he gives to others, the more does he have himself.

With all the sharpness of the Way of Heaven, it injures not; with all the doing in the way of the sage he does not strive. (Legge, 65)

The sage, following the way of Heaven, does not strive or injure. He always gives to others, benefiting others, but he possesses more for this. This is the way of Heaven, the way of Tao, the universal law in the world, which is manifested in the natural world and all things. In the chapter “The Way of Heaven,” Chuang Tzu writes, “The Way of Heaven operates (unceasingly), and leaves no accumulation (of its influence) in any particular place, so that all things are brought to perfection by it” (Lin, 50). The way of Heaven brings all things to perfection, but you cannot find its trace of influence on them. The way of Heaven is the way of Tao – that is, letting things be what they are, never interfering with the naturally evolving way of all things. In this way all things are brought to perfection and excellence.

Both Transcendentalism and Taoism verify and show us the oneness of the world and argues the existence of the universal grand law. The Transcendentalists, influenced by the Chinese ancient thoughts, also acknowledge the sublime power and law of the universe and natural world. For example, in *Walden*, Thoreau quoted some passages from Confucius, whom he deeply agrees with: “How vast and profound is the influence of the subtile powers of Heaven and of Earth!” (149). However, for the Transcendentalists, this universal law comes from the innate nature and spiritual mind of humans. Namely, the human being gives the supreme law to the universe. Although the Transcendentalists also criticize the artificiality of human society, they argue that if humans can retain their innocence and integrity, their innate nature is the highest law in the world. In contrast, for the Taoists, this universal law comes from the objective natural world. It is the natural evolving way of the universe and every individual thing. Man is just one of the myriad things with nothing special. So man should do nothing, and just immerse the self in the universal current of all things evolving – do not disturb, but be beneficial to it.

### **3.2 Inherent and Original Relation between Humanity and Nature**

Both Transcendentalism and Taoism believe in the unity of the world. From their perspectives, humanity and nature are born from the same thing and are unified. Therefore, humanity and nature have an inherent and original relation with each other. Both Transcendentalism and Taoism acknowledge and emphasize this inherent relation, which can be discovered by intuition. The Transcendentalists believe in the importance of a direct relationship with God and with nature. This direct relation is where the self’s power comes from, and the reason why the Transcendentalists advocate humans keeping an intimate touch with nature. For example, in *Nature*, Emerson argues that humans should behold nature face to face, and retain or return to their original relation to nature and God:

The foregoing generations beheld God and Nature face to face; we – through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs? Embosomed for a season in nature, whose floods of life stream around and through us, and invite us by the powers they supply, to action proportioned to nature [...] . (6)



Emerson's resounding claim, "Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe?", influenced many people in America and the world, and still resounds today. According to Emerson, the relation between humans and nature is innate. The floods of life that stream through nature also flow through our bodies. Abiding with nature, we can get life and power from it, and can gain our own insight and revelation. But many people in modern society have forgotten or lost this direct relation, and accordingly lost this source of their lives and power. This is what Emerson tries to call people return back to.

Not only dull beckoning, the Transcendentalists describe the real experiences they experienced with poetic language to verify our own experiences to make us apprehend and believe this inherent relation. For example, in *Nature*, Emerson illuminates this innate relation with his own perceivable experience:

The greatest delight which the fields and woods minister is the suggestion of an occult relation between man and the vegetable. I am not alone and unacknowledged. They nod to me, and I to them. The waving of the boughs in the storm is new to me and old. It takes me by surprise, and yet is not unknown. Its effect is like that of a higher thought or a better emotion coming over me, when I deemed I was thinking justly or doing right. (8)

Emerson believes that there is an occult relation between man and the vegetable. When they meet, they nod to each other and can feel an innate familiarity with each other. The effect of the waving of the boughs to one is like the feeling of a higher thought or a better emotion coming over him. Through his description and experience, Emerson reveals to us the inherent and original relation between humans and nature.

The Transcendentalists not only describe this relation, they also put their ideas into practice to explore and prove this relation. Thoreau lived almost his entire life in Concord, and went to live at nearby Walden Pond in 1845 to experience nature directly and intensely. His two years' life at Walden Pond was recorded in *Walden*. In the chapter of *Walden* titled "Solitude," he writes his connection with nature as an intimate, two-way relationship:

In the midst of a gentle rain while these thoughts prevailed, I was suddenly sensible of such sweet and beneficent society in Nature, in the very pattering of the drops, and in every sound and sight around my house, an infinite and

unaccountable friendliness all at once like an atmosphere sustaining me, as made the fancied advantages of human neighborhood insignificant, and I have never thought of them since. Every little pine needle expanded and swelled with sympathy and befriended me. I was so distinctly made aware of the presence of something kindred to me, even in scenes which we are accustomed to call wild and dreary, and also that the nearest of blood to me and humanest was not a person nor a villager, that I thought no place could ever be strange to me again. (146)

Only through experiencing nature personally, can one get this true and profound experience. Thoreau felt a sweet and beneficent society in nature, and a friendliness and sympathy in all natural things. All natural things are so kindred to him that with their presence, Thoreau thought that the natural things are the nearest of blood and most human to him, and no place could ever be strange to him again. Abiding in nature, Thoreau experienced his inherent “blood” relation with nature truly and vividly.

This inherent and original relation between humans and nature comes from the unity and oneness of the world, from the presence of the Oversoul, the deity of God, and the sublime truth in all things. Abiding in nature is staying close to one’s own soul and nature and the deity of God. At Walden Pond, Thoreau stayed so close to nature that he claimed:

I cannot come nearer to God and Heaven/  
Than I live to Walden even. (215)

With this in mind, Thoreau advocates keeping an original and direct relation with nature – not only to natural things but also to the nature of life. Thoreau criticizes that many students study at school, “where anything is professed and practised but the art of life; – to survey the world through a telescope or a microscope, and never with his natural eye” (56-57). Actually, “how could youths better learn to live than by at once trying the experiment of living?” (56). Thoreau thus encourages living one’s life and becoming a seer rather than a reader: “Will you be a reader, a student merely, or a seer? Read your fate, see what is before you, and walk on into futurity” (123). One should see his life with his own eyes, and experience his life personally. That is to stay close to one’s innate nature or genius, then one can read own fate.

Similarly, the Taoists also think that humanity and the myriad things are all born from Tao and are manifestations of Tao. This Tao is the eternal One of the world and

the wholeness of all things. This Tao is also the natural way all things operate and the initial nature of all things. With the same origin and nature, the original and direct relation between humans and nature is innate. Taoism, like Transcendentalism, also accentuates an inherent and original relation between humanity and nature.

In contrast to Transcendentalists' descriptions of perceivable experiences of nature, the Taoists mostly use vivid stories or wonderful fables to suggest this inherent relation. The chapter "Autumn Floods" of *Chuang Tzu* records such a heckling story:

Master Chuang and Master Hui were strolling across the bridge over the Hao River. "The minnows have come out and are swimming so leisurely," said Master Chuang. "This is the joy of fishes." "You're not a fish," said Master Hui. "How do you know what the joy of fishes is?" "You're not me," said Master Chuang, "so how do you know that I don't know what the joy of fishes is? [...] I know it by strolling over the Hao." (Mair, trans., 165)

Can a man really know the joy of fishes? This is a question that many people wonder about. When Master Chuang (Chuang Tzu) saw the swimming fishes in the Hao River during their strolling, he felt the joy of fishes. Master Hui heckled him and asked How can you know? Master Chuang also heckled back, How can you know I don't know? Finally, Chuang Tzu says that he just knows it by strolling over the Hao River. Through this story, Chuang Tzu suggests that humanity and all things have an innate connection and they know each other by intuition.

In the same way, both Transcendentalism and Taoism value living life directly through experience rather than through reading a book. In the chapter "The Way of Heaven," Chuang Tzu narrates a vivid story:

Duke Huan was reading in the upper part of his hall and Wheelwright Flat was hewing a wheel in the lower part. Setting aside his hammer and chisel, the wheelwright went to the upper part of the hall and inquired of Duke Huan, saying,

"I venture to ask what words Your Highness is reading?"

"The words of the sages," said the duke.

"Are the sages still alive?"

"They're already dead;" said the duke.

"Then what my lord is reading are merely the dregs of the ancients."

"How can you, a wheelwright, comment upon what I am reading?" asked Duke Huan. "If you can explain yourself, all right. If you cannot explain yourself, you shall die."

“I look at it from my own occupation,” said Wheelwright Flat. “If the spokes are loose, they’ll fit sweet as a whistle but the wheel won’t be solid. If they’re too tight, you won’t be able to insert them no matter how hard you try. To make them neither too loose nor too tight is something you sense in your hand and feel in your heart. There’s a knack to it that can’t be put in words. I haven’t been able to teach it to my son, and my son hasn’t been able to learn it from me. That’s why I’m still hewing wheels after seventy years. When they died, the ancients took with them what they couldn’t transmit. So what you are reading are the dregs of the ancients.” (Mair, 128-29)

In this story, we find similar ideas to those of Thoreau: that a common craftsman understands life more deeply than officers and noblemen. Through his experience of his own craft work and life, the craftsman knows that there are “knacks,” feelings, wisdom, and beauty in real life that cannot be transmitted by words or any other means. Only by living your life by yourself can you experience and understand it. The words and books of past sages are merely the dregs of the ancients.

In the chapter “Heavenly Revolution” of *Chuang Tzu*, when Lao Tzu and Confucius are talking about the inviolable six classics, Lao Tzu says, “The six classics are the stale traces of the former kings, but they do not tell what created the traces! Now, sir, what you talk about are traces. Traces, however, are produced by shoes; they’re not the shoes themselves!” (Mair, 142) In a debate with Confucius, whose ideas sanctify the deeds and classics of ancient kings and greatly influenced China for more than 2,000 years with its strong moral teachings and doctrines, Lao Tzu depreciates the six classics as stale traces and points out that the “shoes,” the deeds themselves or current life, are more important and true. This idea is confirmed by Emerson: “The persons who make up a nation to-day, next year die, and their experience dies with them” (“Self-Reliance,” 33). After this debate, Confucius comes to realize that “I have long been a man who has not shared in evolution. But how can a man who does not share in evolution help other men to evolve?” (Mair, 143). Then Lao Tzu comments that “You’ve finally got it!” According to Lao Tzu, humanity and the myriad things are all unified as one and evolve together. Only the man sharing in the common evolution can help other men to evolve.

### **3.3 Benefit and Power from Nature**

The Transcendentalists and Taoists not only acknowledge the inherent relation between humans and nature, but also emphasize the importance to maintain and

experience this relation. People should experience this relation, abide in nature, and facilitate their communication and intercourse with nature. In fact, this communication or intercourse between humans and nature is the source of human life and power. Therefore, both Transcendentalism and Taoism argue that humans can benefit and get power from nature. Actually, as two systems of thoughts, both Transcendentalism and Taoism derive great creative power from nature, and the thoughts of nature are central to both of them.

In a more specific and perceivable way, the Transcendentalists show us how humans benefit and get life and power from nature, and how nature supplies humans with both physical and spiritual sustenance. For example, in *Nature*, Emerson argues that abiding in nature human beings are “embosomed” or nourished by nature: “Embosomed for a season in nature, whose floods of life stream around and through us, and invite us by the powers they supply, to action proportioned to nature” (6). Nature supplies humans with powers and floods of life. Nature is full of lives, which not only supply us with physical food but also vitality, beauty, and divinity. Emerson continues to argue that man gets daily food from his intercourse with nature: “[Man’s] intercourse with heaven and earth becomes part of his daily food. In the presence of nature a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows” (7). This food is the power or delight humans get or experience when their innocence, soul, and nature communicate with nature’s innocence, sublime truth, and divinity from God. This food also is the “firmness,” “tranquility,” “industry,” “providence,” and “affection” that humans learn from the manifestations of God and supreme truth in natural things:

Who can estimate this? Who can guess how much firmness the sea-beaten rock has taught the fisherman? How much tranquility has been reflected to man from the azure sky, [...] ? How much industry and providence and affection we have caught from the pantomime of brutes? What a searching preacher of self-command is the varying phenomenon of Health! (22)

Abiding in nature, the sky, the winds, the sea-beaten rock, and the pantomime of brutes all reveal and transmit the excellence, grace, beauty, and truth to humans. With soul, divinity, and beauty inside, humans get beauty, truth, and power outside from the natural world.

