

## RETHINKING THE WAY: EAST AND WEST (Preliminaries to Philosophy of Religion)

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The intention of this paper is to meet a Western understanding of the Way, Truth and Being with an ancient East Asian insight of Dao as a way of masterful living. Zhuang Zhou was the first Chinese philosopher who raised the question of the limits of language, in which the starting point itself is not marked and oriented towards a definite final goal (teleology), and examined the inexhaustible potential of Dao-talking as a spontaneous, self-liberating flow. Zhuangzi's parables and such daoist topics as *yin* and *yang*, *wuwei*, *taiji* etc. are juxtaposed with late Heideggerian concepts of Telling (*Sage*), Releasement (*Gelassenheit*) and the Event of Appropriation (*Ereignis*): not only as strikingly corresponding topics or texts that oppose one another, separated by continents and ages, but as two random streams moving in parallel. This comparative technique intends to stimulate a creative study conducted or merely inspired by the hermeneutics of H.O. Poggeler, W. Owens, Prof. G. Wohlfart and especially the analysis carried out by such experts in M. Heidegger like Prof. M. Heim and J. Stambaugh.

Our own contribution to this subject investigates Heidegger's involvement with Daoist thought, concerning the question of the a/temporal shining-forth of beings that is an opening of a new philosophical consideration for the empty origin of all manifestations. The '*Lichtung*' as a clearing of the self-concealing and impenetrable 'forest', similar to the etymology of Chinese conception of nothingness (*wu*), brings an openness that is needed in turn to let things be. By '*Gelassenheit*' the later Heidegger means a detached state analogous to what Daoism calls 'the doing of non-doing' (*wei-wuwei*). He writes that Dao could be "the way that gives all ways... a great hidden stream which moves all things along and makes way for everything" (Heidegger 1971: 92), so we are invited to carefully pursue his apparent proximity to Eastern thought.<sup>1</sup>

Key words: *hermeneutics, Dao, Dasein, correlative thinking, Speech (Rede), Releasement, Appropriation, clearing (Lichtung), pathway, transformation, complementarity* etc.

“The word ‘way’ probably is an ancient primary word that speaks to the reflective mind of man. The key word in Laozi’s poetic thinking is Tao, which ‘properly speaking’ means way. But because we are prone to think of ‘way’ superficially, as a stretch connecting two places, our word ‘way’ has all too rashly been considered unfit to name what Tao says. Tao is then translated as reason, mind, meaning, logos.” (Heidegger 1971: 92)

This report is oriented towards contemporary hermeneutic readings of Zhuangzi and makes some general typological parallels between nuances in Heidegger’s works on poetical thinking and motives in Daoist philosophy of religion, to which the latter has manifested a keen interest. In his dialogue with the Japanese Professor of German literature Tomio Tezuka Heidegger notes that up to these days we have no word to describe the nature of language<sup>2</sup> and expresses some skepticism about the possibility of West European and Far Eastern thinking to enter into a dialogue, or to be proven that their speech stems from a single source.

Heideggerian hermeneutics has turned out to be a creative re-thinking (recalling/recollecting: *Andenken*) and overcoming the dualistic Achilles’ heel deeply embedded in European Onto-Theo-Logic. The poetic function of Dao-language (in *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*) is not only creatively divulging the dark mysteries ( 阄 – *xuan*) of the Hidden and Nameless Dao, but is conceptually flexible and clearer, coming closer to Heidegger’s primordial Talk – *Sage* and ‘poetizing of Being’ – *Dichten*. According to Heidegger thinking solves no cosmic riddle, but the Saying of being functionally “brings poetry and thinking together into neighborhood”. (Heidegger 1971: 93) The endless enfolding of the Unnameable and the Nameable make possible the everyday renewability of the profoundest enlightening ( 明 – *ming*) Dao: an ever-widening and all-encompassing ontological horizon.

