

DAOISTIC HUMANISM IN ANCIENT CHINA: BROADENING PERSONALITY AND COUNSELING THEORIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY



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Summary

American psychology, including humanistic psychology, tends to focus on Western cultures and European/American-centric theories while neglecting Eastern or other cultures. Examining Laozi's Daoism (previously called Taoism), the article expounds the following humanistic issues from the perspective of ancient Chinese philosophy: (a) the principle of *wei wu-wei* (or following the noninterference or nonaction) or spontaneity and natural way; (b) openness and tolerance; (c) water personality; (d) high regard for females and mothers; (e) moderation and avoidance of extremes; (f) the welfare of others and the world; and (g) opposition to war and love of peace. Connections between early humanistic counseling and Chinese Daoism are also discussed.

PROBLEMS WITH PERSONALITY AND COUNSELING THEORIES: EUROPEAN-CENTRIC AND WHITE AMERICAN-CENTRIC VIEWS

Problems and purpose. Mainstream American psychology has a long history of focusing only on Western civilization and European-centric ideas with little interest in other cultures and civilizations (Fowers & Richardson, 1996; Grof, 2000; Lee, 1993). Today humanistic psychology is no exception, for humanistic ideas are covered mostly from a Western or European-/American-centric perspective. For example, in personality psychology and/or in counseling/clinical theories (e.g., Cloninger, 2000; Corey, 2000; Feshbach, Weiner, & Bohart, 1996; Schultz & Schultz, 2001; also see Pervin, 1990), researchers and textbook writers tend to limit themselves to modern Western humanistic or existential figures such as Abraham Maslow, Gordon Allport, Carl Rogers, Rollo May, Viktor Frankl, and George Kelly, and their works. Some researchers and writers may cite or refer to early existentialist philosophers and writers, such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, Camus, and Tillich. Nevertheless, humanistic/existential thinking, surprisingly, has a connection with Daoism that could be deepened by further study of Daoism in ancient China.

Humanism or the humanistic (and existential) perspective had been promoted in many civilizations (e.g., in ancient China, India, Greece, and Egypt) before modern humanistic or existential ideas

began in Europe or in the United States. For example, Jenni (1999) recently pointed out:

The Chinese also value pragmatic adaptation to what life brings, an attitude westerners call fatalism, although it does not mean passivity. One combines acceptance and hard work with whatever one is given by fate. The Chinese are perhaps the earliest existentialists in that they accept what is given in the human condition generally and in each person's specific circumstances. Because they have had to practice it so frequently, they often know how to pragmatically make the best of what life brings. (pp. 35-36)

Similarly, it was recently reported that books and articles concerning humanism and humanistic psychology were well received in China in the 1980s and 1990s based on research by Xu (1997). All this suggests that humanism is a universal or general concern to all human beings in both Western and Eastern cultures.

A cautionary note is in order here. Though humanism is culturally general and universal (i.e., culturally etic), the way each culture perceives or understands humanism may be specific and different (i.e., culturally emic). For example, in the West its post-Enlightenment aims of displacing religion from man's center and perfecting a human self are much valued. According to Johnson (1985), humanism and self are individualistic (and/or "me" oriented). In the East Confucianism holds that a human is most valuable, but Chinese humanism and self are dependent on the society in which people live (Tu, 1985). In Daoism Man and Heaven are united into one. Specifically, in chapter 25 of *Dao De Jing* (500 B.C./1961) by Laozi (the founder of Daoism), it is held that Man (i.e., human behavior or the way man acts) should follow (or be consistent with) the way Earth works (*ren fa di*), whereas the way Earth works follows (or is consistent with) the way Heaven works (*di fa tian*); the way Heaven works follows (or is consistent with) the way Dao works (*tian fa dao*), and the way Dao works follows (or is consistent with) the way Nature or Universe works (*dao fa zi ran*). If Westerners tend to see humans as the center of all things or above all things, and humans can conquer almost everything (see Fung, 1948; Johnson, 1985), then in an Eastern sense man is in harmony with other people and things, and a human or humanistic behavior is part of Dao and nature. In other words, Eastern humanism and self are based on social and the physical/natural world (see Lee, McCauley, & Draguns, 1999; Tu, 1985).

Simply put, humanism may be conceptually general and universal, but the way Chinese perceive humanism may be different from the way Westerners see it. Thus, one of the purposes in this article is to demonstrate how ancient Chinese culture expressed their humanistic ideas.