More specifically and perceivably than Emerson, Thoreau describes how humans get life, vitality, health, and perpetual youth from the earth, the sun, the grass, and all the natural things. For example, in *Walden*, Thoreau describes the beneficence of nature to humans: “The indescribable innocence and beneficence of Nature – of sun and wind and rain, of summer and winter – such health, such cheer, they afford forever!” (153). The sun, wind, rain, and the summer, the winter, all things in nature can benefit us and give us health and life. “We are wont to forget that the sun looks on our cultivated fields and on the prairies and forests without distinction. [...] In his view the earth is all equally cultivated like a garden. Therefore we should receive the benefit of his light and heat with a corresponding trust and magnanimity” (183). The light of sun physically cultivates humans and the world like a garden, but humans are not only fed by sun and nature physically. The universal medicine of nature can keep us well, serene, and young forever: “What is the pill which will keep us well, serene, contented? Not my or thy great-grandfather’s, but our great-grandmother Nature’s universal, vegetable, botanic medicines, by which she has kept herself young always” (153). Nature endows humans with serenity, health, and youth, which itself has. Therefore, Thoreau claims, “Let me have a draught of undiluted morning air. Morning air!” (153). The “Morning air” with its fresh vitality can endow humans with health, life, and perpetual youth.

In the opinion of Thoreau, the Earth, which gives birth to all creatures in the natural world, is alive: “The earth is not a mere fragment of dead history, [...] but living poetry like the leaves of a tree, which precede flowers and fruit – not a fossil earth, but a living earth” (340-41). Nature is alive itself and gives life to humans and all things: “[...] Nature has some bowels, and there again is mother of humanity” (340). Thoreau describes the vitality of grass as a green fire, symbolizing perpetual youth and the eternal life of nature, and the perennial spring with a green life stream, which all creatures drink at:

The grass flames up on the hillsides like a spring fire [...] as if the earth sent forth an inward heat to greet the returning sun; not yellow but green is the color of its flame; – the symbol of perpetual youth, the grass-blade, like a long green ribbon, streams from the sod into the summer, checked indeed by the frost, but anon pushing on again, lifting its spear of last year’s hay with the fresh life below. It grows as steadily as the rill oozes out of the ground. It is almost

identical with that, for in the growing days of June, when the rills are dry, the grass-blades are their channels, and from year to year the herds drink at this perennial green stream, and the mower draws from it betimes their winter supply. So our human life but dies down to its root, and still puts forth its green blade to eternity. (343)

From sun and earth, the rills of life grow out through grass and plants, at which the herds and humans all drink at. Our human life also comes from the creatures, the plants, the earth – from nature. When we die we return to the root of life and will grow new life again, like the dead grass. Humans are part of the eternal life of nature. Nature gives birth to abundant creatures, which are so full of life that they can afford to be sacrificed: “I love to see that Nature is so rife with life that myriads can be afforded to be sacrificed and suffered to prey on one another.” (350)

In the similar way, the Taoists also argue that Tao and nature are the origin and source of human life. Humans receive “sustenance” and get nourishment from heaven (nature). The Taoists’ nature is more abstract and spiritual, without the specific and physical color of the Transcendentalists’ nature, which is based on the modern scientific findings. The chapter “Symbols of Integrity Fulfilled” of *Chuang Tzu* tells that the sage, living in Tao, receives sustenance from heaven (Tian) and is fed by heaven, which denotes nature:

The sage hatches no schemes, so what use has he for knowledge? He does no splitting, so what use has he for glue? He has no deficiency, so what use has he for virtue? He does no peddling, so what use has he for commerce? These four are the gruel of heaven. The gruel of heaven is sustenance from heaven. Since he receives sustenance from heaven, what use has he for man? (Mair, trans., 49)

According to Chuang Tzu, the “gruel” or “sustenance” the sage receives from heaven (Tian), actually is the innocence, simplicity, and integrity which he inherits from the Tao and sublime truth as his innate nature. With this heavenly “sustenance,” the sage is in a state of purity, innocence, and is integrated – pure One – and does not need knowledge, convention, virtue, or commerce for discriminating, scheming, or judging. People should stay close to nature, receive power from heaven, retain their own nature, and abandon social discriminations and values.

In *Chuang Tzu*, the chapter “The Great Ancestral Teacher” gives a fable:

When springs dry up, fish huddle together on the land. They blow moisture on each other and keep each other wet with their slime. But it would be better if

they could forget themselves in the rivers and lakes. Rather than praising Yao [sage] and condemning Chieh [tyrant], it would be better for people to forget both of them and assimilate their ways. (Mair, 53)

In this fable, Chang Tzu suggests that when people comment on the sage and the tyrant, the social morals, they are like fish on dry land without springs, moistening each other with their damp and spittle. Although they try to help each other in the predicament, it would be better if the fish could forget themselves in the rivers and lakes, which denotes that it would be better if people could forget both the sage and the tyrant and just “lose oneself in Tao.”<sup>7</sup> Abiding in Tao, nature, the wholeness and the eternal essence of the world, people receive their life and liberty unconsciously. In the same chapter, Chuang Tzu continues,

“Fish delight in water,” said Confucius, “and man delights in the Way [Tao]. Delighting in water, fish find adequate nourishment just by passing through their ponds. Delighting in the Way [Tao], man’s life is stabilized without ado. Therefore, it is said, ‘Fish forget themselves in the rivers and lakes; men forget themselves in the arts of the Way [Tao].’” (Mair, 61)

In the Tao man delights in nature as fish delight in water. In the same way, humans get vitality from the Tao and nature, as fish get nourishment from the water in ponds. The third sentence of the previous passage is rendered into “Those that live their full life in Tao achieve realization of their nature in inaction” (Lin, 28). In other words, by abiding in the Tao, man realizes his full nature in inaction.

Abiding in nature and following their own innate nature, humans can achieve brilliant creative power. In *Walden*, Thoreau writes, “... [we relate] to the perennial source of our life, whence in all our experience we have found that to issue, as the willow stands near the water and sends out its roots in that direction. This will vary with different natures, but this is the place where a wise man will dig his cellar” (148). Thoreau argues that nature is the perennial source of human life, and, as a willow sends out its roots in the direction of water, humans should abide in nature to feed his genius and creative power: he finds “That some berries which I had eaten on a hillside had fed my genius” (241). These berries Thoreau just picked from the tree really nourish his body and health. But the freshness, purity, and natural state of the berries and natural world are what really nourish his genius. Innate nature, fed by the

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<sup>7</sup> The last part of the fable is rendered as “And it would be better than praising Yao and blaming Chieh to forget both (the good and bad) and lose oneself in Tao” (Lin Yutang, 25).



outside natural world, becomes your genius. Following your genius, your inner nature, and your own path, you will always make fresh discoveries: “Follow your genius closely enough, and it will not fail to show you a fresh prospect every hour” (125). You genius shows you your path of fate, and you should follow it: “Every path but your own is the path of fate. Keep on your own track, then” (131).

Similarly, in Taoism, the silence and emptiness of Tao contains creative factors and power. Chapter 5 of *Tao Te Ching* states, “How the universe is like a bellows! Empty, yet it gives a supply that never fails.” The universe, like Tao, is empty, but can nurture and grow myriad things. Chapter 15 argues,

Who can be muddy water, settling, slowly become limpid?  
Who can be at rest and yet, stirring, slowly come to life?  
He who holds fast to this way [Tao]  
Desires not to be full.  
It is because he is not full  
That he can be worn and yet newly made. (Lau, 17)

According to Taoists, the state of Tao is a state of silent and empty, but it is not absolute silence and emptiness. The one, living in Tao, can calm down and come clean and still in ado and din, and can stir and come to life in rest and quiet. He keeps his silence and emptiness, and in this way he can refresh self and revive. As 陈鼓应 (Chen Guying) said, “The life of ‘Xu Jing’ (emptiness and silence) is an embracing and gathering state of the human psyche. Only this kind of psyche can cultivate the lofty aspiration and true and simple temperament; only this kind of psyche can generate profound and rich creative power” (65).

### **3.4 The Wholeness of Nature and the Integrity of Humanity**

Both in Transcendentalism and Taoism, nature is perceived as a whole. Only by perceiving nature as a whole can we obtain nature’s innate wholeness, poetic power, and beauty, through which we can reach God, or the Tao. On the other hand, only the one, retaining his innate innocence, simplicity, harmony, and integrity, can perceive the wholeness and beauty of nature. In their own way, both Transcendentalism and Taoism represent the wholeness and beauty of nature, and what the one with innate integrity is like or feels. Then they both suggest their ways to maintain the innocence and integrity of humans.

The Transcendentalists argue that all the nature is a whole and each individual thing in nature is a whole. The latter belongs to and suggests the former. And there is great beauty in the wholeness of nature and things in nature. Only the one maintaining his innate integrity can perceive the wholeness and beauty of nature. For example, in *Nature*, Emerson, when talking about the landscape and the farmers, says, “But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet” (7). Only the one who can integrate all the parts of nature, for example, the poet, can see the landscape – the beauty of nature. In this manner, Emerson focuses on the wholeness that one can perceive in nature: “When we speak of nature in this manner, we have a distinct but most poetical sense in the mind. We mean the integrity of impression made by manifold natural objects” (7). That harmonious integrity of nature is beauty, the poetic charm, the universal grace of nature, which only comes from the wholeness of nature. For example, Emerson writes in *Nature*,

Nature is a sea of forms radically alike and even unique. A leaf, a sunbeam, a landscape, the ocean, make an analogous impression on the mind. What is common to them all, – that perfectness and harmony, is beauty. The standard of beauty is the entire circuit of natural forms, – the totality of nature; [...] Nothing is quite beautiful alone; nothing but is beautiful in the whole. A single object is only so far beautiful as it suggests this universal grace. (14)

According to Emerson, there is a common thing between all the things nature, the “perfectness”, “harmony”, or wholeness, which is beauty. This beauty of nature is the “circuit of natural forms,” the totality of nature. Any beautiful thing is beautiful in the whole, or as suggesting the whole, the universal grace.

In *Walden*, Thoreau also applauds the beauty of nature: “[Ponds like Walden] are too pure to have a market value; they contain no muck. How much more beautiful than our lives, how much more transparent than our characters, are they!” (221). Compared to our secular lives and social characters, nature is pure, transparent, and beautiful. In Thoreau’s opinion, the beauty of nature is a kind of wild luxuriant beauty, full of vitality:

Nature has no human inhabitant who appreciates her. The birds with their plumage and their notes are in harmony with the flowers, but what youth or maiden conspires with the wild luxuriant beauty of Nature? She flourishes most

alone, far from the towns where they reside. Talk of heaven! ye disgrace earth.  
(222)

Compared to human inhabitants, even youths and maidens, birds and animals are more in harmony with this luxuriant beauty of nature. When secular humans talk about social morals, and hollow and rigid heavens, they are actually ignoring the beauty of nature and disgracing the vitality and divinity of the earth.

In a more brief and epigrammatic way, the Taoists also illuminate the great beauty of nature. For example, the chapter “Knowledge Wanders North” in *Chuang Tzu* describes the beauty of heaven and earth:

Heaven and earth have great beauty but do not speak; the four seasons have a clear law but do not deliberate; the myriad things have a complete principle but do not explain. The sage is one who probes the beauties of heaven and earth and comprehends the principles of the myriad things. Hence the ultimate man does not act and the great sage makes nothing, which is to say that they observe heaven and earth. (Mair, 213)

Chuang Tzu argues that the heaven and earth or nature has great beauty but does not speak. Nature, including the myriad things, stays serenely and evolves by itself. In this state, nature emits luxuriant and sublime beauty. Thus, the ultimate man or sage, makes nothing, and just observes nature tranquilly, trying to probe the beauties of heaven and earth and comprehend the principles of the myriad things, to immerse the self in.