For the ‘hermit of Todnauberg’<sup>3</sup> thinking itself is a way and we respond to the call of Being by remaining underway. “The way of thinking cannot be traced from somewhere to somewhere like a well-worn rut, nor does it at all exist as such in any place.” (Heidegger 1971: 126) This reminds us of Zhuangzi, who maintains in the Second Chapter of his work that ‘There is no place where we can not find Dao’, it is omnipresent and

not confined to space and time. Heidegger goes on: “Only when we walk it, and in no other fashion, only, that is by thoughtful questioning, are we on the move on the way. This movement is what allows the way to come forward.” (Heidegger 1971: 126) The analogy to Zhuangzi is also striking – ‘When we get on the Way, it becomes Dao’, or we must take the steps by which alone the way may be said to be such. To have no name means to be a true master of the art of Dao-language wherein is found a miraculous interplay of ‘what-is-unsayable’ and ‘what-is-spoken’.

As Zhuangzi posited in Chapter XXVI: “With words that are no - words, you may speak all your life long and you’ll never have said anything. Or you may go through your whole life without speaking, but it will be as if you have never stopped talking.” (Guying 1988: 233) Dao-masters engage themselves in an endless talk about the Way – by the masterful art of Dao-language they renew their day-to-day enlightenment and at the same time keep complete silence. To claim no-name means spontaneous forgetfulness in accordance with the ‘unspeakable Dao’, following what is natural. “Where can I find a man who has forgotten words, so I can have a word with him”, (Guying 1988: 235) paradoxically asks Zhuangzi in the abovementioned chapter of his work. In the process of getting rid of any sort of fixation, the substantive language should be forsaken – the true Master knows how to explore all the humanly possible points of view. He inquires into the all the perspectives regarding the truth of the Way, equalizing and transcending them at the same time. When uttering Dao he makes use of the various functional forms of poetic expression, such as the so called ‘goblet words’ of Zhuangzi coming forth totally unlimited in the light of what he calls the *Heavenly Equality* (天倪 – *Tian’ni*).

“There is beginning, there is no beginning. There is no no-beginning. There is being, there is nonbeing. There is no nonbeing. There is no no-nonbeing. Suddenly there is a distinction of being and nonbeing. Still, between being and nonbeing, I do not know which is really being and which is really nonbeing.”<sup>4</sup> (Yu-Lan 1989: 48–49) Whether we are looking for some universal semantics or not, it turns out to be more interesting to explore the direct and indirect analogies between Heidegger’s understanding of the *pathway* in his later texts (*Das Feldweg/Holzwege – The Fieldpath/Woodpaths*), and *Dao*<sup>5</sup> in ancient Chinese texts (of Zhuangzi/Laozi), as a fruitful approach to one of the current tasks of

philosophy – the contemporary way of thinking. Regardless whether we turn to the East or to the West, to unveil the conceptual frame acquired in the routine use of words (either practical or metaphysical), is only the first step in clarifying their ontic (empirical) or ontologic (transcendental) reference.

The publisher of the book *Heidegger and Asian thought*, G. Parkes investigates disparate influences in the formation of Heideggerian concept of Nothingness (*‘das Nichts’*) - from Gnostics through M. Eckhart to Hegel, but for him and other contributors to this edition, Far-East threads are to be detected in some later writings of the ‘hermit of Todnauberg’. Laozi says that the vessel is hollow inside and there is no clay within it, which makes it useful – the ‘non-being’ of the stuff in a jug is the ‘being’ of the vessel as *vessel*: only through this ‘nothingness’ it at first becomes an actual jug. Its emptiness is concealed within its becoming useful as the transference to fullness, which does not exclude a revision of the process – which is once filled can always be emptied again. The author of Daodejing associates with ‘*wu*’ something very concrete, which should be distinguished from the visible corporeal things (*‘you’*) and in the same time is in a complementary relationship with them in the physical space. ‘Non-being’ is a kind of space which encircles or fills up the thing – e.g. the shaped and useful emptiness of the jug.

In his “West – East Dialogue: Heidegger and Lao-Tzu” in the above Parkes’s collection of papers, Otto Poggeler mentions Heidegger’s examination of the empty vessel in his lecture from 1950 – “The Thing” (*Das Ding*). The usefulness of the jug consists predominantly in its emptiness rather than in its substance: this is an exhortation in learning to see things as such since they have not yet occurred in our thinking as things that *bode*. (Heidegger 1999: 168) Cheng Chung-ying who visited Heidegger in Freiburg in 1972, believes that the latter is the only Western thinker who grasped Dao not just intellectually, but became intuitively aware of its essence. (Parkes 1985: 61) Whether the Heideggerian *availability* of the thing and its potency to be *in hand* has been conceptualized under the indirect impact of Laozi, under the influence of Meister Eckhart and his concept of ‘Releasement’ (*Gelassenheit*), or as a result of rethinking Pre-Socratics only, it is more important that he drew a path in the openness of thinking for a real, rather than just formal dialogue between the East and the West.