Humanism and humanistic psychology. Although humanistic psychology turned out to be a very influential approach in the United States in the middle of the 20th century, it has some of its roots in the Western humanism that became popular in Europe during the Renaissance period. Humanistic psychological ideas were also observed in ancient China (Coward, 1999/1985; Dreher, 1999; Lee, 1991, 1993). Thus, humanism and humanistic psychology appear to be more important and general regardless of East or West than is sometimes acknowledged. If research shows that human beings indeed share much in common in their personality and behavior (Brown, 1991; Buss, 1999), humanism may be part of the common concerns or general values and beliefs that both Westerners and Easterners have advocated and shared. But the way each culture expresses humanism may be specific, as is seen via Eastern Daoistic (or Taoistic) humanism, as follows.

A cautionary clarification must be made here before Daoistic humanism is discussed. As per Lee (1991, 1993, 2000), other philosophers such as Confucius or Kongzi (557-479 B.C.), Mo Tzu or Mozi (325-238 B.C.), Chuang Tzu or Zhangzi (369-286 B.C.), Mencius or Menzi (372-289 B.C.), and Hsun Tzu or Xun Kuang (298-238 B.C.) explicitly or implicitly dealt with humanism and humanistic values. This article, however, focuses on Laozi (or Lao Tsu or Lao Tzu, 571-447 B.C.) and Daoism (Taoism)¹ for two reasons. First, the scope of this article does not allow for the comprehensive coverage of humanistic views by all other ancient philosophers in China. Second, historically, Laozi and his Daoism were more highly regarded than other philosophers or ideas (Sima, 150 B.C./1994).²

LAOZI AND DAOISTIC HUMANISM

Who is Laozi? Laozi was an originator or father of Daoism (or Taoism). According to classic and recent research (Lee, 1991, 2000; Sima, 150 B.C./1994; Yan, 1999), Laozi was born in the central part of China (near the Yangtze River) more than 2,500 years ago. With

his real name being Li (or Lee) Er, Laozi used to work as an official historian for the Zhou dynasty. All his life he pursued the *Dao* (or *Tao*) and *De* (or *Te*). *Dao* can mean a road, a path, the way it is, the way of nature, the Way of Ultimate Reality, the Rules/Laws of Nature. According to R. B. Blakney (1955), in the eyes of Chinese, *Dao* does not only refer to the way the whole world of nature operates but also signifies the original undifferentiated Reality from which the universe is evolved. *De* means humanistic behavior/virtues, character, influence, or moral force. The character *De* consists of three parts, (a) an ideograph meaning “to go”; (b) another, meaning “straight”; and (c) a pictograph meaning “the heart.” Put together, these imply motivation by inward rectitude (Blakney, 1955, p. 38).

In another translation (see Addiss & Lombardo, 1993), *Dao* means a “way” both literally (“road”) and metaphysically (“spiritual path”). It can also, more rarely, mean “to say,” “to express,” or “to tell.” According to Burton Watson (see Addiss & Lombardo, 1993, p. xiii), *Dao* is literally a “way” or “path” and is used by other schools of Chinese philosophies to refer to a particular calling or mode of conduct. But in Daoistic writing it has a far more comprehensive meaning, referring, rather, to a metaphysical first principle that embraces and underlies all being, a vast Oneness that precedes and in some mysterious manner generates the endlessly diverse forms of the world. Thus, *Dao* lies beyond the power of language to describe. Burton Watson (see Addiss & Lombardo, 1993, p. xiii) defined *De* as the moral virtue or power that one acquires through being in accord with the *Dao*, what one gets from *Dao*.

Laozi was so well known in the pursuit of natural *Dao* and humanistic *De* that, according to Sima Qian’s historical records (Sima, 150B.C./1994; also see Fei, 1984), Kongzi (i.e., Confucius) went to study *Dao* and *De* with Laozi. Because he was not pleased with the decline of the Zhou dynasty and was sick of the wars or fighting in which people killed each other, Laozi decided to live in a mountain as a hermit. He resigned from his official position as a historian in the Chinese Imperial Capital in Luoyang (near the Yellow River in central China) and traveled west with his ox through the Han Ku Pass. However, Linyin Xi (also known as Guan Yin), the Keeper of the Pass, who had heard of Laozi’s knowledge and wisdom, begged Laozi to pass the Han Ku Pass after he could write down what he knew. Laozi stayed nearby and composed a 5,000-character/word classic, *Dao De Jing* (or *Tao-Te Ching*, *The*

Power of Tao and Te, or The Book of Laozi (Shi, 1988; Sima, 150 B.C./1994; Wing, 1986). He then gave it to Linyin Xi and continued on his way west into the mountains of China. He was never seen again.