After illuminating this poetic wholeness and great beauty of nature, both the Transcendentalists and the Taoists represent what the person, who can really apprehend this beauty, is like. Both Transcendentalism and Taoism argue that to perceive the integrity and poetic wholeness of nature one first must maintain the innocence, simplicity, and integrity of one’s own nature. Only one who can maintain this innate innocence, simplicity, and wholeness can really perceive and grasp the integrity and poetic power of nature, and reach the Tao or God. In this respect, the infant or child is the ideal. For example, Emerson argues that the child has innate superiority in apprehending nature’s beauty and maintaining own integrity:

To speak truly, few adult persons can see nature. Most persons do not see the sun. At least they have a very superficial seeing. The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child. The lover of

nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood. (7)

Only the child can really see nature. For the innocence and integrity of the child, whose “inward and outward senses” are in harmony, the sun can shine into his eye and heart. The innocence and integrity of the child makes him capable of perceiving and obtaining the wholeness and poetic power of nature. For men, only the one retaining his “spirit of infancy” can really sense nature.

The Taoists also emphasize the “spirit of infancy”. In Taoism, the initial, innocent, and harmonious state of human nature is Te, the manifestation of Tao in the myriad things. The Taoists think that the infant is full of Te, and is the ideal of human harmonious and perfect nature. For example, in a paragraph of chapter 55 in *Tao Te Ching*, which is cited in section 1.2.2 of this thesis, Lao Tzu describes the infant full of Te, who has strong living forces and inner harmony. The infant’s body is weak and soft, but his grasp is firm. His excited virile member shows the perfection of his physical essence, and all day long crying without hoarseness shows the harmony in his constitution. The infant with the initial state and integrity of his nature retains inner perfection and harmony. The Taoists argue that only “the truly intelligent” understand the oneness of the world and can retain their own wholeness of nature, through which they can reach the Tao:

Only the truly intelligent understand this principle of the leveling of all things into One. They discard the distinctions and take refuge in the common and ordinary things. The common and ordinary things serve certain functions and therefore retain the wholeness of nature. From this wholeness, one comprehends, and from comprehension, one to the Tao. (Chuang Tzu, “On Leveling All Things”, trans., Lin, 7-8)

Knowing the wholeness of nature, the “truly intelligent” discard discrimination, retain own integrity, and can reach the Tao. Chapter 10 of *Tao Te Ching* puts a series of questions to humanity:

In embracing the One with your soul,  
Can you never forsake the Tao?  
In controlling your vital force to achieve gentleness,  
Can you become like the new-born child?  
In cleansing and purifying your Mystic vision,  
Can you strive after perfection? (Lin, 5)

Can we embrace the eternal One with our soul and keep the Tao? Can we keep our inner nature gentle, innocent, and simple as an infant? That is the way to stay close to the eternal One, to the poetic integrity of nature. However, the secular multitude always immerse themselves in discrimination, searching knowledge, pursuing morals. Chapter 20 in *Tao Te Ching* describes with beautiful and poetic language what a man in innocence and integrity feels in the secular multitude:

The multitude of men look satisfied and pleased; as if enjoying a full banquet, as if mounted on a tower in spring. I alone seem listless and still, my desires having as yet given no indication of their presence. I am like an infant which has not yet smiled. I look dejected and forlorn, as if I had no home to go to. The multitude of men all have enough and to spare. I alone seem to have lost everything. My mind is that of a stupid man; I am in a state of chaos.

Ordinary men look bright and intelligent, while I alone seem to be benighted. They look full of discrimination, while I alone am dull and confused. I seem to be carried about as on the sea, drifting as if I had nowhere to rest. All men have their spheres of action, while I alone seem dull and incapable, like a rude borderer. (Thus) I alone am different from other men, but I value the nursing-mother (the Tao). (Legge, 23-24)

The man embracing Tao is like a new-born babe, unattached, without intelligence and discrimination. In the multitude of human society, without so-called knowledge and intelligence, he feels alone, unemployed, purposeless, dull, melancholy and in a state of chaos. However, staying in chaos, he receives nutrition, life, and power from the Tao, Nature, or the eternal One.

After presenting the poetic wholeness and beauty of nature, and what a man in integrity like, both Transcendentalism and Taoism continue to represent how we can keep the integrity of our own inner nature, to stay close to the eternal One, to reach the Tao or God. In *Walden* Thoreau argues that “The finest qualities of our nature, like the bloom on fruits, can be preserved only by the most delicate handling” (7). But in the social reality, human inhabitants have lost their integrity: “the laboring man has not leisure for a true integrity day by day; he cannot afford to sustain the manliest relations to men; ... He has no time to be anything but a machine” (6). Emerson argues that “The reason why the world lacks unity, and lies broken and in heaps, is because man is disunited with himself. He cannot be a naturalist until he

satisfies all the demands of the spirit. Love is as much its demand as perception” (*Nature*, 35).

In *Walden*, Thoreau continues to offer ways that we may keep the integrity of our nature: abiding in nature, living in simplicity and solitude. “Let us first be as simple and well as Nature ourselves, dispel the clouds which hang over our own brows, and take up a little life into our pores” (87). We should stay and live life as simple as nature, keep our state of original nature from secular disturbing and polluting. “Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself” (98). Abiding in nature, whose innocence and simplicity will affect us to keep our simplicity and innocence, we can make our lives as innocent, fresh, and vivid as the fresh morning. The true life is simple and just includes several not hundreds of things: “An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers. [...] Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity!” (101). Living alone and staying in solitude is a good way to keep the integrity, innocence, and simplicity of his nature. “I find it wholesome to be alone the greater part of the time. [...] I love to be alone. I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude” (150). After Thoreau lived by himself at Walden pond some time, he said, “I am no more lonely than the loon in the pond that laughs so loud, or than Walden Pond itself” (152). Thoreau continues to argue that the sun and God are all alone: “The sun is alone, except in thick weather [...] God is alone – but the devil, he is far from being alone” (152). Thus, the way of staying alone to keep one’s integrity is the same as the way of sun and God. It is the way of nature. It is also the way of Tao. Then, for Thoreau solitude is not real solitude. It is the way to keep one’s own nature and then unify oneself with the sun, nature, God, the Tao, and the eternal One. In this solitude, and this process to reach our innocence, nature is the best companion and motivation. As Thoreau writes, “In a pleasant spring morning all men’s sins are forgiven. Such a day is a truce to vice. While such a sun holds out to burn, the vilest sinner may return. Through our own recovered innocence we discern the innocence of our neighbors” (346-47). The morning wipes off human’s sins and restores innocence to humans. With restored innocence, humans can perceive the innocence of nature and their neighbors.

The Taoists, especially Chuang Tzu, through describing what the great man living in Tao is like, show us the ways to maintain own innocence and integrity, to apprehend the greatness of nature and the Tao. For example, the chapter “Preserving and Accepting” in *Chuang Tzu* observes that the great man with Tao is alone: “He will pass in and out of the six reaches of the universe, he will wander through the nine regions. Alone he will come, alone he will go. This may be termed ‘possessing all alone.’ The man who possesses this all alone may be termed the noblest of all” (Mair, 101). This chapter continues to describe the great man:

He passes in and out of nonattachment, beginningless as the sun. His discourse and corporeal form join in the great commonality. Having joined in the great commonality, he has no self. Having no self, how could he have being? If you look at those who had being, they were the superior men of old. If you look at those who had nonbeing, they were the friends of heaven and earth [...]. (Mair, 101)

According to Chuang Tzu, the great man has no secular attachments, and his spirit lives long with the Tao and the universe. His discourse and body join in the universal One. Thus, he has no self, no being. The one who has being is the secular superior man with good morality; the one who has nonbeing is the friend of heaven and earth – nature. So the one who keeps his innocence and integrity and unifies himself with nature and the eternal One, alone gets rid of secular attachments.

In Taoism, the great man or the sage is the ideal human, who can follow the Tao, abide in nature, and keep the innocence, simplicity, and integrity of his innate nature. The chapter “On the Equality of Things” in *Chuang Tzu* describes the sage:

How does the Sage seat himself by the sun and moon, and hold the universe in his grasp? He blends everything into one harmonious whole, rejecting the confusion of this and that. Rank and precedence, which the vulgar sedulously cultivate, the Sage stolidly ignores, amalgamating the disparities of ten thousand years into one pure mold. The universe itself, too, conserves and blends all in the same manner. (Lin, 11)

According to Chuang Tzu, the sage abides with the sun, the moon, and nature, holds the universe, and blends everything into one harmonious whole, rejecting and ignoring confusion and ranking. The sage follows the way of the universe and nature, which itself is an eternal One.

The chapter “Responses for Emperors and Kings” in *Chuang Tzu* describes what Lieh Tzu is like. After getting Tao and returning back from his Master Hu Tzu, “He took no sides in affairs and whittled himself back to the simplicity of the unhewn log. Clodlike, he stood alone in his physical form. Sealed off against perplexity, in this manner he remained whole to the end” (Mair, 70). Lieh Tzu the sage got Tao, shows no interest in secular affairs, seals off all secular perplexities, and returns back to simplicity and the whole to the end. In the same chapter, which is rendered into “Dealing with Emperors and Kings” by Lin Yutang, Chuang Tzu depicts a dramatic and inspiring fable:

The Emperor of the South Sea is known as Change. The Emperor of the North Sea is called Dramatic. The Emperor of the Center is called Chaos. Change and Dramatic met every so often in the region of Chaos. Chaos always treated them kindly and virtuously. Change and Dramatic said, “Everyone has seven orifices so they can see, hear, eat and breathe. Chaos does not have these. Let us bore some holes into him.” Each day they bored a hole into Chaos... but on the seventh day Chaos died. (Lin, 33-34)

In this fable, the Emperor of the Center is Chaos, which keeps its wholeness, simplicity, and innocence, without seven holes to discriminate worldly things. The Emperor Change and Dramatic, for repaying Chaos’s kindness, bore holes into Chaos but finally killed him by destroying his wholeness.

The chapter “Knowledge Wandering North” of *Chuang Tzu* illuminates the way to get Tao and what one is like when getting Tao:

Gnaw Gap asked Wearcoat about the Way [Tao]. Wearcoat said, “If you Rectify your physical form and unify your vision,  
Heavenly harmony will arrive;  
Gather in your knowledge and unify your consciousness,  
The spirit will come to take up its abode.  
Integrity [Te] will beautify you;  
The Way [Tao] will reside in you.  
You will look at things with the eyes of a newborn calf  
Who does not seek out their causes.” (Mair, 213-14)

The sage, retaining Tao, unifies his form and consciousness. His spirit and nature can reach heavenly harmony and integrity. This integrity, which is Te, the initial state of nature, will beautify him and make him like an infant, who looks at things with the eyes of a newborn calf. This is the state and integrity of the infant that Emerson depicts in *Nature*. “The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the



eye and the heart of the child. The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood” (7). Hence, unifying yourself, retaining your integrity and spirit of infancy, you can be a real “seer” (Thoreau, *Walden*, 123) and really “see” the world and nature like a child.

