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**UNDERSTANDING THE WORD OF *TAO* (道) THROUGH
THE TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM**

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Understanding the Word of *Tao* (道) through the Teachings of Buddhism

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Introduction

This article shifts its focus from the concept of Tao to exploring how the term Tao should be interpreted within the context of Buddhism (withing Buddhist words). Extensive research has examined Tao as a concept in Tao philosophy, which showcases its distinct features within Chinese philosophy, both in the East and the West. Despite Tao having multiple interpretations, a definitive word meaning proves elusive. Scholars well-versed in Taoist philosophy and Buddhist philosophy recognize the significant similarities between the two. Consequently, the aim of this article is to investigate which conceptual term from Buddhist philosophy best aligns with the word Tao. This article specifically refers to the Tao as expounded by Lao Tzu, the original author of *Tao De Jing* 《道德经》, and would be taken the Theravada philosophy as a Buddhist teaching. The article investigates the conclusions within a comprehensive framework encompassing linguistics and philosophy.

Chinese philosophy and Indian philosophy are two prominent schools of thought that represent Eastern philosophy within the broader division of philosophy into Western and Eastern. Despite any geographical or cultural distinctions, these philosophies share kind of similar fundamental teachings and principles. Chinese philosophy is categorized into three primary sections:

Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism¹. Each of these three philosophies encompasses unique teachings, cultural characteristics, and well-established traditions. Historically, these three philosophies exhibited distinct ideologies and frequently found themselves at odds with one another. Taoist and Buddhist philosophies, in particular, often displayed peaceful tendencies. However, Confucian philosophy diverged significantly by establishing direct ties with state authority and benefiting from state backing.

In China, aside from Confucianism, the Taoist school stands as one of the most significant and influential native philosophies in Chinese history. Like Confucianism, Taoism has maintained its vitality and appeal to the Chinese mind throughout the ancient period and beyond. ‘Taoism, known widely today through the teachings of the classic *Tao Te Ching* 《道德经》 and the practices of *t'ai chi* and *feng-shui*, is less known for its unique traditions of meditation, physical training, magical practice, and internal alchemy.²’ The concept of “Tao” in Taoist philosophy finds its roots in Lao Tzu’s (老子) seminal work, the *Tao Te Ching* 《道德经》. While various philosophers within Taoist philosophy have offered different interpretations of the concept of Tao, the understanding of Tao we refer to in this article is closely tied to the fundamental teachings outlined in the *Tao Te Ching* 《道德经》. Therefore, this article will not place significant emphasis on subsequent studies and interpretations related to the Tao.

Buddhism stands out as a philosophy that permeates Eastern thought, offering profound spiritual healing. Originating from Indian philosophy, Buddhist teachings have gained global recognition, transcending mere philosophical status to become a widely practiced religion in contemporary times. Once Buddha said; “This Dhamma is for one who is modest, not for one who is self-aggrandizing.”³ In Buddhism, no facts are presented that are disconnected from human experience and simply accepted as they are. Instead, Buddhism provides a comprehensive religious system accessible to individuals who possess sufficient practical knowledge to discern what is wholesome and what is unwholesome in the world. Accordingly, Buddhism guides individuals to tread a path of wisdom.

Both Buddhism and Taoism⁴ share a common objective: the attainment of realization through meditation. In this pursuit, the concepts of Nirvana in Buddhism and Tao in Taoism are rooted in the fundamental principle of understanding. The purpose of this article is not to criticize the variances between Taoist and Buddhist philosophies. However, for a comprehensive understanding of the content, it is crucial for readers to recognize the similarities that exist between these two systems of thought. The objective of this inquiry is to identify the equivalent term in Buddhism that corresponds to "Tao" in Taoist philosophy. To accomplish this, certain Pali words are chosen from the Buddha's teachings, and their linguistic and philosophical implications are examined to discern their shared meanings.