Humanistic ideas in the Dao De Jing. During the Spring and Autumn period in ancient China (2,500-2,700 years ago), Laozi withdrew and lived in a mountain as a hermit. But historians have shown that he had lived a long life (approximately 160 years) (Fei, 1984; Sima, 150 B.C./1994). His book, *Dao De Jing*, has only 5,000 characters composing 81 chapters and has been regarded as one of the best philosophical books in human history (Hart, 1987).³ Simply, the book tells us about how to exist in harmony with the natural world and other human beings. It should be pointed out that it is beyond the scope and purpose of the article to discuss specifically why Laozi originally wrote each of the sentences quoted in the following. Although seven humanistic issues (or ideas) are excerpted and organized based on Laozi's *Dao De Jing*, these issues (or ideas) are far from complete or perfect, and they are just used as examples to illustrate Laozi's humanism.

1. *The principle of Wei Wu-Wei*, or spontaneity and the natural way. Laozi greatly emphasized wei wu-wei, or spontaneity and the natural way, throughout his book. *Wei* (follow or do) *Wu-Wei* (without doing or without action; *wu* = not) adheres to the principle of "noninterference" or "nonaction" and allows things to be or to act within the true nature of things:

The Dao never acts,
And yet is never inactive. (chapter 37)

To pursue artificial discovering (to learn), add to it daily,
To pursue the Dao, subtract (interfere less) from it daily
Subtract and subtract again,
To arrive at non-action.
Through non-action nothing is left undone. (chapter 48)

Act without action; work without effort.
Taste without savoring.
Magnify the small; increase the few.
Repay ill-will with kindness.

Plan the difficult when it is easy;
Handle the big where it is small.
The world's hardest work begins when it is easy;
The world's largest effort begins where it is small.
Evolved/Wise Individuals (or Sages/Saints), finally take no
great action,
And in that way the great is achieved. (chapter 63)

As can be seen above, *wei wu-wei* does not mean inertia, laziness, *laissez-faire*, or mere passivity. Based on counseling or psychotherapeutic research (see Knoblauch, 1985; Maslow, 1971, 1998; Watts, 1975), it is instead seen as something helpful and important. For example, too much care or being too concerned for other people or clients (or things) means too much intervention or control. Too much action or too much intervention for other humans (or things) may produce opposite negative outcomes (e.g., in our counseling or management). As was discussed previously, Man follows Earth, which follows Heaven; Heaven follows Dao, which follows the Nature or Universe. All this means we should be natural and should not intervene too much—*wei wu-wei*.

Simply, *wei wu-wei* means “going with the grain, rolling with the punch, swimming with the current, trimming the sails to the wind, taking the tide at its flood, and stooping to conquer” (Watts, 1975, p. 75). It is the flow or well-being that allows one to be in harmony with all things or people, which is similar to the Western religious saying, “Letting God be God in you.”

2. *Openness and tolerance*. Being open and tolerant is a very important aspect of Daoistic humanism.

The one with great De (or humanistic virtue)
Tends to be tolerant and open to everything
Because the one must follow *the Dao*. (chapter 21)

In other words, openness and tolerance are the essential and fundamental ways (Dao) for human beings. Without openness and tolerance it is very difficult for human beings to be in harmony with nature and other human beings.

The cycle of destiny is called the Absolute:
To know the Absolute is called insight;

To know the Absolute is to be tolerant;
What is tolerant is fair (or impartial);
What is fair (or impartial) is powerful;
What is powerful become natural;
What is natural becomes *Dao*. (chapter 16)

Our real power is to follow the natural *Dao*, which must be based on insight, tolerance, and fairness. Thus, open-mindedness, tolerance, and fairness are very important not only for harmonious group relationships but also for harmonious individual interactions.

3. *Water personality*. Laozi advocated a “water personality” partly because at his times he observed that human conflict (e.g., fighting, killing, wars) was most likely to occur if everyone wanted to compete and to go after his or her interest (e.g., moving or fighting for more material or more fame or higher rank). Thus, we human beings should learn from water, because water always remains in the lowest position and never competes with other things. Instead, water is very helpful and beneficial to all things.