According to Parkes, in view of the number of the contacts Heidegger had with East-Asian thinkers, his acquaintance with Daoist philosophical texts and the keen interest in questioning his Japanese interlocutors about the main ideas of the East, there are remarkably few references to them in his published works. Except Daoism, we find in such papers as *The Origin of the Work of Art* the Zen Buddhist motive of nothingness and emptiness (the *Void*), distinct, but not different from form. Something is kneaded from clay but the vessel is at the same time formed emptiness – the form of the jug is its ‘shaped non-being’ as a certain holding capacity. As Moller’s translation reads – “Clay is fired and from that emerges a jug. It is because of their empty places that jugs are useful”. Daodejing, Chapter XI (Wohlfart 2003: 39).

The author of *Being and Time* is too reserved in speaking on his relationship with Zen and Daoism and that is the reason for his occupation with these topics to be still in question. There is documented evidence from his colleagues and friends that at the time of writing ‘*Sein und Zeit*’, especially in the 30 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he has been engaged in Buber’s edition of Zhuangzi and the Wilhelm’s version of Daodejing. One of the most prominent early twentieth century Japanese philosophers – Nishida and his disciple Nishitani, who was acquainted with Heidegger – are among the first heralds of the nihilistic theme in Europe. Contacts are registered in the period 1921–27 through Japanese students of Husserl who developed the Far-Eastern phenomenological stream. Heidegger was interested in Tokuri Yamanuchi and Shuzo Kuki, and attempted a joint philological/philosophical translation of Daodejing with Paul Xiao (Parkes 1987: 95–101). During the second semester of the year of 1946 Heidegger began his hermeneutic readings of Laozi teachings, paying special attention to the passages which speak of Dao, but by the end of the summer, according to Xiao only 8 of 81 chapters were completed and later the work was forsaken.

*Being and Time* reveals that we are always ‘underway’ – “One must seek a way of illuminating the fundamental question of ontology and then go this way. Whether this is the sole or right way can be decided only after one has gone along it” (Stambough 1984: 335)= In the Foreword to the collected essays, called *Woodpaths* Heidegger writes: “Wood is an old name for forest. In the wood are paths that mostly wind along until

they end quite suddenly in an impenetrable thicket. They are called woodpaths” (Heidegger 1977: 34). The function of woodpaths left behind by the woodcutters is not to lead someone from one point to another – actually they are useless for the non-woodcutters walking in the forest: almost a byproduct of the cutting activity. We could not know where these paths are leading if their primary aim is to do so – if we needed to arrive at a fixed destination in the shortest amount of time, we would not be on a woodpath. The philosophical meaning of being-on-the-Way is not predetermined: “For Heidegger, woodpaths express the fact that thinking is thoroughly and essentially questioning... not to be stilled or ‘solved’ by any answer... that can not calculate in advance the direction in which it will be led” (Stambough 1984: 336).

Probably the most important source of Chinese thinking for Heidegger was Laozi with his concept of ‘Nothing’, compared with the clearing of a forest thicket. The original meaning of the Chinese character ‘無 – *wu*’ designates a place at which lush vegetation was first found and the trees were cut in such a manner that a free space arose in the site where the thicket used to be previously. In his *Chinese Characters*, first published in 1915 L. Wiegner gave the following interpretation of ‘*wu*’ – it stands for ‘there where nothing is left’ – “In the old form the graph indicated that the wood had vanished” – a tract of land is cleared by felling the trees – “hence... the general abstract notions of vanishing, defect, want, negation.”<sup>6</sup> In “The End of Philosophy and the task of Thinking” Heidegger states: “*Lichtung* something means to make it light, free and open, e.g. to make the forest free of trees at one place. The free space thus originating is the clearing” (Heidegger 1977: 384).