Tao (道)

Laozi's comprehensive philosophical system unfolds from cosmology to life theory, and further progresses from life theory to political theory. Nevertheless, a deeper comprehension of the true impetus behind the formation of Laozi's ideas reveals that his metaphysics primarily took shape to address the exigencies of life and politics. Laozi's philosophical foundation stems from the concept of "Tao" which, in essence, poses as a conceptual quandary. Laozi postulates all the attributes and functions of "Tao" as preconceived notions. This "Tao" he envisions represents the truths he has apprehended through his worldly experiences, with all realized truths becoming intrinsic attributes and functions of the so-called "Tao". Additionally, one can view "Tao" as a manifestation of the inner voice of human existence a theory formulated in harmony with the yearnings and aspirations of our inner lives.

In modern Chinese (mandarin), Tao means road, speak, and the name of the administrative region in Chinese history. In the Tang Dynasty equivalent to the present province, the Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China in the province under the road⁵. In contemporary Chinese usage, the word (Tao) is devoid of any philosophical connotations. Therefore, when conducting studies on this term, it is crucial to meticulously scrutinize its diverse implications encompassing philosophy, grammar, religion, culture, and history⁶. The term "Tao" carries profound philosophical significance

within the realm of Taoism. Taoism, too, embraces the multifaceted nature of the concept of Tao, which encompasses a wide range of meanings. This section will delve into an in-depth exploration of the various interpretations and representations of Tao within the context of Taoism as follows,

‘The Tao that can be expressed in words
Is not the true and eternal Tao;
The name that can be uttered in words
Is not the true and eternal name.’⁷

Therefore, according to Laozi, *Tao* is ineffable. Another interpretation suggests that language's expressive prowess pales in comparison to the profoundness of the Tao. The Tao, though ineffable, encompasses multiple interpretations.

Existential Tao

According to *Tao De Ching* 《道德经》, even though Tao is ineffable, it is an existential thing.

‘What cannot be seen is called "Yi" (without colour);
What cannot be heard is called "Xi" (without sound);
What cannot be touched is called "Wei" (without shape);
These three things can be in no way defined,
So, they are combined into one.
Above it there is no light;

Below it, there is no darkness;
So vague as to defy any description.’⁸

Laozi (老子) said that there is a thing that is blended " there is a mixture of things", and I do not know its name, but I barely call it "Tao". Why we don't know its name? For we can neither hear its voice nor see its form (lonely and empty). In other words, it is not something that has a concrete image. Meanwhile, *Guangzi*⁹ said: "The inherent shape of the object, the inherent name of the shape", "name" is with the "shape", Since "Tao" has no definite form, it is of course "nameless". Accordingly, Lao Tzu, Tao, the fundamental principle, defies verbal expression. It transcends language and remains ineffable, yet it permeates all things in the universe, existing as an anonymous force. Therefore, the Tao transcends all verbal expression as it permeates the very essence of existence.

Regularity Tao (Law of the Nature)

Another interpretation of Tao is regularity Tao. The "Tao" body remains elusive and intangible, defying direct observation or adherence. However, when it exerts its influence on all things, discernible patterns emerge. These patterns, akin to the effects of human behavior, are expounded upon in the book of *Tao De Ching* 《道德经》. Thus, besides exploring the profound existential significance of the "Tao," the text also elucidates its role in establishing order and regularity.

Laozi said: 'Cycling is the movement of Tao; Being weak is the function of Tao.'¹⁰ Laozi believed that the movement and changes in the natural world adhere to certain laws, one of which is the general principle of "反" (fan), which signifies that things move and develop in the opposite direction; simultaneously, the progression of things always returns to their original state. Therefore, the character "反" can be interpreted as both "opposite" and "return" ("反" can mean "to return"). It embodies two concepts:

1. Opposing contrasts
2. Returning to the original

The following will explain these concepts in order.

1. The law of opposites transformation

'Existence and Nothingness beget each other; Difficult and easy complement each other; Long and short manifest themselves by comparison; High and low are inclined. As well as opposed to each other; Musical sound and singing voice harmonize each other.'¹¹

The philosophy taught here is straightforward: beauty is often perceived in contrast to ugliness, and something can be considered tall when compared to something shorter. However, it is important to note that claiming something as the tallest or most beautiful in the world is subjective, as our perception is limited to what we have experienced thus far. According to Lao Tzu, everything in existence is shaped by its opposite and relies on the concept

of “opposite and complementary” for growth and progress. Additionally, Lao Tzu observed that the states of opposites frequently transition into one another.