The highest (or best) value is like water,
The value in water benefits All Things
And yet it does not contend,
It stays in places that others despise,
And therefore is close to *Dao*. (chapter 8)

Though soft and yielding, water is very strong and powerful. Here is an example of what we could learn from water:

Nothing in the world
Is as yielding and receptive as water;
Yet in attacking the firm and inflexible,
Nothing triumphs so well. (chapter 78)

Although Westerners historically and currently value and enjoy assertiveness, aggressiveness, and competitiveness, Laozi encouraged us to have a water-like personality, which is to maintain a low profile and to be humble and modest but very helpful and/or beneficial to others. To Laozi, modesty or humbleness, willingness to help and benefit others, and ability to maintain a low profile (just

like water) are qualities essential to a leader who want to influence others:

The rivers and seas lead the hundred streams
Because they are skillful at staying low.
Thus they are able to lead the hundred streams. (chapter 66)

In Laozi's eyes, those who are humble and modest not only exist in good harmony with others but are effective leaders, just like the rivers and seas. In short, interpersonal and intergroup harmony and peace are more likely for people who learn from water (i.e., with water personality) than for those who are too competitive, controlling, and aggressive.

4. *High regard for females and mothers.* Laozi believed that females are the mothers of all things and all human beings. In accordance with Dao, which generates everything, females are those that produce all things. Without females or mothers, there is nothing else in the world.

The mystery of the valley is immortal;
It is known as the Subtle Female.
The gateway of the Subtle Female
Is the source of the Heaven and Earth. (chapter 6)

In another chapter, Laozi observed:

The beginning of the world
May be regarded as the Mother of the world.
To apprehend the Mother,
Know the offspring.
To know the offspring
Is to remain close to the mother,
And free from harm throughout life. (chapter 52)

As per Daoist humanism, females, instead of males, are usually highly regarded in his writing:

Know the male
Hold to the female;
Become the world's stream.

By being the world's stream
 The Permanent *De* (or humanism) will never leave.
 This is returning to Infancy. (chapter 28)

From this perspective, it is easy to see that femininity and mothering were highly valued by Laozi. Simply speaking, nothing in the world is as important as women and mothers. If many philosophical and religious ideas tend to maintain male superiority or dominance, directly or indirectly (e.g., Confucianism; Hinduism; Christianity, including Mormonism; Islam; Chauvinism; or Freudianism), Daoism differs because females play a more important role in humanism than males. This point may not have been well understood in modern feminist research (see Laughlin & Wong, 1999). Perhaps philosophically or religiously, Laozi could be seen as one of the first proponents of feminism in human history.

5. *Moderation and avoidance of extremes.* Moderation and avoidance of extremes are also part of Laozi's Daoist humanism. In chapter 29 of *Dao De Jing*, Laozi pointed out:

Thus, Sages and Wise/Evolved Individuals
 Avoid extremes,
 Avoid extravagance,
 Avoid excess. (chapter 29)

This line of Daoist belief may directly affect Confucianism and ordinary Chinese behavior today. For example, *The Doctrine of the Mean (or Moderation)*, one of the Confucian Bible-like books, stresses "not taking extremes," which is consistent with Daoism. In a cross-cultural study, we also found evidence of Chinese-American differences in terms of their optimism and attributional style (Lee & Seligman, 1997). That is, Chinese participants tended to take less extreme positions than American counterparts in their internal and external attribution when absolute mean differences were computed. In comparison with Mainland Chinese and Chinese Americans, White Americans were more likely to attribute good events to themselves and bad events to others. Speculatively, Chinese people (including those participants in the cross-cultural study), may be influenced by Daoism and Daoist thinking (also see Fung, 1948; Peng & Nisbett, 1999; Yan, 1999).