The debate on the etymology of ‘*wu*’ as a contrast juxtaposition with ‘*you*’ can be summarized as follows: the fullness and emptiness in Daodejing do not indicate sheer existence and nonexistence – ‘*wu*’ and ‘*you*’ as stages of the phenomenological structure of occurrence, contained in each other, lay beyond pure ontological determination. The ideographical reading of the character ‘*wu*’ (无 – which is considered to be one of the first artificial, abstract concepts in Chinese proto-logics) depicts schematically two interrelated issues. (1) Clearing of impenetrable thicket by fire – the forest is absent after the cutting of the trees, but its potential to grow anew is preserved. Its transformation is a transition from nonexistence to existence

and requires the reversal of the hidden potency (the substrate for germination of stored seeds and stems). (2) Ritual dance of the shaman whose pantomimic simulative movements evoke the desired state of being. He turns to the symbolic dimension available before the apparent onset, which is a precondition for other miraculous transformation of something-into-another-thing, or of a *becoming*.

Instead of talking about pure nothingness, Laozi refers to the phenomenological background of each manifestation: emptiness as an immanent immersion in Dao and an ontological precondition of the global dynamics. Without a refreshing ‘tide’ of emptiness, the Way would appear to be not just lifeless, but also undefined because of the absolute impossibility of description. However where nothingness dwells, is the place where the wheel spokes converge – the void makes use of the empty space and gathers speed in the axle, which makes movement possible. “Thirty spokes encircle the hub, but the usefulness of the wheel is in the middle cavity,” is said in Daodejing, Chapter XI (Guying 1985: 47). The real non-action (无为 – *wu wei*<sup>7</sup>) becomes a source of actualization, giving impetus to the phase of deployment - the realization of mature potencies. Once the primordial emptiness in turn is formed, it becomes functional and hence able to produce an effect.

In his comparison between the concept of Lao Tzu for ‘*wu*’ (unavailable, non-being) and Heidegger’s concept ‘*das Nichts*’ (Nothingness), professor G. Wohlfart analyzes the XI Chapter of Daodejing which impressed him with quadrupling reference to 无 – ‘*wu*’ in parallel verses 2, 4 and 6 as a counterpoint to the existing, being: 有 *g* – ‘*you*’. This interesting correlation suggests several interpretations:

1) the semantic treatment of Gu Zhengkun, referring to the structural apposition as a given architectural unity;

2) C. Omerborn’s research of the reversion to the fundamental Dao as ‘coincidentia oppositorum’ – ‘processive complementarity’;

3) the successive interchange of *yin* and *yang*,<sup>8</sup> represented by the mutual interdependence of beginning, existence and vanishing, which is detected by H.-G. Moller.

In Laozi’s text ‘*wu*’ and ‘*you*’ are both fundamental beings in the empirical world as well as positionally reversed forms (‘*wu*’ as not-‘*you*’), coinciding by the returning to the original Dao. Being: ‘*you*’ in its turn

originates in non-being: ‘*wu*’ (nothingness) – obviously we can speak more accurately of mutual interdependence than of mere opposition between them. What is openly manifested in the cosmology of Daodejing is their processual dependence as a matter of becoming in the context of occurrence – ‘emerging from’ and ‘passing away’. According to Prof. Moller the complementarity of empty and full forms one ‘*dao*’ as a process – the wheel, the pot and the room attain their usefulness through the empty place within them. So their use rests upon the void wholeness of Dao and they are not to be described as mere objects, but rather as functional processes, forming the unity of the structure of occurrence (Wohlfart 2003: 42).

Prof. Wohlfart’s analysis covers almost all modern studies of Daoist philosophy up to date, but it goes far beyond the above brief overview of historiographical notes on Heidegger and his interest in early Daoist texts. Let’s go straight to the annotated topic and examine the analogies and indirect matches between the rethinking of the way in the East and in the West. To be able to get out of the image means hitting the intractable road – an incessant experience of the immediate non-differentiation of all differences – or redirection of all forms of expression in the absolute closeness to Dao. Zhuangzi talks about the Great awakening (大觉 – *da jue*), which overcomes the opposition between dream and waking state, of Heavenly music (天籁 – *tian lai*) as a transition between speech and silence, of Real forgetfulness (*chen wang* – 诚忘), which precedes knowledge and ignorance.