2. Return to the beginning (返本复初)

Return to the beginning is the law of circular motion - the state of motion development of things always returns to the original state of the beginning. Other rules: the wind does not end the day, showers do not end the day; Weak is better than strong; Those who do fail, those who cling lose, etc. The concept of “返本复初” in Tao (道) ism means to return to the origin and rediscover the original intention. This philosophical concept emphasizes returning to a natural, simple, and effortless state in order to achieve inner tranquility and harmony. The ideology of 返本复初 suggests that individuals should let go of complicated desires and utilitarian motives, and instead pursue inner truth and freedom. By returning to the original state, people can rediscover their pure and natural essence, achieving a balance and harmony of body and mind. Here's a simple example to help illustrate this concept:

Imagine a person who is caught up in the fast-paced, materialistic world of modern society. They are constantly working long hours, accumulating possessions, and seeking external validation. This lifestyle has led to stress, anxiety, and a feeling of being disconnected from themselves and their surroundings.

To apply the concept of "返本复初," this person decides to take a step back and reevaluate their priorities. They simplify their life by reducing their workload, decluttering their living space, and letting go of unnecessary desires and attachments. They also spend more time in nature, practicing mindfulness and self-reflection.

As they embrace simplicity and return to their true nature, the person experiences a sense of inner peace, clarity, and contentment. They feel more connected to the natural world, their relationships improve, and they gain a deeper understanding of themselves. By returning to their original essence, they find harmony and balance in their life.

This simple example demonstrates how the concept of "返本复初" encourages individuals to let go of external distractions, embrace simplicity, and reconnect with their true nature to achieve a state of harmony and balance.

In summary, Lao Tzu asserts that the concept of "Tao" embodies a law of transformation, where its progression entails a shift towards the opposite direction. As "Tao" influences objects, they too conform to this law of change.

(The above explains the systematic 'Tao (道)'. Based on the concept of 'return,' it illustrates the principles that govern the 'Tao (道)' and the things it influences, following the following rules:

1. Movement in the opposite direction
2. Circular motion, returning to the origin

Additionally, Laozi states, 'The light wind does not blow all morning, and the sudden rain does not pour all day.' (Chapter 33) 'The soft and weak overcomes the hard and strong.' (Chapter 36) 'Those who act will fail, and those who grasp will lose.' (Using force recklessly will lead to failure, and excessive control will lead to loss.) (Chapter 39) These are also natural laws. Laozi says that understanding the laws of nature is knowing the 'constant' (the unchanging principles behind the changes in things). We should act in accordance with the laws of nature; if we act recklessly without following these laws, chaos will ensue ('Knowing the constant is called clarity; not knowing the constant leads to disaster').

The Tao of the Life Standards¹²

The metaphysical Tao exists beyond our direct sensory perception. Although we cannot see or hear it, this Tao can manifest in our world, profoundly impacting us. When the Tao influences everything, its characteristics become apparent, offering fundamental guidelines for human behavior. As it descends from its abstract form, the Tao becomes a practical way of living and engaging with the world. This version of the Tao transcends metaphysical constraints, becoming accessible to us in a straightforward manner.

The metaphysical "Tao" can be called "virtue" if it is implemented into the realm of things and acts on life. The relationship between "Tao" (道) and "De" (德) is two and one. The development of Laozi's body and application

explains the relationship between “Tao” (道) and "De" (德) . "De" is the function of "Tao (道) " and the manifestation of "Tao (道) ". The mixed Tao, which in the process of creation is internalized in all things and becomes the attribute of all things, is virtue; in short, the Tao that falls into the realm of experience is virtue. Thus, the metaphysical "Tao" is carried out on the level of life, and the characteristics it manifests, which are experienced by human beings and taken by human beings, can be said to be the sphere of activity of "virtue" (here we can also make such a distinction between "Tao" and "virtue"); "Tao" refers to the natural state that has not been infiltrated by human beings at all, and "德" refers to the state that has participated in human factors and still returned to nature (it can be seen that the "morality" said by Taoism is the side that is more important than the nature, and is completely different from the ethical side of the Confucianism).