6. *Welfare of others and the world.* The Daoistic concept of the self is contingent on prosocial values and interests in the welfare of others and the world. In other words, sticking to prosocial values (e.g., altruism and giving) and maintaining interests in the welfare of others are the core of Daoist humanism. If Western humanism is self or me oriented, Daoistic humanism is others or world oriented (Lee et al., 1999). It is true that everyone in the world needs help and has necessities for subsistence. But if all people are motivated by their own (self-) interest, conflict and disharmony between people may occur. Thus, Daoistic humanistic philosophy states as follows:

Sages or evolved individuals do not accumulate.
 The more they do for others, the more they gain;
 The more they give to others, the more they possess. (chapter 81)

When we put too much emphasis on our own interests, this may engender self-related fears and feelings of disgrace. Consistent with our recent research on the cross-cultural difference of self and personality (Lee et al., 1999), the Daoist self is based on the interest of others and the world, as can be seen in chapter 13:

There is surprise in both favor and disgrace.
 Esteem and fear are identified with the self.
 What do we mean by “surprise in both favor and disgrace?”
 Favor ascends; disgrace descends.
 To attain them brings surprise.
 To lose them brings surprise.
 This is what we mean by “surprise in both favor and disgrace.”
 What do we mean by “esteem and fear are identified with the self?”
 The reason for our fear
 Is the presence of our self.
 When we are selfless,
 What is there to fear?
 Therefore those who esteem the world as self
 Will be committed to the world.
 Those who love the world as self
 Will be entrusted with the world. (chapter 13)

This Daoistic idea may be inconsistent with Western humanism, which focuses on the me-oriented self. Today's Western counseling or psychotherapeutic approaches sometimes lead to too much individualism, with little interest in communities and others. However, the Daoistic view is somewhat consistent with early counselors (e.g., Adler, 1927; Fromm, 1956; Maslow, 1970, 1971), because Fromm (1956) stressed self-love as well as other love and Maslow (see Hoffman, 1996) valued American Indian (Blackfoot) cooperation and altruism. From a cross-cultural perspective, renewing interest in the prior work of these psychologists is a possible direction to future American/European humanistic psychology.

7. *Love of peace.* As a humanistic historian and philosopher who valued life, Laozi loved peace and discouraged war. Perhaps almost all humanistic thinkers abhorred wars, because wars meant the destruction of human lives and civilization. Laozi was a strong advocate of peace.

Let the people value their lives
and yet not move far away.
Even though there are boats and carriages,
There is no occasion to use them.
Even though there are armor and weapons,
There is no occasion to display them. (chapter 80)

When all the people in the world follow the Dao, they are not busy with preparing for wars but with their farming or livelihood.

When the world possesses the *Dao*,
Even the fast horses are used for their dung
When the world is without the *Dao*,
War horses are raised in the suburbs. (chapter 46)

When armies are positioned
Thorny brambles are produced.
A great military always brings years of hunger. (chapter 30)

The finest weapons can be the instruments of misfortune,
and thus contrary to natural law. (chapter 31)

One of the reasons that modern humanistic psychology developed in Europe and in the United States is because of its oppositional stance to wars, such as World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War (Fromm, 1956; Hoffman, 1988, 1996). According to his biography (see Hoffman, 1988, 1996), Abraham Maslow decided at the onset of World War II that understanding human motivation should be his lifelong contribution to the world:

One day just after Pearl Harbor, I was driving home and my car was stopped by a poor, pathetic parade. . . . As I watched, the tears began to run down my face. I felt that we didn't understand—not Hitler, nor the Germans, nor Stalin, nor the Communists. I felt that if we could understand, then we could make progress. I had a vision of a peace table, with people sitting around it, talking about human nature and hatred and peace and brotherhood. . . . I realized that the rest of my life must be devoted to discovering a psychology of the peace table (Hoffman, 1988, p. 148).

If the lives of human beings can easily be destroyed by wars, what is the meaning of human life? In the same vein, thousands of lives were lost during the Spring and Autumn period in ancient China (ca. 500 B.C.). Laozi asked the same question that Maslow and many other modern humanistic and existential thinkers asked. This is why, in *Dao De Jing*, Laozi encouraged people to follow the Dao and to be tolerant, sincere, receptive, and open to other people. He discouraged fighting, competitiveness, aggressiveness, or contention and was against insatiable desires and hoped people would be tolerant and considerate of others.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN HUMANISTIC COUNSELING AND DAOISM

Jungian counseling and wei wu-wei approach. Carl Gustav Jung was not only a psychoanalyst but also a humanistic scholar. His work was much influenced by Laozi and Daoism. In one of his books on the integration of personality, Jung began by quoting what Laozi said in chapter 20 of *Dao De Jing*:

Give up your learnedness,
Then you will be free from cares!