Heidegger’s existential analytic and the transition to the ontological foundation of language as phenomenal talk (*Sage*) is reminiscent of the ancient Daoist critique to the paradoxes, developed by their intellectual rivals – the sophists from the School of Names (名家 – *mingjia*). Zhuangzi cleverly parodies the mentalist admission of the existence of universal names, described as real entities, which leads to paradoxes of logico-metaphysical type. Thinkers of the period, called ‘the Hundred Schools’ suffered from the inertia of debating in which any rule eliminates one dimension of authenticity. Each discussion is based on something undeniable: the natural disposition of speech (言 – *yan*) leads to the conclusion that in real talk you do not pronounce any words: “The ignorant speaks, those who know remain silent”,<sup>9</sup> said Laozi (Guying 1985: 89).



Unlike the spectacular demonstration of rhetorical discourse, the sage poetizing sinks into quietude – the ‘homecoming’ of being in language, where thinking is not closed and concealed but shelters and takes care of being.

In the processiveness of Dao grow the potencies of occurrence rather than the output of production, so any verbal violence (为 – *wei*) in its expression appears to be excessive and unfruitful. Chinese thinking explores in depth this causal indeterminacy and ineffability without opposing reciprocally the degrees of evidence. The incessant fulfillment of opportunities and the interchange of the forthcoming and the becoming (成 – *cheng*) leads the talk on the Way (道言 – *Dao yan*) astray from conventional reduction to coherent and progressive unfolding. For Daoists the *Void* as a primary source of meaning has an ontological priority over any kind of motion in the mode of availability: wise men return to the constancy of the absent.

To be able to see that something is given to us prior to any reflective act does not imply any special phenomenal access since the ultimate task of thinking is to follow what is already available, rather than over-thinking. According to Heidegger we are able to attain language only because we already belong to Saying – for him this is not simply a linguistic term; it points to the way in which we respond to what happens. It includes poetic and artistic kind of human response as well as silence and indicates to the primordial belonging-together of Man and Being (the so called Appropriation – *Eriegenis*). “For, since the being of language, as Saying that shows, rests on Appropriation which makes us human over to the releasement in which we can listen freely, therefore the way-making of Saying into speech first opens up for us paths along which our thinking can pursue the authentic way to language” (Heidegger 1971: 130).

We must be careful about what is coming and getting away - listening to the silent call of Being and responding with paradoxical ‘non-action’ means that we need vigilance, deep vision and continually renewing prudence. Zhuangzi replicated the stanza of the Old Master (Laozi): “Looking and not seeing, listening but not hearing” – Daodejing, Chapter XIV (Guying 1985: 64), calling us to restrain our vision, focusing on what we actually see and limit our hearing to what is really said; although affective in nature, these perceptions reveal the breaking simplicity of our non-speculative ability to comprehend the world. Daoists are more

interested in the knowledge which we spontaneously gain in the process of learning-to-talk: that primary emptiness of the mind (heart: 心 – *xin*), in which echoes Dao - the boundary event of meeting between language and being.

*Gelassenheit* (Releasement) is a term originating with the stoic conception of *apatheia* developed in the Middle Ages by M. Ekhart – its translation as ‘detachment’ can be misleading, if it implies indifference or an attitude of not caring about anything. Heidegger distanced from this negative connotations and stated that Releasement lies outside the distinction of activity and passivity – it is a kind of waiting that has nothing to do with willing and yet it is not just impartial ‘doing nothing’. To stay in openness without having anything definite in mind reminds us of the Daoist meditation in which you do not welcome the forthcoming and don’t send off the fading away. The root of *Gelassenheit* is *Lassen* – letting, allowing and this meaning becomes more and more central in Heidegger’s later works.

*Gelassenheit* is neither ontic, nor ontological concept and enables us to step beyond the difference between beings and Being. If we are not willing and also are not totally idle, then what are we doing in such state of Releasement? Heidegger answers the following: “Such relinquishing no longer stems from a willing, except that the occasion for releasing oneself to belonging to that which regions requires a trace of willing. This trace, however, vanishes while releasing oneself and is completely extinguished in releasement” (Heidegger 1966: 79–80). In Daoism ‘*wu wei*’ indicates that we cannot will not to will, or will to relax, or consciously calm down and be enlightened and yet we won’t be able to attain meditative state of mind by doing nothing at all; it invokes a practice, called by the Japanese Buddhist *Dogen* ‘sustained exertion’.