Lao-tzu's concept of "Tao" or "Virtue" is centered around the idea of "natural inaction," where things are allowed to develop according to their own conditions without external constraints. This notion signifies nature's spontaneity and the avoidance of excessive interference. Other essential characteristics and spirit encompassed by this "Tao" include embracing vacuity and silence, being born without possessing, striving without relying on force, attaining longevity without causing harm, exhibiting gentleness over aggression, living humbly and in harmony, practicing kindness and frugality, and embodying simplicity. These principles together form the foundation of

Lao-tzu's philosophy, with "natural inaction" serving as the cornerstone around which the other concepts revolve.

Dhamma

In this article, "Dhamma" emerges as the opening term that carries a potential resemblance to the concept of "Tao." Given that "Dhamma" holds multiple interpretations, it becomes essential to intricately identify the parallels between the meanings of "Dhamma" and "Tao".

The Dhamma, the profound truth imparted by the Buddha, reveals itself gradually to those who engage in continuous practice. The Buddha emphasized repeatedly that Awakening does not strike suddenly, like a bolt out of the blue, for minds untrained and unprepared. Instead, it marks the culmination of a long and multi-staged journey. 'Just as the ocean has a gradual shelf, a gradual slope, a gradual inclination, with a sudden drop-off only after a long stretch, in the same way, this Doctrine and Discipline (*dhamma-vinaya*) has a gradual training, a gradual performance, a gradual progression, with penetration to prognosis only after a long stretch.¹³

In ancient India, the term "Dhamma" referred to the inherent principles one lives by – *dhāretīti dhammaṃ*. The concept encompassed the immediate mental state, defining it as the mind's Dhamma. Since the mind absorbs its own qualities, these became its 'Dhamma'. Dhamma indicated the distinctive features and attributes of specific elements. In that era's language, Dhamma

was also known as "*rit*," denoting the laws of nature. For example, fire's inherent quality is to burn and scorch upon contact, while ice's inherent quality is to remain cold and chill upon contact.

We also assert that the inevitability of death, illness, and old age are dictated by the laws of nature. In essence, the term for these laws was "Dharma." Let's delve into understanding the essence of the mind's nature. The emotions that emerge in my mind at this very moment—anger, animosity, jealousy, or arrogance, for instance—are instances of negativity that sporadically arise. Consequently, these qualities have been labeled as the mind's inherent nature, or in other words, the mind's law—its Dharma. Throughout history, esteemed investigators such as Rishis, Sages, Saints, Gurus, Arahants, and Buddhas diligently pursued the profound nature of Dharma or the mind's essence. Apart from this, according to early Buddhist teaching, “Whatever *dharmā* (which are *kammabīja*) that give rise to the rebirth process, causes for those to arise have been declared by the Buddha; he has also explained how those causes can be stopped from arising (and thus end the rebirth process)”.¹⁴ In Buddhist philosophy, the term "Dhamma" refers to the path of dependent origination, reflecting the cyclical nature by which the world's structure and order unfold.

The term "*Loka dhamma*" is another word mentioned in the *Maṅgalasutta* that is closely associated with the concept of Dhamma. In the context of the sutta, *Loka dhamma* refers to the principles or teachings that are

beneficial and auspicious for the world. It encompasses the ethical and moral guidelines that promote harmony, peace, and well-being in society. *Loka dhamma*, conditions which are necessarily connected with life in this world; there are primarily eight of them: gain and loss, honor and dishonor, praise and blame, pain and joy¹⁵. The term "dhamma" is significant in Buddhist philosophy, representing the natural order of things and the teachings of Buddha. When we encounter the phrase "*loka dhamma*," it combines "*loka*," meaning "world" or "cosmos," with "dhamma." This combination suggests that "*loka dhamma*" pertains to the principles or laws governing the world or cosmos, similar to how Tao in Tao philosophy represents the fundamental principle that governs the universe. In Taoism, Tao is often described as the fundamental force that flows through and unites everything in existence. Similarly, "*loka dhamma*" in Buddhism can be seen as the underlying principles that guide the world and everything within it. So, when you compare "*loka dhamma*" to Tao in Tao philosophy, you're drawing a parallel between two philosophies' concepts of fundamental principles that underlie the natural order of the universe. This connection highlights the common thread of seeking to understand the essential nature of existence and the laws that govern it in both Buddhist and Taoist philosophies.