Between "yes" and "yes indeed," what difference is there?
 Between good and bad, what difference is there?
 But what all men honor,
 That one may not with impunity set aside.
 O wilderness, have I not yet reached your center?
 The men of the multitude are radiant
 As at the celebration of great feasts,
 As when in the spring people climb upon the towers.
 I alone am undecided, still without a sign to act by,
 Like a little child that is not yet able to laugh—
 A weary wanderer, who has no home.
 The men of the multitude all live in superabundance;
 I alone am like one abandoned.
 Truly, I have the heart of a fool!
 Chaos, O chaos!
 The men of the world are clear, so clear—
 I alone am as if beclouded.
 The men of the world lust so after knowledge—
 I alone am downcast, so downcast;
 Restless, alas, as the sea!
 Driven hither and yon, alas, like one who dwells nowhere!
 The men of the multitude all have something to do—
 I alone am as idle as a ne'er-do-well
 I alone am not as other people are,
 For I value the lavishing Mother. (Jung, 1939, p. 30)

Jung (1939) acknowledged that he had to borrow these verses from Laozi, an Easterner, "because the European has not yet framed the questions they contain" (p. 31). On the other hand, Laozi provided Jung with an answer to the question (i.e., why a White analyst tends to intervene too much) Jung had in his mind as seen by Jung's (1939, p. 31) citing chapter 21 in Laozi's *Dao De Jing*:

The form of the full life wholly follows the Tao⁴
 The Tao, invisible, ungraspable, brings things about!
 It contains images, ungraspable, invisible!
 It contains things, invisible, ungraspable!
 It contains seed, unfathomable and dark!
 The seed is the truth.
 This truth embraces faith.

From the very beginning until today
The name of Tao has been indispensable
For the understanding of the origin of all things.
And how do I know
That the origin of all things is of this nature?
Through the Tao!

In the eyes of Jung, White analysts (or psychologists) tended to give too much advice to their clients, but when those clients were true to their instincts, they reacted defensively against any advice from psychologists. Thus, Jung (1939) pointed out that it was wise not to tell people (or clients) anything or give them any advice:

The best cannot be told, anyhow, and the second best does not strike home. One must be able to *let things happen*. I have learned from the East what it means by the phrase “Wu Wei”: namely, not doing, letting be, which is quite different from doing nothing. (Jung, 1939, pp. 31-32)

Obviously, Jung was much interested in Laozi’s ideas and Daoism.

Maslow and Daoistic (or Taoistic) counseling. Abraham Maslow is not only a great humanistic psychologist but also a great Daoist. In his books *Motivation and Personality* (1970) and *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (1971), Maslow cited the concept of Taoism/Taoistic (or Daoism/Daoistic) numerous times. For instance, in the index of Maslow’s (1970) *Motivation and Personality*, Taoism or Taoistic was cited seven times as follows (italics added in all quotes), which indicated that he was much interested in or influenced by Laozi’s Daoism:

1. p. 133, “the concept of motivated, purposeful spontaneity, of *Taoistic* yielding and letting go”
2. p. 134, “an education in spontaneity and eager abandon, in being natural, nonvoluntary, noncritical and passive in the *Taoist* style, trying not to try. One must ‘learn’ for such purposes to be able to drop inhibitions, self-consciousness, will, control, acculturation, and dignity. (‘When once you are free from all seeming, from all craving and lusting, then will you move of your own impulse, without so much as knowing that you move’—LaoTse).”
3. p. 197, “Admiration asks for nothing and gets nothing. It is purposeless and useless. It is more passive than active and comes close to simple receiving in the *Taoistic* sense.”

4. p. 229, "A usable differentiation between striving (doing, coping, achieving, trying, purposive-ness, and being-becoming (existing, expressing, growing, self-actualization). This distinction is, of course, a familiar one in Eastern cultures and religions, e.g., *Taoism*."
5. p. 232, "the important difference for various fields of psychology between stereotyped or rubricized cognition and fresh, humble, receptive, *Taoistic* cognition"
6. p. 277, "a *Taoistic* but loving culture in which people (young people too) would have much more free choice than we are used to" and
7. p. 278, "Eupsychia would tend to be more *Taoistic*, nonintrusive."