This phenomenon is related to the kind of thinking which Heidegger calls *Andenken* – a process akin to what we do when we try to recall something forgotten: waiting not passively, but very attentively, intensely, like a solo musician who is about to begin his recital or a football player in a high level of concentration. Actually there is nothing whatever we can ‘do’ in such situation – doing as a kind of metaphysical production is part of the problem, if not its source. If we believe that thinking is capable to change the place of man in the world this represents an active adjustment which has nothing to do with our present situation. The renowned statement

in the *Spiegel Interview* that only a god can save us is telling the same thing in a different manner.

Heidegger says that “we never gain the thoughts – they come to us. We are to do nothing but wait” (Heidegger 1999: 6). Zhuangzi has gone far ahead in this direction, linking the meaning of the character 待 – *dai*: ‘looking forward’ with the meaning ‘to be dependent’ – a recommendation to develop full Releasement and become as independent as Dao (we must learn how not-to-wait: *wu dai*). Daoist clear seeing as ontological equalization of man and things, being and nonbeing, etc. in the primordial light of nature emphasizes on no-mind ( 无心 – *wu xin*), no-deliberation and sitting-in-forgetfulness. When Heidegger uses tautologies as the *worldling world*, *Appropriation appropriates*, etc. seemingly contrary to his thesis of ‘inexhaustible richness of language’ (verborgen Reichum der Sprache), circular expression of *figura etymologica* appears similar to the Daoist metaphor for the ‘heavenly reservoir’ – the primordial source of meaning and Dao-speech as a response to the nameless Dao.

Zhuangzi’s and Laozi’s ‘poetizing’ reveals the mastery of Daoist parables and verses as a kind of economy of thought: the figurative expression (like ‘the speechless echo’) and the short rhythmical phrases in Daodejing refer to the shapeless, voiceless and unnamable melody of Being (the flute of Heaven and Earth). The poetical enterprise from the late years of Heidegger also alludes to the splendor of simplicity - the pure expression of poetic thinking paving subtle furrows in the field of truth, where the language of being dwells. The Daoist ontological insight (*ming*) into the nameless-which-is-nondifferentiable is the primordial source that illuminates the ten thousand things (万物 – *wan wu*), the revelation-and-concealment of Heaven-and-Earth, abiding what is natural. Dao is clearing and openness: the formless form, the imageless image that lets things-be-as-they-are (自然 – *ziran*). This reminds of Heidegger’s transformation of his early hermeneutical conception as a phenomenologico-ontological attempt to define the nature of interpretation by the way of *Daseinsanalytik*, into the bearing of message and tidings which the two-fold’s unconcealment shows to man as the message-bearer.

The primordial Nameability of the invariable Dao (the Unnameable) can be associated with the Saying of Being, humanly uttered as ‘something-unsayable’ by the pre-Socratic thinkers, reconsidered by Heidegger (*etwas*

*Unsagbares*). Speaking of what-is-hidden and of Dao-as-manifestation are the two naturalistic ways of expressing the same thing, provisionally called Dao – “We cannot... utter Tao-as-Reality; once we try to name it, it all of a sudden turns out to be Tao-as-manifestation in terms of the two-fold of Nonbeing and Being, etc” (Wei-Hsin Fu 1978: 317). The reciprocal ‘production’ of ‘*wu*’ and ‘*you*’ is close to the Heideggerian ‘showing-and-withdrawing’ and ‘clearing-and-concealing’ of Being-as-*Ereignis*. The ultimate ground for all the frameworks is itself no-ground (revealing the limitation of the framework) – Laozi says that both ‘the Nameless’ (无名 – *wu ming*) and ‘the Named’ (有名 – *you ming*) stem of the same source, but on the other hand they give birth to each other, i.e. they belong together in mutual appropriation.

From the perspective of the Dao-as-principle and Dao-as-function ‘non-being’ and ‘being’ are two inseparable dimensions of the inexhaustible functional aspect of the Nameless. The yin and yang interaction, the interplay of what-is-hidden and what-is-manifest are still a human and figurative way of construing the meaning of that which is nondifferentiable. In Daodejing we find: ‘Its rising brings no light; Its sinking – no darkness. Continuous and Unnameable, it again returns to Nothingness.’ “It is in this light that even Heidegger’s Being and beings in their Ontological Difference would have to maintain an ontological parity, which is what Heidegger can hardly accept” (Wei-Hsin Fu 1978: 318). The functional pointing at the inevitable limit of any utterance or reticence about Dao as spontaneous *thisness* and nameless naturalness (*ziran*) symbolizes the ultimate way things are *as they are*.