Laozi emphasizes the contrasting relationships between things and the role of transformation towards opposites. However, the essence of Laozi's philosophy lies in the idea of returning to the original state. "Return" and

"restore," synonymous with "cycle," convey the concept of circular motion. This is the secondary meaning of "opposite." When describing the "Tao (道)," Laozi mentions it as a concept that "circulates without fail." The term "circulates" forms a circle, indicating a sense of cyclic movement. "Circulates without fail" means that the Tao (道)'s cyclic motion is constant and everlasting. In the same chapter¹⁶, Laozi says, "Being forceful with a name makes it daily increase; increasing daily, it goes beyond limits; going beyond limits, it returns." This explanation aligns with the idea of "circulates without fail." It means that the Tao (道) is boundless and vast. All things originate from it ("increasing"), and after separating from the Tao (道), they continuously move in a flowing manner ("going beyond limits"). As things move further away from the Tao (道) ("return"), they eventually reach a point where they reverse and return to their original state ("returns"). This cycle of movement and return is what constitutes the "circulates" concept. In the Sixteenth chapter of *Tao De Ching* 《道德经》, Laozi discerned the principle of the cyclical pattern of the universe's growth ('all things arise together, and I watch them return') from the flourishing of myriad creatures. He believed that the diverse and colorful myriad things eventually return to their respective origins ('when things have been given their fullness, each returns to its origin'). Here, it could be understood that Laozi's concept of 'return' contains the idea of returning to one's source. Why did Laozi advocate this return to the source? What are the two states of this source? Laozi believed that the source is a state of emptiness and tranquility ('returning to the root is

stillness'). In his view, the 'Tao (道)' is in accordance with nature, and emptiness and tranquility are the natural states. After the 'Tao (道)' gives birth to all things, their movement and development gradually deviate from the 'Tao (道)'. The farther they depart from the 'Tao (道)', the more they deviate from nature, and the turmoil and disputes of all things are manifestations of this unnaturalness. Therefore, only by returning to the source and embracing emptiness and tranquility can one align with nature, free from turmoil and disputes. The concepts of 'emptiness' and 'tranquility' will be further explained in the subsequent text.

Magga

It recommends the term "*Magga*" from Buddhism as the second word to comprehend the Tao in this article. Additionally, it's important to note that the origin of Tao is synonymous with "path" or "way." The '*Magga*' path to liberation in Buddhism, often termed awakening, is depicted in various manners. One prominent representation is the Noble Eightfold Path¹⁷, a classical example among several summaries found in the *Suttapitaka*. Numerous alternative paths to liberation also thrive within diverse Buddhist traditions and theology.

Magga is often referred to as the "Noble Eightfold Path," and it is a fundamental concept in Buddhism. It outlines the path to achieving enlightenment and liberation from suffering. The Noble Eightfold Path consists of eight interconnected practices that guide practitioners toward

ethical and mental development, ultimately leading to the cessation of suffering (*Nirvana*).

The concept of the Tao in Taoism refers to the fundamental principle that underlies and unites all aspects of existence. As mentioned above, it is often translated as "the Way." Taoism emphasizes living in harmony with the natural order, embracing simplicity, and allowing things to unfold naturally. The Tao is considered ineffable and cannot be fully understood through intellectual analysis alone; it must be experienced and lived. While both Magga in Buddhism and the Tao in Taoism emphasize a path or principle that leads to harmony, balance, and liberation, they arise from different cultural and philosophical contexts. Magga focuses on a structured path of ethical and mental development, while the Tao emphasizes a more intuitive and holistic approach to living in accordance with the natural order.