### **3.5 The Deficiency of Understanding and Morals and the Alienation of Civilization**

Both Transcendentalism and Taoism argue the deficiency of intellectual understanding and secular morals. They advise people to rely more on intuition to reach truth rather than rational reason, and adhere more to one’s innate nature and outside natural world rather than doctrines of social morals. With one’s innate nature – innocence or Te, one can feel and reach the supreme truth – God or Tao – intuitively. It is something that the one with the secular knowledge or morals cannot obtain or reach. Actually, the discriminations in human society – knowledge and morals – will disturb and destroy one’s innocence and integrity, and alienate one from nature, the eternal One, and the supreme truth – God or Tao. Against old Christian dogmas and Locke’s empiricism, the Transcendentalists think that neither the received dogma of traditional systems of belief nor formal reasoning will give real insight into truth and morality as expressed in the multiple manifestations of the Oversoul. They look rather to intuitive, as opposed to consciously rational thought. Similarly, against the knowledge and secular morals, the Taoists think that knowledge of mechanics and secular morals will interrupt human being’s initial and integrated state of nature. Thus, they advocate abolishing secular morals and abandoning wisdom to allow people to attain simplicity, innocence, and integrity.

Transcendentalism rejects the aid of observation, and does not trust experiment. For the Transcendentalists, the truths which are felt are more satisfactory and certain than those which are proved. The observation of sensible phenomena can lead only to the discovery of insulated, partial, and relative laws; but the feeling of the same phenomena, in a whole, may lead us to infinite and absolute truth. For example, in *Walden*, Thoreau argues that humans are complacent about their superficial knowledge and sciences but ignore the supreme truth in nature:

Men say they know many things;  
But lo! they have taken wings, –  
The arts and sciences,  
And a thousand appliances;  
The wind that blows  
Is all that anybody knows. (46)

People think that they know many things and have power over nature with their sciences and appliances. But they know nothing of the ultimate truth, and their knowledge is superficial. The wind that blows, the perception of nature, is the only ultimate truth that anyone can obtain.

In *Walden* Thoreau describes one of his visitors, a simple-minded pauper, who he thinks is “wiser than the so-called overseers of the poor and selected men of the town” (167). “He told me, with the utmost simplicity and truth, quite superior, or rather inferior, to anything that is called humility, that he was ‘deficient in intellect’” (167). But Thoreau sensed and detected his simplicity, sincerity, and sublimity:

“I have always been so,” said he, “from my childhood; I never had much mind; I was not like other children; I am weak in the head. It was the Lord’s will, I suppose.” And there he was to prove the truth of his words. He was a metaphysical puzzle to me. I have rarely met a fellowman on such promising ground – it was so simple and sincere and so true all that he said. And, true enough, in proportion as he appeared to humble himself was he exalted. (167-68)

According to Thoreau, because he is weak in the mind, in the rational reason and the mechanic knowledge, he can retain his initial state of nature to be simple, sincere and exalted. This simple-minded pauper described by Thoreau is so similar to the man with initial nature described by Lao Tzu in chapter 20 of *Tao Te Ching*, which we cited in last section. The man in innocence and integrity feels in the secular multitude that “My mind is that of a stupid man; I am in a state of chaos. [...] Ordinary men look bright and intelligent, while I alone seem to be benighted” (Legge, 23-24). Thoreau describes the pauper and show us his sincerity with his real experience, whereas, Lao Tzu represents the man in chaos in a style of ancient lyrics.

The Taoists similarly deny and criticize the so-called knowledge and morals, and emphasize more human life and nature. The Taoists argue that the true man, or the sage unifying with heaven (nature) has no use for knowledge and morals. The chapter “Symbols of Integrity Fulfilled” of *Chuang Tzu* tells that the sage has no use for knowledge and morals:

Therefore, the sage has a place where he wanders, and considers knowledge as a curse, convention as glue, virtue as a social grace, and craft as commerce. The sage hatches no schemes, so what use has he for knowledge? He does no splitting, so what use has he for glue? He has no deficiency, so what use has he for virtue? He does no peddling, so what use has he for commerce? These four are the gruel of heaven. The gruel of heaven is sustenance from heaven. Since he receives sustenance from heaven, what use has he for man? He has a human form, but is without human emotions. Because he has a human form, he groups together with other men. Because he is without human emotions, “right” and “wrong” have no effect upon him. How insignificant and small is that part of him which belongs to humanity! How grand and great is his singular identification with heaven! (Mair, 49)

Generally, a man lives simultaneously with humans and nature. In him there is an artificial part from human society and a natural part from heaven. The sage retaining the part from heaven – his innate nature, is in a state of perfectness and harmony. Thus, the sage does not need knowledge, which he considers a curse, convention, virtue, and commerce in life. He just obtains sustenance, energy and power from nature, and retains his simplicity and integrity. The part of him belonging to humanity is insignificant, and the part of him identifying with nature is grand.

In fact, both Transcendentalists and Taoists argue that secular morals are artificial and not natural. For example, in “Oversoul”, Emerson argues that the soul and nature of humans are something natural and better than secular morals:

The soul requires purity, but purity is not it; requires justice, but justice is not that; requires beneficence, but is somewhat better; so that there is a kind of descent and accommodation felt when we leave speaking of moral nature to urge a virtue which it enjoins. To the well-horn child all the virtues are natural, and not painfully acquired. (99)

So the true virtues are the grace deriving from one’s innocence naturally. Similarly, in *Walden*, Thoreau argues that the secular morals are only “stem and leaves” not “flower and fruit” of life:

I do not value chiefly a man’s uprightness and benevolence, which are, as it were, his stem and leaves. [...] I want the flower and fruit of a man; that some fragrance be wafted over from him to me, and some ripeness flavor our intercourse. His goodness must not be a partial and transitory act, but a constant superfluity, which costs him nothing and of which he is unconscious. This is a charity that hides a multitude of sins. The philanthropist too often surrounds mankind with the remembrance of his own castoff griefs as an atmosphere, and calls it sympathy. We should impart our courage, and not our despair, our health

and ease, and not our disease, and take care that this does not spread by contagion. (85)

Thoreau satirizes the philanthropists' sympathy, and thinks that their sympathy and charity to the poor impart their despair and disease, not courage and health. According to Thoreau, the true goodness one can give is the "fragrance" of one's humanity – the "fruit" – the brilliant grace and power from one's innocent and integrated nature. Therefore, Thoreau satirizes and refuses secular goodness and charity: "...for fear that I should get some of his good done to me – some of its virus mingled with my blood" (82).

Similarly, the Taoists also argue that secular morals are artificial and superficial. For example, in the chapter "Webbed Toes", Chuang Tzu describes the secular morals as extra fingers and appendages on a hand, which is superfluous to one's integrity and nature: "Webbed toes and extra fingers may issue from one's nature, but they are superfluous to one's integrity. [...] Humaneness and righteousness [Morals] [...] are not the correct approach according to the Way [Tao] and its integrity" (Mair, 75). This chapter continues to argue that secular morals are not by nature, but artificial and superfluous:

That which is ultimately correct does not lose the characteristics of its nature and destiny. Therefore, [...] lengthening is accomplished without a surplus, shortening is accomplished without inadequacy. Thus, although a duck's legs are short, if we extend them it will come to grief; although a crane's legs are long, if we cut them short, it will be tragic. Therefore, if what by nature is long is not cut short, and if what by nature is short is not extended, there will be no grief to dispense with. One suspects that humaneness and righteousness are not attributes of humanity! Otherwise, why would those humane men be so full of grief? (Mair, 76)

Chuang Tzu suggests that if we keep all things in their natural state, or in the way things by nature evolve, there will be no grief. People heckle, are not morals natural attributes of humanity? Then Chuang Tzu heckle back, if they are from our nature, why are those people with morals so full of grief? The morals are the reasons of human grief, because they go against human nature. In the same chapter, Chuang Tzu further describes morals as the bevel and glue, which are artificial:

Furthermore, if we must depend upon the bevel, the ruler, the compass, and the L-square to make things correct, that would be to slice away their nature. [...]

Bowing and scraping to the rites and music, simpering and smirking with humaneness and righteousness to console the hearts of all under heaven, this is to forfeit constancy. (Mair, 77)

Using morals to govern society, like using the bevel and glue to trim and integrate things, will slice away people's nature and invade their integrity. In humans and myriad things, there is universal constancy – Tao. Morals – “humaneness and righteousness,” in human society, only confuse people and break their initial integrity from nature.

Further more, the Taoists argue that the knowledge and morals are not only useless and artificial but also are harmful to individual human being and human society. To the individual human being the pursuits of knowledge and morals harm his life, innocence, integrity, and innate nature. For example, the chapter “The Preservation of Life” in *Chuang Tzu* claims: “Human life is limited, but knowledge is limitless. To drive the limited in pursuit of the limitless is fatal” (Lin, 13). To pursue limitless knowledge with limited lives is fatal. Life itself is more important: too much pursuit of knowledge will harm life. Last section we cited a dramatic and inspiring fable about the Emperor Change and the Emperor Dramatic kill the Emperor Chaos for boring holes into him to give him senses from the chapter “Dealing with Emperors and Kings” of *Chuang Tzu*. This fable tells us that the seven senses to perceive and obtain knowledge would disturb our innocence and integrity. In the chapter “Webbed Toes”, Chuang Tzu argues that morals damage people's nature: “The petty man sacrifices himself for the sake of gain; [...] the sage sacrifices himself for the sake of all under heaven. Therefore, these various people, although of different occupations and dissimilar reputations, in damaging their nature through personal sacrifice are identical” (Mair, 78). The moral standard of dividing the petty man and the sage is artificial. Morals are harming people's lives and nature in the same way as wealth.

To the human society, the Taoists argue that knowledge and morals are the cause of robbery and disorder in the world, thus advocate abolishing sagehood (morals) and abandoning wisdom (knowledge). For example, in the chapter “Heavenly Revolutions,” Chuang Tzu censures sharply the sainted three ancient emperors:

... for there is no greater disorder than that which they caused. The knowledge of the three august sovereigns rebelled against the brightness of the sun and moon, conflicted with the essence of the mountains and rivers below, and disrupted the procession of the four seasons in between. Their knowledge was more fatal than the sting of a scorpion or the bite of a pit viper. Insecure in the reality of their nature and destiny, they still considered themselves sages. Is this not shameful? (Mair, 141-42)

Chuang Tzu criticizes the knowledge, wisdom, and morals of the three great sovereigns for violating the ultimate principle of the myriad things and nature. Their governing with their so-called wisdom and morals causes greater disorder, for they interrupting people's innocence and integrity. In the chapter "Horses' Hooves" Chuang Tzu criticizes the faults of the sage for impairing the Tao and Te – natural principle and state in the world:

If the Way [Tao] and integrity [Te] were not discarded, who would choose humaneness and righteousness [morals]? If the attributes of our individual natures were not set aside, what use would there be for rites and music? [...] The carving of the unhewn log into instruments is the fault of the craftsman; the impairment of the Way [Tao] and integrity [Te] with humaneness and righteousness is the error of the sage. (Mair, 82)

According to Chuang Tzu, if we can keep our innocence and integrity, morals are superfluous. The sages' advocating secular morals is breaking people's initial state of nature.

Then Chuang Tzu illuminates the process how the sainted emperors' knowledge and morals destroy the Tao, human nature, and the peace and harmony of the world. The chapter "The Deceived and Ignorant Ones" criticizes the sainted emperors' governing:

This was the case until the time when Virtue [Te] deteriorated [...] . Virtue [Te] continued to deteriorate and then Yao and Shun came to govern all below Heaven, with the result that, ruling by decrees and grand plans, they polluted the purity of nature and destroyed simplicity. The Tao was abandoned and Good [Morals] substituted. Virtue [Te] was put at risk for the sake of opportunity. Then innate nature was abandoned and hearts allowed to determine their own way. Hearts linked with heart through knowledge, but were unable to give the world peace. Pomp and ceremony were added to this knowledge. This displaced simplicity and the heart was swamped, resulting in the people being confused and disobedient, with no way back to true innate nature nor to their origin. (Lin, 59-60)

According to Chuang Tzu, the so-called sainted emperors' governing is a process of Te's deterioration, breaking people's initial state of nature. The sainted emperors, Yao and Shun, ruling by decrees and grand plans, polluted people's purity of nature and destroyed their simplicity. In that period, Tao was abandoned and morals were advocated; innate nature was abandoned, hearts did not move out of spontaneity, and knowledge, wisdom, pomp, and ceremony were advocated to keep the world in peace, but they did just the opposite to what they wished. Therefore, Chuang Tzu advises, "Therefore, abolish sagehood and abandon wisdom, then the great robbers will be stopped" ("Ransacking Coffers", Mair, 87) and asserts: "Abolish sagehood and abandon knowledge, and all under heaven will be well governed" ("Preserving and Accepting", Mair, 94).