Let’s make a brief summary of the issues we attempted to touch upon in this paper:

Daoism is initially outside the Aristotelian predicative categories – for example *yin* and *yang* cannot be fixed down either as substances, nor as pure forces; saying that they are terms expressing processes, doesn’t solve the problem of categorization: genus-species classification is lacking in Daoism and the similarity with Heidegger is due to his rejection of metaphysical predication (originally absent in Ancient China).

Re-thinking of the Way is not a representational, nor abstractly conceptual or calculative undertaking, but a correlative kind of thinking toward (*Andenken*) – in the direction of something instead of positing it

as something over against us: *ob-ject*. Daoism has never looked at the world in terms of objective presence, parameters and measurement – Dao has been described as the unified rhythm of the space-time structure. Heidegger also has always distanced himself from reifying entities in Newtonian container-space and reducing time to the Aristotelian series of now-points.

The traces of Daodejing on the path of Heidegger's later thought are evident in the influence of Chapter XI upon his conception of the usefulness of the emptiness, the flow of words and the unspeakable, the jug as a *thing* in the homonymous lection, in *The Way to Language* and in the *Discourse on Thinking* as a whole. Zhuangzi, beside Holderlin and Heraclitus seems to be one of the decisive sources of the later Heidegger.

The existential-ontological foundation of language is discourse or Talk (*Rede*), which is equiprimordial with *Dasein's* everyday state-of-mind (mood) as pre-ontological understanding of its existential encounter with the world and other *Daseins*. *Ereignis* appropriates Being and man, Being and thinking, Being and language-as-Saying in their *belonging-togetherness*.

Instead of a conclusion we'll finish with Heidegger's phrase from *Being and Time* "Speaking at length about something does not offer the slightest guarantee that thereby understanding is advanced" (Heidegger 1962: 208) seem to echo Laozi's saying 'Whoever knows speaks-not; whoever speaks knows-not.'

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Both Dao as mutual attunement of beings to the vicissitude of events and *Ereignis* as belonging together of Being and *Dasein* disable human representational schematizations and predominantly metaphysical rationality.

<sup>2</sup> "The fitting word is still lacking even today" (Heidegger 1971: 8).

<sup>3</sup> I.e. Heidegger

<sup>4</sup> "There is a beginning. There is a not yet (*wei*) beginning to be a beginning. There is a not yet beginning to be a not yet beginning to be a beginning. There is being. There is nonbeing. There is a not yet beginning to be nonbeing. There is a not yet beginning to be a not yet beginning to be nonbeing. Suddenly there is nonbeing. But I do not know, when it comes to nonbeing, which is really being and which is nonbeing." sounds the redaction of B. Watson (Watson 1964: 83).

Because of the polysemy of the determinative particle ‘wei’, ‘not yet beginning’ may be translated as ‘no no-beginning’ (as in the case of Fung Yu-Lan), ‘before that beginning’ (J. Legge – <http://oaks.nvg.org/ys1ra5.html>) or even ‘ever begun’ with another contextual reading (S. Katurova). Except here and when the following after the cited author’s translation is necessary, all quotations from ancient Chinese texts are under the translation of PhD Sofia Katurova with reference to the editions of Cheng Guying – *Zhuangzi jinzhū jinyi*, Beijing (Zhuangzi – New Reading and Commentary), 1988 and Laozi zhuyi ji pingjie (Laozi – Commentary and Analysis), Beijing, 1985.

<sup>5</sup> 道 – literary: way, path; also method, manner

<sup>6</sup> Wieger L. *Chinese Characters*, 36 in (Heim 1984: 316).

<sup>7</sup> ‘Wu wei’ does not emphasize upon the irrational, totally unconditioned behavior. Higher state of consciousness improves the level of awareness - the foreseen direction of human doings and cosmological events.

<sup>8</sup> Generally translated as dark and light; furtiveness and openness etc.

<sup>9</sup> For the popular translation of this stanza, see the end of this paper.

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