The concept of the Middle Way is also a significant aspect that we can explore within the framework of the term "*magga*" in Buddhism. The notion of the middle way refers to the Buddha's resistance to unconditionally accepting any extreme ways of practice or theoretical viewpoints. The Buddha described himself as a *vibhajyavādin* (one who asserts propositions conditionally) rather than an *ekāntavādin* (one who maintains one absolute position)¹⁸. The concept of the Middle Path in Buddhism is essentially a guiding principle that advocates steering clear of two extreme approaches to practical life. On one end of the spectrum, there's indulgence in sensual

pleasures, a path characterized by excessive hedonism and the relentless pursuit of worldly desires. On the opposite end lies severe asceticism, where individuals subject themselves to extreme self-denial and deprivation in their quest for spiritual enlightenment. According to religious biographies, the Buddha's personal journey embodies this principle. Before embarking on his path to enlightenment, Siddhartha Gautama, who would later become the Buddha, lived a life of great comfort and affluence as a prince. This initial experience of opulence allowed him to intimately understand the allure of sensory pleasures, but it also left him questioning the ultimate purpose of such a life. Thus, his life's transformation and eventual enlightenment were grounded in finding a balanced path, avoiding both excessive indulgence and harsh asceticism. This Middle Path became a central tenet of his teachings and a fundamental aspect of Buddhist philosophy. The *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta* is the very first sutta that Buddha mentioned about the middle way, it is as below; "There are these two extremes that are not to be indulged in by one who has gone forth. Which two? That which is devoted to sensual pleasure with reference to sensual objects: base, vulgar, common, ignoble, unprofitable; and that which is devoted to self-affliction: painful, ignoble, unprofitable. Avoiding both of these extremes, the middle way realized by the Tathagata — producing vision, producing knowledge — leads to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to Unbinding.¹⁹" Taoist philosophy doesn't possess a centralized and highly developed concept akin to the Middle Way found in Buddhism. However, scattered throughout Taoist

teachings, we can discern occasional parallel ideas that resonate with the Middle Way philosophy in Buddhism.

Both the Middle Way in Buddhism and the Tao in Taoism may share similar teachings centered around balance, harmony, and a holistic approach to life:

Balance and Moderation, both philosophies advocate avoiding extremes and finding a balanced approach to life. In Buddhism's Middle Way, one should neither indulge excessively in sensory pleasures nor engage in extreme asceticism. On the other hand, Taoism encourages avoiding excess and embracing moderation in all aspects of life.

Harmony with Nature, both teachings stress the importance of aligning oneself with the natural order. Buddhism's Middle Way encourages understanding the interconnectedness of all life and avoiding actions that disrupt harmony. Taoism's Tao suggests flowing with the natural rhythms of the universe and adapting to circumstances without resistance.

Simplicity, both philosophies emphasize simplicity as a way to reduce attachment and desire. The Middle Way encourages letting go of attachments to material possessions and desires. Taoism encourages living a simple and humble life, free from unnecessary complications.

Non-Attachment²⁰, Both teachings teach the value of non-attachment to outcomes and desires. Buddhism's Middle Way encourages detachment

from desires and a focus on the present moment. Taoism's Tao advises letting go of ego and desires, allowing life to unfold naturally.

Self-Discovery and Inner Wisdom, both paths emphasize self-awareness and inner wisdom. Buddhism's Middle Way encourages self-exploration and understanding of the nature of suffering. Taoism's Tao promotes introspection and seeking inner insights to align with the universal flow.

Compassion and Kindness, both philosophies emphasize compassion and kindness toward oneself and others. Buddhism's Middle Way encourages practicing loving-kindness and empathy. Taoism's Tao emphasizes treating others with kindness and striving to create a peaceful and harmonious environment.

Transcendence of Dualities, both teachings encourage transcending dualistic thinking. Buddhism's Middle Way seeks to transcend the duality of pleasure and pain, self and other. Taoism's Tao encourages transcending the dualities of good and bad and embracing the paradoxes of life. In summary, both the Middle Way in Buddhism and the Tao in Taoism promote a balanced, harmonious, and mindful approach to life, aiming for personal growth, inner peace, and alignment with the natural order of the universe.