Finally, the Taoists argue that before supreme truth and the universal Tao, the knowledge is insufficient and only through keeping one's integrity and innate nature can one reach supreme truth. The chapter "Heaven and Earth" in *Chuang Tzu* describes an interesting story:

Hwang-Tî, enjoying himself on the north of the Red-water, ascended to the height of the Khwan-lun (mountain), and having looked towards the south, was returning home, when he lost his dark-coloured pearl. He employed Wisdom [knowledge<sup>8</sup>] to search for it, but he could not find it. He employed (the clear-sighted) Lî Kû to search for it, but he could not find it. He employed (the vehement debater) Khieh Khâu to search for it, but he could not find it. He then employed Purposeless [Amorphous<sup>9</sup>], who found it; on which Hwang-Tî said, "How strange that it was Purposeless who was able to find it!" (Lin, 47)

This is an allegorical story, suggesting to us that it is the Purposeless or the Amorphous, not wisdom or knowledge, that can obtain supreme truth. Rather than becoming independent of nature through the development of his power of thought, man ought to abide by nature, follow the ways of nature. Behave spontaneously, without purpose, and retain your innocence and integrity, then you can attain eternal truth or reach the Tao.

After illuminating the deficiency of intellectual understanding and the artificiality of secular morals. Both Transcendentalism and Taoism turn to censor and criticize

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<sup>8</sup> Zhi (知) is rendered into "wisdom" by Lin, and "knowledge" by Mair.

<sup>9</sup> Xiang Wang (象罔) is rendered into "purposeless" by Lin, and "Amorphous" by Mair.

the established human society and the state of human life. Both criticize the alienation of human civilization. Too much focusing on material appliances surely results in neglect of soul and nature nursing. The invented material appliances, superfluous wealth and fashions, the social systems, the commerce and trade, seduce avarice, cost lives, and alienate and corrupt the innocence and integrity of humans. Ultimately, they all betray, alienate, and harm human initial nature. For example, in *Walden*, Thoreau argues that human civilization only focuses on material appliances, which become people's burden, agitate people's greed, and cost people's life:

When the farmer has got his house, he may not be the richer but the poorer for it, and it be the house that has got him. [...] While civilization has been improving our houses, it has not equally improved the men who are to inhabit them. [...] if the civilized man's pursuits are no worthier than the savage's, if he is employed the greater part of his life in obtaining gross necessaries and comforts merely, why should he have a better dwelling than the former? (37)

Here, Thoreau questions the accepted belief that human civilization is real progress. With all these appliances invented, human beings themselves become appliances: "But lo! men have become the tools of their tools" (41). Thoreau reflects on the alienation of the railroad, the symbol of modern civilization:

We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us. Did you ever think what those sleepers are that underlie the railroad? Each one is a man, an Irishman, or a Yankee man. The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them. They are sound sleepers, I assure you. ... if some have the pleasure of riding on a rail, others have the misfortune to be ridden upon. (102-3)

The railroad, the human civilization is built on the cost of numerous human lives. It not only costs human physical life, but also alienate human soul, genius, and nature. Thoreau criticizes the oppression one class exerts on another in human society: "The luxury of one class is counterbalanced by the indigence of another. [...] The myriads who built the pyramids to be the tombs of the Pharaohs were fed on garlic, and it may be were not decently buried themselves" (38). In the long history of human civilization, one class always oppresses another class and the pursuits of right, fame, and wealth sacrifice numerous lives.

Thoreau disdains and criticizes commerce and trade. "I have since learned that trade curses everything it handles; and though you trade in messages from heaven,



the whole curse of trade attaches to the business” (77). Commerce deludes human heart, pollutes human soul and innocence, betrays the honest voices from one’s innate nature. Someone even trade in messages from heaven or God, which betrays the truth of faith. Thoreau further states that ancient husbandry is simple and innocent, but modern civilization and commerce degrade the labor of husbandry to a greedy trade, the soil to property, crops, flowers, and fruits to “dollars”, and the farmers to robbers:

Ancient poetry and mythology suggest, at least, that husbandry was once a sacred art; but it is pursued with irreverent haste and heedlessness by us. [...] By avarice and selfishness, and a grovelling habit, from which none of us is free, of regarding the soil as property, or the means of acquiring property chiefly, the landscape is deformed, husbandry is degraded with us, and the farmer leads the meanest of lives. He knows Nature but as a robber. (182-83)

Him who thought only of its money value; whose presence perchance cursed all the shores; who exhausted the land around it, and would fain have exhausted the waters within it; [...] I respect not his labors, his farm where everything has its price, who would carry the landscape, who would carry his God, to market, if he could get anything for him; who goes to market for his god as it is; on whose farm nothing grows free, whose fields bear no crops, whose meadows no flowers, whose trees no fruits, but dollars; who loves not the beauty of his fruits, whose fruits are not ripe for him till they are turned to dollars. Give me the poverty that enjoys true wealth. (218)

Here Thoreau satirizes sharply and criticizes profoundly the corruption commerce makes on farmers. Commerce has corrupted people’s innocence, spiritual faith, and labor, and makes them avaricious and selfish. They know nothing about the real nature, lose the faculty to apprehend the beauty of the fruits, flowers, trees, and landscape. They forget the real voice from their heart and the real faith in God. Ultimately, they lose their innocence, sincerity, and integrity, which come from their innate nature.

Rejecting the invented appliances, secular pursuits, and human civilization, Thoreau advocates simple and free life. For example, disdaining the luxurious fashions, Thoreau prefers sitting on a pumpkin and riding on earth in an ox cart, to keep his life simple and free:

It is the luxurious and dissipated who set the fashions which the herd so diligently follow. [...] I would rather sit on a pumpkin and have it all to myself than be crowded on a velvet cushion. I would rather ride on earth in an ox cart,

with a free circulation, than go to heaven in the fancy car of an excursion train and breathe a malaria all the way. (40-41)

The appliances and comforts human developed attract people with false illusion of civilization, but actually alienate the natural world and human nature.

Similarly, the Taoists also criticize the alienation of human civilization. For example, the chapter “Heaven and Earth” in *Chuang Tzu* argues that the invented appliances will surely corrupt people’s minds:

[...] where there are ingenious contraptions, there are sure to be ingenious affairs, and where there are ingenious affairs, there are sure to be ingenious minds. When one harbors an ingenious mind in one’s breast, its pure simplicity will be impaired. When pure simplicity is impaired, the spiritual nature will be unstable. He whose spiritual nature is unsettled will not be supported by the Way [Tao]. (Mair, 111)

According to Chuang Tzu, ingenious contraptions surely result in ingenious minds. The invented appliances and sciences break the innocent and simple state of human heart and nature. Then humans lose the way to reach supreme truth or the Tao. The chapter “On the Equality of Things” describes the suffering state of people with ingenious hearts:

When people sleep, their souls are confused; when they awake, their bodies feel all out of joint.

Their contacts turn into conflicts,  
Each day involves them in mental strife.  
They become indecisive, dissembling, secretive.  
Small fears disturb them;  
Great fears incapacitate them.

[...] Some there are whose decline is like autumn or winter, which describes their dissolution day by day. Others are so immersed in activity that they cannot be revitalized. (Mair, 12-13)

With ingenious hearths, people get entangled with secular affairs, worries, and strife, and thus become dissolute day by day and cannot be revitalized.

Finally, in the chapter “On the Equality of Things”, Chuang Tzu warns the secular people through interrogating human deluded life:

Once we have received our complete physical form, we remain conscious of it while we await extinction. In our strife and friction with other things, we gallop forward on our course unable to stop. Is this not sad? We toil our whole life without seeing any results. We deplete ourselves with wearisome labor, but don’t know what it all adds up to. Isn’t this lamentable? There are those who

say that at least we are not dead, but what's the good of it? Our physical form decays and with it the mind likewise. May we not say that this is the most lamentable of all? Is human life really so deluded as this? Am I the only one who is so deluded? Are there some individuals who are not deluded? (Mair, 14)

Chuang Tzu is pessimistic about human life. But actually he pities the deluded multitude. As mortals, human life is limit. But without knowing what they really want, they gallop through it and wear it for secular pursuits. In this way, with the decays of physical forms, the souls and spirits also decay. It is the most sad and lamentable thing in the world. But it is all because secular people did not find their true souls, did not retain their innocence and adhere to their innate nature. Therefore, in their mortal lives, they lost their ways to reach the supreme truth, the divine God, or the universal Tao.

### **3.6 Greed for Property as Hindrance**

Both Transcendentalists and Taoists think that secular artifacts, properties, luxuries and the greed for them are harmful to one's innocence and integrated nature, cost life to gain, and are hindrances to reach God or the Tao. Thus both Transcendentalism and Taoism advocate refraining from desires and living a simple life.

The Transcendentalists argue that the luxuries and comforts of life seduce people's avarice, and are hindrances to the elevation of mankind. For example, in *Walden*, Thoreau points out that these secular luxuries and comforts of life always seduce people's avarice: "they frequently starve, not for want of necessaries, but for want of luxuries" (68). "Man thus not only works for the animal within him, but, for a symbol of this, he works for the animal without him" (63). The greed of one's body transforms to the greed of one class or the whole society. Thoreau doubts the advance of civilization and points out the cost of life for dwellings:

If it is asserted that civilization is a real advance in the condition of man [...] it must be shown that it has produced better dwellings without making them more costly; and the cost of a thing is the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it. (34)

According to Thoreau, dwellings and other appliances cost the best part of one's life for so-called comforts: "This spending of the best part of one's life earning money in order to enjoy a questionable liberty during the least valuable part of it [...]" (59).

Thoreau asserts that the luxuries and comforts of life are hindrances to the elevation of mankind:

Most of the luxuries, and many of the so-called comforts of life, are not only not indispensable, but positive hindrances to the elevation of mankind. With respect to luxuries and comforts, the wisest have ever lived a more simple and meagre life than the poor. The ancient philosophers, Chinese, Hindoo, Persian, and Greek, were a class than which none has been poorer in outward riches, none so rich in inward. (15)

In fact, pursuing and enjoying these luxuries will cost people their life: physical energy, innocence, integrity of nature, and fullness of spirit. Thus the wise sages in various ancient civilizations are all poor outwardly but rich inwardly.

Therefore, Thoreau advocates living simple life. Thoreau describes the extreme simple and poor life he imagines: “I used to see a large box by the railroad, six feet long by three wide, [...] get into it rained and at night, and hook down the lid, and so have freedom in his love, and in his soul be free” (32). According to Thoreau, if one takes this box as dwelling place, when you travel far away you have nothing to worry about – no landlord dogging you for rent, and you do not have to be harassed to death to pay the rent or the cost. Thoreau advocates voluntary poverty like the wise sages in various ancient civilizations. In *Walden* Thoreau argues, “Cultivate poverty like a garden herb, like sage. Do not trouble yourself much to get new things, whether clothes or friends. Turn the old; return to them. Things do not change; we change. Sell your clothes and keep your thoughts” (361). Thoreau continues, “Money is not required to buy one necessary of the soul” (362). “Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth” (364). In poverty and simplicity, getting rid of property and fame, people can more easily keep their thoughts, integrity, and reach eternal truth.