This article focuses on the meaning of Tao and how it is understood through the Buddhist perspective. Tao is a word with multiple meanings, as it

is considered ineffable. However, Buddhism shares similar thoughts with Taoism, and this article suggests that some Buddhist words may have similar meanings to Tao. The suggested meanings of each word in the article are primarily based on philosophical interpretations. It is an attempt to provide a basic understanding of the word Tao to Buddhist studies students. It highlights that both philosophies have developed in different cultures and regions, resulting in distinct differences and interpretations. Nevertheless, it is possible to use familiar philosophical ideas to understand and appreciate the other philosophy.

End notes

¹ 中国三大宗教分别是道教、佛教、儒教。《宗教禅语》, 2021.

² Eva Wong., 2011. *Taoism is an essential guide*. Shambhala Bosophon & London.

³ “*Paññavato ayaṃ bhikkhave, dhammo nāyaṃ dhammo duppaññassa*”, *Anuruddha Sutta*: AN 8.30 PTS: A iv 228, translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

⁴ The role of some form of breathing meditation in most of the world's great mystical traditions has long been known, but few have seen much evidence for this in early Taoism. By 'early Taoism' I mean the formative stages of the tradition, from its mysterious origins to the completion of the Huai-nan-Tzu 淮南子 7 (139.C.). Harold D. Roth., 1997. *Evidence for stages of meditation in early Taoism*. Cambridge University Press, 295-314p.

⁵ Modern Chinese Dictionary, 现代汉语词典

⁶ The ability of the dictionary user to understand these definitions depends on knowledge of what Searle called "the Background" - the beliefs, practices, assumptions, etc. that enable a human being to function in and interact with the world. Inevitably, therefore, the dictionary is the encyclopedia. Normally, the lexicographer can assume familiarity with the Background. He takes for granted that the dictionary user is familiar with doors, toolboxes, parcels, books, zippers, and so on, and the manner in which we interact with these kinds 'of objects. Only in the case of forgotten, specialized, or exotic practices is it necessary to give detailed, and

perhaps ultimately not very satisfactory, accounts of the relevant Background. I suspect that a lexicographer assigned the task of compiling a dictionary for disembodied aliens would have a hard time explicating the meaning(s) of open.

John R. Taylor University of the Witwatersrand., 1992. How Many Meanings Does a Word Have ?. *Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics*, Vol. 25, 1992, 133-168 doi: 10.5774/25-0-79.

⁷ 道可道，非常道。名可名，非常名。Gu Zhengkun., 2006. *The Book of Tao and Teh*, 中国对外翻译出版公司 press.

⁸ 视而不见，名曰夷；听之不闻，名曰希；搏之不得，名曰微。此三者不可致诘，故混而为一。其上不微，其下不昧，绳绳兮不可名，复归于无物。是谓无状之状，无物之象，是谓惚恍。迎之不见其首，随之不见其后。Gu Zhengkun., 2006. *The Book of Tao and Teh*, 中国对外翻译出版公司 press.

⁹ Guanzi or Guan Zhong 管仲 (-645 BC), a famous politician of Qi 齐国 of the Spring and Autumn period.

¹⁰ 反也者，道之动也；弱也者，道之用也。

¹¹ 有无相生，难易相成，长短相形，高下相盈，音声相和，前后相随。

¹² 生活准则的‘道’

¹³ *Uposatha Sutta: Uposatha*, Ud 5.5 PTS: Ud 51, translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu, 2012.

¹⁴ *Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā,
Tesaṃ hētum tathāgato āha;
Tesaṅca yo nirōdhō,
Evaṃvādī mahāsamaṇō*

<https://puredhamma.net/living-dhamma/transition-to-noble-eightfold-path/ye-dhamma-hetuppabhava-and-yam-kinci-samudaya-dhammam/>

¹⁵ *Maṅgala Sutta: Blessings*, Khp 5 PTS: Khp 5.

¹⁶ 强为之名曰大。大曰逝，逝曰远，远曰反

¹⁷ *Magga-Vibhaṅga Sutta: An Analysis of the Path*, SN 45.8 PTS: S v 2 CDB ii 1524

¹⁸ Ana Bajzelj., (2017). *Middle way (Buddhism)*, *Encyclopedia of Indian religion*. Springer Link, pp 775-778.

¹⁹ *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion*, SN 56.11 PTS: S v 420 CDB ii 1843.

²⁰ 无为 - non-action in Taoism

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