Similarly, the Taoists also argue that the sensual desires and avarices will break people’s integrity and harm their nature, thus advocate refraining from desires and embracing one’s original nature. For example, chapter 12 in *Tao Te Ching* criticizes sensual entertainments:

The five colors blind the eyes of man;  
The five musical notes deafen the ears of man;  
The five flavors dull the taste of man;

Horse-racing, hunting and chasing madden the minds of man;  
Rare, valuable goods keep their owners awake at night. (Lin, 5)

According to Lao Tzu, the various colors, musical notes, flavors, social amusements, and properties entertain one's sensual senses and seduce one's desires, and worry and madden one's heart and mind. They all are things disturbing the innocence, integrity, and innate nature of humans. In the chapter "The Great Ancestral Teacher," Chuang Tzu argues that the sensual desires will break people's integrity and harm their nature: "Those whose desires are deep-seated will have shallow natural reserves" (Mair, 52). The chapter "Mending Nature" continues: "Those who forsake themselves for things, who lose their nature for vulgarity, are called topsy-turvy people" (Mair, 151). The people with deep-seated desires or forsaking selves for things, will lose their nature and the way to supreme truth. These people are the cursed and condemned people living suffering lives. In Chapter 20 Lao Tzu argues, "There is no greater curse than the lack of contentment. No greater sin than the desire for possession" (Lin, 20). For example, the chapter "Heavenly Revolutions" in Chuang Tzu describes the destiny of the condemned:

He who considers wealth to be right will not part with his earnings. He who considers prominence to be right will not part with his fame. He who is partial to power will not share its handle with others. Grasping them, he trembles; letting go of them, he grieves. Yet he has not the slightest introspection to perceive that which he ceaselessly pursues. He is one of heaven's condemned. (Mair, 139)

The people adhering to wealth, fame, or power fall into limitless suffering and self-torturing.

Therefore, the Taoists advocate refraining from desires and retaining simplicity, calmness, tranquility, and peace, and embracing one's original nature. In chapter 44, Lao Tzu queries and warns human beings:

Fame or one's own self, which does one love more?  
One's own self or material goods, which has more worth?  
Loss (of self) or possession (of goods), which is the greater evil?  
Therefore: he who loves most spends most,  
He who hoards much loses much.  
The contented man meets no disgrace;  
Who know when to stop runs into no danger –  
He can long endure. (Lin, 19)

In Lao Tzu's opinion, when people pursue material goods and fame, they always forget and sacrifice their own body, life, and self, despite knowing that the latter is more valuable. Hence, Lao Tzu tries to awake the indulging people with queries. Then Lao Tzu tells the truth: people who love and hoard more, actually lose more of their life. Only the contented man, knowing when to stop, can avoid shame and endure long. In the chapter "Preserving and Accepting," Chuang Tzu also argues that the possessors of material things should pay attention in case being alienated by the things to become things their own:

The possessors of the land possess the greatest of all things. Possessing the greatest of all things, they should not be influenced by things. Having a thing but not being influenced by things, therefore they can treat things as things. He who perceives clearly how to treat things as things is himself not a thing. (Mair, 100)

In fact, many people are vexed by the things they possess and make their life and nature suffer. Finally, in chapter 19 Lao Tzu urges people to curtail their desires and embrace their original nature:

The people have need of what they can depend upon:  
Reveal thy simple self,  
Embrace thy original nature,  
Check thy selfishness,  
Curtail thy desires. (Lin, 8)

Chapter 37 writes, "With no desire, at rest and still, all things go right as of their will" (Legge, 34). Chapter 45 writes, "Who is calm and quiet becomes the guide for the universe" (Lin, 20). According to Lao Tzu, by refraining from desires, one gains calmness, ease and tranquility, in which state, human beings and the myriad things can evolve in the way appropriate. Therefore, the ones who can remain calm and quiet, with purity and stillness, can be the guide for the universe.

### **3.7 Go to Nature and Experience Being**

After criticizing the deficiency of intellectual understanding, the artificiality of secular morals, the alienation of human civilization, and the greed for property, both Transcendentalists and Taoists advocate going to nature and doing nothing to experience one's nature and being. In this way, people can keep the innocence and

integrity of one's nature, then can reach God through the oversoul, or reach the Tao through Te.

For the innate oneness with humans, Nature is the best companion and motivation for humans maintaining their own nature and elevating selves to supreme truth. For example, in *Nature*, Emerson urges people to spend life in the woods, where one can attain perpetual youth: "In the woods, too, a man casts off his years, as the snake his slough, and at what period soever of life, is always a child. In the woods is perpetual youth" (8). Then Emerson tells how he feels when becoming part of God in the woods:

In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life, – no disgrace, no calamity (leaving me my eyes), which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground, – my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, – all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God. (8)

According to Emerson, in the woods, abiding with nature, one connects self with infinite nature and eternal wholeness, then forgets self but perceives all and obtains the currents of the Universal Being. In this state, one can become part of God.

Following Emerson's inspiring beckoning, Thoreau went to reside at nearby Walden Pond by himself. In the woods of Walden, Thoreau built a wooden house with his own hand and cultivated the land himself. In the woods, abiding in nature, in society of all the plants, animals, and creatures, Thoreau experienced free and true life, the innocence and essence of life, or life as deliberately as nature itself. For example, when he goes to live in the woods of Walden, Thoreau describes in *Walden*, "I found myself suddenly neighbor to the birds; not by having imprisoned one, but having caged myself near them" (95). "It is a surprising and memorable, as well as valuable experience, to be lost in the woods any time" (189). Thoreau continues to describe why he went to the woods:

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life. (100-101)

Thoreau goes to the woods because living is so dear that he wants to live deliberately, truly, and deeply. Only in the woods, abiding in nature without secular disturbance, can one maintain his innocence and integrity and live truly. Thoreau thinks that, in the woods, nature is a good companion and motivation for living simply and truly: “Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself” (98). Dwelling in the woods of nature, Thoreau feels he crosses the limit of place and time, and is near to sublime truth: “Both place and time were changed, and I dwelt nearer to those parts of the universe and to those eras in history which had most attracted me” (97).

Both Transcendentalists and Taoists think that doing nothing is a good way to maintain one’s own nature, experience one’s being, and reach eternal truth. For example, in *Walden*, Thoreau writes that he loves a broad margin to his life: “There were times when I could not afford to sacrifice the bloom of the present moment to any work, whether of the head or hands. I love a broad margin to my life” (123). According to Thoreau, the present moment of our lives is the bloom, which should not be sacrificed for any head or hands work. Thus Thoreau advocates leaving a margin to life: just stay there, and do not think about or do anything: “Sometimes, in a summer morning, having taken my accustomed bath, I sat in my sunny doorway from sunrise till noon, rapt in a reverie, amidst the pines and hickories and sumachs, in undisturbed solitude and stillness” (123-24). This “margin” or doing nothing is not complete emptiness in life. It is maintaining a state of tranquility and purity to experience one’s nature and being. For example Thoreau argues that the left “margin” in life is not nothing or wasted time: “They were not time subtracted from my life, but so much over and above my usual allowance” (124). The “margin” of life he spent is the most valued part, and he is rich in the value of:

[...] days when idleness was the most attractive and productive industry. Many a forenoon have I stolen away, preferring to spend thus the most valued part of the day; for I was rich, if not in money, in sunny hours and summer days, and spent them lavishly; nor do I regret that I did not waste more of them in the workshop or the teacher’s desk. (213)

Actually, Thoreau feels that “I grew in those seasons like corn in the night, and they were far better than any work of the hands would have been” (124).



Through this experience, Thoreau “realized what the Orientals mean by contemplation and the forsaking of works” (124). Although there are no direct evidences proving that Thoreau read Taoism, the idea of forsaking of works from the Orientals is surely equal to Taoists’ Wu Wei (无为), which denotes doing nothing or no actions. Thoreau describes the “margin” in life as a state of contemplation, like the Orientals:

With thinking we may be beside ourselves in a sane sense. By a conscious effort of the mind we can stand aloof from actions and their consequences; and all things, good and bad, go by us like a torrent. We are not wholly involved in Nature. I may be either the driftwood in the stream, or Indra in the sky looking down on it. I may be affected by a theatrical exhibition; on the other hand, I may not be affected by an actual event which appears to concern me much more. I only know myself as a human entity; the scene, so to speak, of thoughts and affections; and am sensible of a certain doubleness by which I can stand as remote from myself as from another. (149)

In this state of contemplation, one can be beside oneself, can stand aloof from actions and all things; one can not be affected by actual events and can be sensible of a certain doubleness of self. According to Thoreau, in this state of doing nothing, people shut off the secular things in the world and let self become lost, so they can find self, appreciate the vastness of nature, and their innate relation with nature and myriad things: “for a man needs only to be turned round once with his eyes shut in this world to be lost – [... to] appreciate the vastness and strangeness of nature” (189). “Not till we are lost, in other words not till we have lost the world, do we begin to find ourselves, and realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations” (190).

In Taoism the concept of Wu Wei (无为) is central. Wu Wei denotes doing nothing or inaction. For maintaining the innate Te to reach Tao, Taoists advocate doing nothing and inaction, which is just to let things go in their own way and not disturb their evolving with artificial actions. This state of doing nothing is a state of meditation – to maintain one’s innocence and integrity and experience one’s nature and be in tranquility. Along with the concept of Wu Wei, there are the concepts of Wu Yong (无用), Xin Zhai (心斋), Zuo Wang (坐忘), You (游), and Xu Jing (虚静), which are the ways of meditation. Wu Yong means useless, in which state one can

have the ultimate use: attain the innocence and integrity of one's nature. Xin Zhai means heart-fasting, that is to drop all secular concerns and pursuits to empty one's heart. Zuo Wang means sit-forgetting, that is to forget body and senses, and drop intelligence and knowledge, then become identical with the universal Tao. You denotes wandering purposelessly to keep one's innocence and integrity. Xu Jing denotes emptiness and stillness, in which state people can be clear and innocent, and reflect and embrace everything in the world like a mirror.

The chapter "Carefree Wandering" in Chuang Tzu describes Wu Yong in a story about a big useless tree:

Master Hui said to Master Chuang, "I have a big tree people call Stinky Quassia. Its great trunk is so gnarled and knotted that it cannot be measured with an inked line. Its small branches are so twisted and turned that neither compass nor L-square can be applied to them. It stands next to the road, but carpenters pay no attention to it. Now, sir, your words are just like my tree—big, useless, and heeded by no one."

"Sir," said Master Chuang, "[...] Now you, sir, have a big tree and are bothered by its uselessness. Why don't you plant it in Never-never Land with its wide, open spaces? There you can roam in nonaction by its side and sleep carefreely beneath it. Your Stinky Quassia's life will not be cut short by axes, nor will anything else harm it. Being useless, how could it ever come to grief." (Mair, 8-9)

Here, Chuang Tzu suggests to us that one just live one's life purposeless, roaming, sleeping, and making one's life useless. In this way, your life, like the Stinky Quassia, will have no grief, and not be cut short or harmed by anything. Thus Chuang Tzu claims in the chapter of "The Human World": "Everybody knows the utility of usefulness, but nobody knows the utility of uselessness" (Mair, 41).

In the chapter, "The Human World", Chuang Tzu describes the heart-fasting: "The primal breath [Qi], however, awaits things empty. It is only through the Way [Tao] that one can gather emptiness [Xu], and emptiness is the fasting of the mind [Xin Zhai]" (Mair, 32). The "primal breath" (Qi), which literally means gas, denotes the vital force. According to Taoism, Qi, the vital force, is a state of awaiting things empty. Through the fasting of the mind and abiding in Tao, one can attain emptiness.

The chapter “The Great Ancestral Teacher” in Chuang Tzu describes a contemplating state of Zuo Wang (sit-forgetting):

“What do you mean, ‘sit and forget’?” Confucius asked with surprise.

“I slough off my limbs and trunk” said Yen Hui, “dim my intelligence, depart from my form, leave knowledge behind, and become identical with the Transformational Thoroughfare. This is what I mean by ‘sit and forget’.” (Mair, 64)

In this state, people forget body, form and senses, and drop intelligence and knowledge, then become identical with the universal Tao.

The same chapter continues to describe the ultimate man, who is wandering purposelessly and inactively:

They’re about to become companions of the Creator of Things, and wander in the unity of the vital breath that joins heaven and earth. [...] They lodge in a common body composed of diverse elements. They forget their inner organs and are oblivious of the senses. Over and over turns the seamless cycle of beginning and ending. Faraway they are, roaming beyond the dust and dirt of the mundane world, carefree in the karma of nonaction. So how can they be bothered with worldly rites, merely to look good in the eyes of ordinary people! (Mair, 60-61)

According to Chuang Tzu, the ultimate man becomes companions of Tao, and wander purposelessly with the vital breath, which is the innate innocence and integrity of nature. In this state, he will not be bothered with secular rites and concerns. The chapter “Responses for Emperors and Kings” in *Chuang Tzu* also describes the wandering of the ultimate man:

Thoroughly embody unendingness and wander in nonbeginning. Thoroughly experience what you receive from heaven but do not reveal what you attain. Just be empty, that’s all. The mind of the ultimate man functions like a mirror. It neither sends off nor welcomes; it responds but does not retain. Therefore, he can triumph over things without injury. (Mair, 71)

Chuang Tzu argues that the ultimate man will drop off all the fame, schemes, affairs and knowledge, wander purposelessly in the limitless universe, experience his own nature, and just be empty like a mirror, which reflects and responds to all things without retaining them.

In the chapter, “On the Equality of Things”, Chuang Tzu describes the stillness of one’s body and mind:

Sir Motley of Southurb sat leaning against his low table. He looked up to heaven and exhaled slowly. Disembodied, he seemed bereft of soul. Sir Wanderer of Countenance Complete, who stood in attendance before him, asked, “How can we explain this? Can the body really be made to become like withered wood? Can the mind really be made to become like dead ashes?” (Mair, 10)

In the state of contemplation, one drops off all desires and concerns, and one’s body can be made to become like withered wood and mind can be made to become like dead ashes. This state of stillness is not totally death or emptiness. It is a tranquil state reflecting and embracing all things. The chapter “The Way of Heaven” in *Chuang Tzu* depicts the stillness of the sage:

He who understands heaven, [...] acts spontaneously but is always obliviously still. The stillness of the sage is [...] because the myriad things are unable to disturb his mind that he is still. When water is still, it clearly reflects whiskers and brows. [...] If still water has such clarity, how much more so pure spirit! The stillness of the mind of the sage is the mirror of heaven and earth, the looking glass of the myriad things.

Emptiness, stillness, placidity, mildness, quietude, indifference, nonaction – these are the root of heaven and earth, the substance of the Way and virtue [Te]. Therefore, emperors, kings, and sages rest in them. Resting, they are empty; empty, they are full; full, they are prepared. Empty, they are still; still, they begin to move; moving, they attain. (Mair, 119-20)

According to Chuang Tzu, the stillness of the mind of the sage is like the mirror of the world, which is a tranquil and integrated state of one’s nature, and can reflect and embrace the myriad things. Emptiness, stillness, and nonaction is the root of nature, the substance of the Tao and Te. The chapter “Ingrained Opinions” describes Tao of the world and Te of the sage: “[...] he would forget everything, yet he would possess everything. His tranquillity would be unlimited, yet a multitude of excellences would follow in his wake. This is the Way of heaven and earth, the integrity of the sage” (Mair, 145). In the state of the Te of the sage, the sage forgets everything but possesses everything and the excellences.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DIFFERENT TEMPERAMENTS**

Although some catchphrases and ideas in Transcendentalism and Taoism are shared in different cultures and eras, if we want to comprehend the ideas completely, deeply and accurately, we must try to understand them respectively in their original language, under their era, cultural background, and epistemological pedigree. Transcendentalism and Taoism have many similarities especially in their attitudes to nature, which we have stated in a previous chapter, where their similarities are shown to be not completely in common. If we examine the texts of these two schools attentively and analyze their profound and subtle meanings with their cultural background, we can find subtle differences. Therefore, their similarities have “resonance”, rather than complete accord.

#### **4.1 God, Oversoul and Tao**

Transcendentalism derives from Western society, culture, and epistemological tradition, which is merged with traditional Christianity. In this culture and ideology, God is the center and symbolizes the sublime ideal or spirit. God’s divinity is the goal of the human elevation of self. In Transcendentalism, humans try to elevate self and soul through abiding in nature, solitude, or inaction, to be part of God and reach the divinity of God. In Transcendentalism, God symbolizes sublime truth, the eternal One.

According to traditional Christianity, God is the divine emperor of heaven and the universe, and his divinity is the sublime truth, which not everyone can attain easily. You must cultivate your heart and soul industriously, live an abstinent life of purity, and follow the church doctrines and rituals strictly. Thus, humans are the “lamb” of God the “shepherd”; Christians are followers, seekers, or beggars of God. The liberal Unitarianists and Transcendentalists argue that there is an innate divinity in everyone’s heart, which is part of the oversoul. One just needs to preserve it from secular pollutions and disturbances, and to rediscover and return to it from secular concerns. This innate divinity is the initial state of one’s nature. Transcendentalism

combines God, humanity, and nature, and at this point is constant with Taoism. To attain the sublime divinity, one just needs to keep one's innocence, simplicity, and integrity. For this end, abiding in nature is a good way, which both Transcendentalism and Taoism advocate.

However, through this process, Transcendentalism and Taoism reach partly different ends. In Transcendentalism, through legitimating humans' innate divinity, humans connect with a divine and powerful self – the Oversoul, which is equal to God and nature. In this way, humans get unparalleled confidence and power, and become the “God” of their own land. Whereas, in this similar process of abiding in nature and retaining one's innocence to reach Tao, the eternal One and sublime truth, Taoism immerses the self in the universal principle. To some extent, Taoism abolishes the self before the limitless universe.

Taoism derives from ancient Chinese simple philosophy, which appreciates the natural world in an objective way. This simple ideology thinks that the universe and world are united as one, which is generated from Tao. Tao as an organic nothingness produces the myriad things in the world. Tao as universal principle and eternal truth manifests all the things in the world: Tao is the innate initial state of nature (Te) of things, and the way things evolve and move spontaneously. In Taoism, Tao symbolizes sublime truth and the eternal One. But Tao is also nothingness, which cannot be named or defined. It is not divine, as God. It just exists universally and objectively. In Taoism, one is just part or parcel of the universe and the natural world; in Transcendentalism, one is part or parcel of God.

#### **4.2 Self-reliance and Wu Wei (Do nothing)**

According to Transcendentalism, the manifestation of God in humans is the Oversoul. With this oversoul in everyone's heart, humans get equally powerful “self”. This results in the core of Transcendentalism – Self-reliance, which is the key and central to American ideology and spirit.

According to Transcendentalism, the manifestation of God in humans is through the Oversoul. Since everyone's heart is part of the Oversoul, humans can manifest a

powerful “self”. This results in the core of Transcendentalism – Self-reliance, which is the key to American ideology and spirit.

In “Self-reliance” Emerson states: “Man is his own star” (19). One’s true feeling or heart, one’s nature and genius, is one’s guide to life: “To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men, – that is genius” (19). The highest law is one’s nature: “No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature” (21). Emerson continues to argue that “a true man belongs to no other time or place, but is the centre of things. Where he is, there is nature” (24). With their own nature and genius, which represents the highest truth, humans get unlimited power and confidence: “Let a man then know his worth, and keep things under his feet” (25). This value of self-reliance affects American deeply and extensively: “It is easy to see that a greater self-reliance must work a revolution in all the offices and relations of men; in their religion; in their education; in their pursuits; their modes of living; their association; in their property; in their speculative views” (30). Thus, the value of Self-Reliance is highly advocated and deeply believed by Transcendentalists and Americans: “Insist on yourself; never imitate. [...] Where is the master who could have taught Shakspeare? [...] Every great man is a unique” (32). It endows Americans with great creative power, and shapes the American national character.

Tao is the mother and universal principle of the myriad things, and is also Wu, nothingness. Because all things in the world have their innate initial state and own evolving ways, the universal principle is Wu, nothingness, which denotes Wu Wei, doing nothing, and just letting things go in their own way. The Taoists believe that in this way all things will go well and everything will be done: “He who conquers the world often does so by doing nothing” (*Tao Te Ching*, trans., Lin, Chapter 48, 20)

From Wu Wei (Doing nothing), Taoism develops the idea of “Gentleness overcomes strength” (*Tao Te Ching*, trans., Lin, Chapter 36, 16). In the chapter 76 of *Tao Te Ching*, Lao Tzu argues:

Man at his birth is supple and weak; at his death, firm and strong. (So it is with) all things. Trees and plants, in their early growth, are soft and brittle; at their death, dry and withered.

Thus it is that firmness and strength are the concomitants of death; softness and weakness, the concomitants of life.

Hence he who (relies on) the strength of his forces does not conquer; and a tree which is strong will fill the out – stretched arms, (and thereby invites the feller.)

Therefore the place of what is firm and strong is below, and that of what is soft and weak is above. (Legge, 61-2)

Softness and weakness contain more adaptability and vital forces, whereas firmness and strength lack adaptability and vital forces and are easy to be harmed or broken. Chapter 78 of *Tao Te Ching* argues that the soft and weak overcome the hard and strong:

There is nothing in the world more soft and weak than water, and yet for attacking things that are firm and strong there is nothing that can take precedence of it; – for there is nothing (so effectual) for which it can be changed.

Everyone in the world knows that the soft overcomes the hard, and the weak the strong, but no one is able to carry it out in practice. (Legge, 62-3)

Therefore, from Tao and Wu Wei, the Taoists get the wisdom to be weak and the force to be soft, which is illustrated by the image of water:

The highest excellence is like (that of) water. The excellence of water appears in its benefiting all things, and in its occupying, without striving (to the contrary), the low place which all men dislike. Hence (its way) is near to (that of) the Tao. (Chapter 8, trans., Legge, 16-7)

The way of Tao is to be soft and weak, through which all things will be overcome. The one with Tao should do nothing (Wu Wei), through which everything will go well.

### **4.3 Go to nature and Meditation**

In the Transcendentalists' opinion, the way to retain one's innate innocence and integrity is by going to and abiding in nature, and staying in solitude. Transcendentalism advocates following one's instincts and looking to nature for solace and harmony within oneself. Whereas, Taoism advocates more on meditation: wandering purposelessly and inactively in the nonbeginning and "Never-never Land" (Mair, 9), heart-fasting, and sit-forgetting. In section 2.7, this thesis has illustrated the ways of meditation.



With the scientific and environmental knowledge of nature, the Transcendentalists abide in nature, make friends with creatures and animals in nature, and enjoy friendly society in the woods. They are familiar with the characters and physiological characteristics of creatures and animals as their neighbors in the woods. They enjoy living with all creatures peacefully and are aware of the balance of ecology. By contrast, the ideal in Taoism is the ultimate man or sage, who focuses on meditation: wandering, heart-fasting and sit-forgetting. Wandering in the nonbeginning or “Never-never Land” is a kind of purposeless wandering of one’s spirit. Heart-fasting is a kind of contemplation of getting rid of secular concerns. Sit-forgetting also is contemplation, which means sitting or staying in stillness and nonaction, forgetting all: secular concerns, knowledge, reason, morals, self, form and body. In the chapter “On the Equality of Things”, Chuang Tzu describes the stillness of one’s body and mind, which we cited in section 2.7. In the state of contemplation, one drops off all desires and concerns, and one’s body can be made to become like withered wood and mind can be made to become like dead ashes.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

It is interesting and inspiring to read and examine the basic texts of American Transcendentalism and Chinese Taoism simultaneously. In comparing the nature thoughts of these two schools systematically, the resonance of different temperaments is clear. The affinity of their central ideas and thoughts on nature are obvious, and their different characteristics are striking. The similarities in attitudes toward nature of American Transcendentalism and Chinese Taoism transcend the distance and boundary of time, place, and culture between them. However the different times, places, cultures, and intellectual traditions result in their unique temperaments.

First of all, the system of thought and central ideas of these two schools have many common points but belong to two totally different cultures and epistemologies. In American Transcendentalism, there is a system of thought deriving from Western intellectual epistemology and traditional Christianity. For the Transcendentalists, the central concept is the Oversoul. It is the cosmic unity and eternal One unifying man, nature, and all things, the divine spiritual mind from God shining through humans and all things, the mother and source of lives of humans and all things, and the common heart or nature which is innate and present in every man and myriad things. Accordingly, the concept of nature in Transcendentalism combines with the concept of the Oversoul. Generally, the Transcendentalist concept of nature includes two levels of meaning: first, the material natural world outside of humans; second, the divine spiritual and instinctive nature innate and present in every man and thing, from God. In the first level of meaning, nature is part of the universal unity of man, nature, and all things. This nature and all things in it, including humans, inherit innately the Oversoul, or the divinity of God. Abiding in this original state of nature, humans can retain their initial state of nature – innocence, simplicity, and integrity – and then reach sublime truth and God. In the second level of meaning, nature is instinctive and spiritual and divine. This nature is inherent in humans, and is the manifestation of the Oversoul or deity of God in humans. It is reflected in the

innocence, simplicity, and integrity of humans, and the state of the infant is the ideal. With this innate divine nature, humans can instinctively and intuitively feel, find, and reach the sublime truth and God.

Taoism is a typical Oriental ideology deriving from Chinese traditional epistemology. For the Taoists, the central concept is Tao. Similar to the Oversoul in Transcendentalism, Tao is the universal unity, the eternal One unifying the Heaven, Earth, humans, and myriad things. It is an organic nothingness, nameless, formless, produces everything, and is present in everything as a universal principle. The manifestation of Tao in all things is Te, the initial state or nature of things. As a universal principle, Tao, the nothingness, denotes doing nothing and just letting things go in their own ways. Accordingly, the concept of nature in Taoism is also manifold, which includes a series of concepts: Te, Tian (Heaven), Tian Di Wan Wu (Heaven, Earth, and myriad things), and Zi Ran (spontaneity, naturalness). Te is the manifestation of Tao in all things, and denotes the initial state of nature of things: innocence, simplicity, and integrity, for which the Te of the infant is the ideal. Tian, Heaven, denotes the universal law and the inherent nature of things, which also are manifestations of Tao. Tian Di Wan Wu, which literally means Heaven, Ground, and myriad things, denotes the physical natural world, in which Tao and Te manifest and pervade. Zi Ran denotes doing nothing, or doing things out of spontaneity or naturally. Therefore, the Taoists advocate retaining one's Te, doing things Zi Ran according to their Tian, immersing the self in Tian Di Wan Wu.

Comparatively examining the thoughts of nature in Transcendentalism and Taoism, there are many striking similarities. More or less, with some different temperaments, these two schools, in their attitudes toward nature, advocate the oneness of the World and the inherent relation between humanity and nature, argue the benefit and power of nature, the wholeness and integrity of nature and humanity, and the limit and deficiency of intellectual understanding, criticize secular philanthropy and morals, the alienation of human civilization, the greed for secular property, and finally advocate going to nature and doing nothing to maintain one's innocence and integrity and experience one's nature and being.

However, the different characters of their cultures and intellectual traditions endow Transcendentalism and Taoism with different temperaments in their thoughts about nature. The Transcendentalists' Oversoul is the deity of God and inherent in humans, which results in a powerful self and the Transcendentalists' core idea – self-reliance. The Taoists' Tao is the universal essence and principle in the universe, which levels all things and human beings. Humans immerse the self in universal nature and abolish the Self. Therefore, Transcendentalists advocate self-reliance and letting one's genius, instinct, and intuition lead the self to reach the sublime truth and God; Taoists advocate doing nothing or nonaction, and just letting things go in their own ways. Finally, Transcendentalists advocate going to nature, abiding in nature and solitude, but enjoying the society of all animals, plants, and things in the natural world. Through staying close to, or immersing the self in the original natural world, humans retain their innocence, simplicity, and integrity. Taoists, however, emphasize more the way of contemplation – heart-fasting, sit-forgetting, rather than going to the society of creatures in the natural world. Although Taoists also advocate the life of hermits and enjoy the peaceful society of animals in an ideal society, they focus more on contemplation, like heart-fasting and sit-forgetting, to abolish the physical and spiritual self and to make the self like withered wood and dead ashes.

These two schools transcend 2,000 years, the broad distance of the Pacific Ocean, different races, and different cultures and epistemologies, yet still resonate with each other. This perhaps proves the existence and pervasive nature of the Oversoul, or the Tao, or humanity's common nature. Their different temperaments can complement each other and contribute to the variety and vitality of humanity.

## APPENDIX A

### WADE-GILES TO PINYIN CONVERSION TABLE

| w-g py       | w-g py        | w-g py         | w-g py       |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| a a          | ch'iang qiang | ch'uai chuai   | fu fu        |
| ai ai        | chiao jiao    | chuan zhuan    | ha ha        |
| an an        | ch'iao qiao   | ch'uan chuan   | hai hai      |
| ang ang      | chieh jie     | chüan juan     | han han      |
| ao ao        | ch'ieh qie    | ch'üan quan    | hang hang    |
| cha zha      | chien jian    | chuang zhuang  | hao hao      |
| ch'a cha     | ch'ien qian   | ch'uang chuang | hei hei      |
| chai zhai    | chih zhi      | chüeh jue      | hen hen      |
| ch'ai chai   | ch'ih chi     | ch'üeh que     | heng heng    |
| chan zhan    | chin jin      | chui zhui      | ho he        |
| ch'an chan   | ch'in qin     | ch'ui chui     | hou hou      |
| chang zhang  | ching jing    | chun zhun      | hsi xi       |
| ch'ang chang | ch'ing qing   | ch'un chun     | hsia xia     |
| chao zhao    | chiu jiu      | chün jun       | hsiang xiang |
| ch'ao chao   | ch'iu qiu     | ch'ün qun      | hsiao xiao   |
| che zhe      | chiung jiong  | chung zhong    | hsieh xie    |
| ch'e che     | ch'iung qiong | ch'ung chong   | hsien xian   |
| chen zhen    | cho zhuo      | en en          | hsin xin     |
| ch'en chen   | ch'o chuo     | erh er         | hsing xing   |
| cheng zheng  | chou zhou     | fa fa          | hsiu xiu     |
| ch'eng cheng | ch'ou chou    | fan fan        | hsiung xiong |
| chi ji       | chu zhu       | fang fang      | hsü xu       |
| ch'i qi      | ch'u chu      | fei fei        | hsüan xuan   |
| chia jia     | chü ju        | fen fen        | hsüeh xue    |
| ch'ia qia    | ch'ü qu       | feng feng      | hsün xun     |
| chiang jiang | chua zhua     | fo fo          | hu hu        |
|              | chuai zhuai   | fou fou        | hua hua      |

|             |              |             |             |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| huai huai   | ken gen      | lei lei     | ming ming   |
| huan huan   | k'en ken     | leng leng   | miu miu     |
| huang huang | keng geng    | li li       | mo mo       |
| hui hui     | k'eng keng   | liang liang | mou mou     |
| hun hun     | ko ge        | liao liao   | mu mu       |
| hung hong   | k'o ke       | lieh lie    | na na       |
| huo huo     | kou gou      | lien lian   | nai nai     |
| i yi        | k'ou kou     | lin lin     | nan nan     |
| jan ran     | ku gu        | ling ling   | nang nang   |
| jang rang   | k'u ku       | liu liu     | nao nao     |
| jao rao     | kua gua      | lo luo      | nei nei     |
| je re       | k'ua kua     | lou lou     | nen nen     |
| jen ren     | kuai guai    | lu lu       | neng neng   |
| jeng reng   | k'uai kuai   | lū lū       | ni ni       |
| jih ri      | kuan guan    | luan luan   | niang niang |
| jo ruo      | k'uan kuan   | lūan luan   | niao niao   |
| jou rou     | kuang guang  | lūeh lūe    | nieh nie    |
| ju ru       | k'uang kuang | lun lun     | nien nian   |
| juan ruan   | kuei gui     | lung long   | nin nin     |
| jui rui     | k'uei kui    | ma ma       | ning ning   |
| jun run     | kun gun      | mai mai     | niu niu     |
| jung rong   | k'un kun     | man man     | no nuo      |
| ka ga       | kung gong    | mang mang   | nou nou     |
| k'a ka      | k'ung kong   | mao mao     | nu nu       |
| kai gai     | kuo guo      | mei mei     | nū nū       |
| k'ai kai    | k'uo kuo     | men men     | nuan nuan   |
| kan gan     | la la        | meng meng   | nūeh nūe    |
| k'an kan    | lai lai      | mi mi       | nung nong   |
| kang gang   | lan lan      | miao miao   | o e         |
| k'ang kang  | lang lang    | mieh mie    | ou ou       |
| kao gao     | lao lao      | mien mian   | pa ba       |
| k'ao kao    | le le        | min min     | p'a pa      |

|            |               |            |             |
|------------|---------------|------------|-------------|
| pai bai    | sai sai       | sung song  | tuan duan   |
| p'ai pai   | san san       | ta da      | t'uan tuan  |
| pan ban    | sang sang     | t'a ta     | tui dui     |
| p'an pan   | sao sao       | tai dai    | t'ui tui    |
| pang bang  | se se         | t'ai tai   | tun dun     |
| p'ang pang | sen sen       | tan dan    | t'un tun    |
| pao bao    | seng seng     | t'an tan   | tung dong   |
| p'ao pao   | sha sha       | tang dang  | t'ung tong  |
| pei bei    | shai shai     | t'ang tang | tsa za      |
| p'ei pei   | shan shan     | tao dao    | ts'a ca     |
| pen ben    | shang shang   | t'ao tao   | tsai zai    |
| p'en pen   | shao shao     | te de      | ts'ai cai   |
| peng beng  | she she       | t'e te     | tsan zan    |
| p'eng peng | shen shen     | teng deng  | ts'an can   |
| pi bi      | sheng sheng   | t'eng teng | tsang zang  |
| p'i pi     | shih shi      | ti di      | ts'ang cang |
| piao biao  | shou shou     | t'i ti     | tsao zao    |
| p'iao piao | shu shu       | tiao diao  | ts'ao cao   |
| pieh bie   | shua shua     | t'iao tiao | tse ze      |
| p'ieh pie  | shuai shuai   | tieh die   | ts'e ce     |
| pien bian  | shuan shuan   | t'ieh tie  | tsei zei    |
| p'ien pian | shuang shuang | tien dian  | tsen zen    |
| pin bin    | shui shui     | t'ien tian | ts'en cen   |
| p'in pin   | shun shun     | ting ding  | tseng zeng  |
| ping bing  | shuo shuo     | t'ing ting | ts'eng ceng |
| p'ing ping | so suo        | tiu diu    | tso zuo     |
| po bo      | sou sou       | to duo     | ts'o cuo    |
| p'o po     | ssu si        | t'o tuo    | tsou zou    |
| p'ou pou   | su su         | tou dou    | ts'ou cou   |
| pu bu      | suan suan     | t'ou tou   | tsu zu      |
| p'u pu     | sui sui       | tu du      | ts'u cu     |
| sa sa      | sun sun       | t'u tu     | tsuan zuan  |

|             |           |           |           |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| ts'uan cuan | wa wa     | ya ya     | yu you    |
| tsui zui    | wai wai   | yai yai   | yü yu     |
| ts'ui cui   | wan wan   | yang yang | yüan yuan |
| tsun zun    | wang wang | yao yao   | yüeh yue  |
| ts'un cun   | wei wei   | yeh ye    | yün yun   |
| tsung zong  | wen wen   | yen yan   | yung yong |
| ts'ung cong | weng weng | yin yin   |           |
| tzu zi      | wo wo     | ying ying |           |
| tz'u ci     | wu wu     | yo yo     |           |



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