The following examples also show how much Maslow was influenced by Laozi's ideas and Daoism. To a great extent, he perceived humanistic scientists as Daoists or Taoists:

If we learn to give it greater trust as autonomous, self-governing, and self-choosing, then clearly we as scientists, not to mention physicians, teachers, or even parents, must shift our image over to a more *Taoistic* one. This is the one word that I can think of that summarizes succinctly, the many elements of the image of the more humanistic scientists. *Taoistic* means asking rather than telling. It means nonintruding, noncontrolling. It stresses noninterfering observation rather than a controlling manipulation. (Maslow, 1971, p. 15, italics added)

Maslow's Being values and perception/cognition were also based on Daoism, as was observed in his writing (Maslow, 1971, p. 129). Daoistic (Taoistic) listening was much appreciated and emphasized in his writing:

One finds what is right for oneself by listening carefully and *Taoistically* to one's inner voices, by listening in order to let oneself be molded, guided, directed. The good psychotherapist helps his patient in the same way—by helping the patient hear his drowned-out inner voices, the weak commands of his own nature on the Spinozistic principle that true freedom consists of accepting and loving the inevitable, the nature of reality. . . . In order to be able to hear the fact-voices it is necessary to be very quiet, to listen very receptively—in a *Taoistic* fashion. That is, if we wish to permit the facts to tell us their oughtiness, we must learn to listen to them in a very specific way which can be called *Taoistic*—silently, hushed, quietly, fully listening, noninterfering, receptive, patient, respectful of the matter-in-hand, courteous to the matter-in-hand. (Maslow, 1971, p. 124, italics added)

Thus, we can observe direct connections between humanistic psychology and Daoism via Maslow's work.

Rogers, Fromm, and other humanistic researchers. According to Alan W. Watts (1961, p. 90), Rogers's nondirective therapy is parallel to Daoistic philosophy. James Klee (1960), a colleague of Maslow, was also very interested in Daoism and Eastern philosophies in his writings. In the section of *Love of God*, Fromm (1956) cited Tao (or Dao) and compared it with God (pp. 74-75). He was much fascinated with Laozi's paradoxical wisdom: "Gravity is the root of lightness; stillness the ruler of movement"; "The Tao in its regular course does nothing and so there is nothing which he does not do" (Fromm, 1956, pp. 74-75). Other personality psychologists and/or counseling professionals (e.g., Corsini, 1977; Knoblauch, 1985; Watts, 1961, 1975) have been applying Daoistic ideas and theories to their work. For example, Knoblauch (1985) outlined five Daoistic constructs that are of use to counselors as follows:nowness (or feeling this way now), not trying (or letting things happen naturally), ego de-emphasis, guilt desensitization, and observational acceptance. All this suggests that Daoism is related to humanistic psychology in many ways.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS: WHAT LESSONS CAN WE LEARN FROM DAOISTIC HUMANISM?

In summary, analysis of ancient Chinese Daoism demonstrates that humanism exists not only in the West but also in the East. Though humanism is general and probably universal (i.e., culturally etic), the way Chinese express humanism may be different from the way Westerners express it (i.e., culturally emic). As part of Chinese culture, Daoistic humanism can be summarized as follows: (a) the principle of wei wu-wei, or spontaneity and natural way (following the noninterference, nonaction), (b) openness and tolerance, (c) water personality, (d) high regard for females and mothers, (e) moderation and avoidance of extremities, (f) self contingent on its interest in the welfare of others and the world, and (g) opposition to war and love of peace. It was also discussed that early humanistic psychologists were influenced by Chinese Daoism.

What lessons can we learn from the above discussion? In other words, what are the implications of this investigation into Chinese Daoistic humanism? First, today's psychologists, especially humanistic psychologists, may be better off if they continue the Daoistic tradition advocated by Maslow and his colleagues. This approach may help us to further understand and strengthen modern or current humanistic and existential theories. If researchers and practitioners limit themselves to Western humanistic and existential thinking, it is probably very myopic. Eurocentric approaches should not be overemphasized. Following the legacy of Jung, Maslow, and Fromm, who understood and appreciated both Eastern and Western cultures, we need to explore new humanistic ideas and theories not only from the West but also from the East (see Coward, 1985/1999; Jung, 1939; Maslow, 1971).

Second, though ancient, those humanistic ideas that Laozi advocated over 2,500 years ago are still valuable to us today. Times may change, but human nature may remain unchanged. Daoistic humanism is more like a philosophy than a religion. For example, Laozi's Dao and De may make the world more harmonious, and interpersonal and intergroup (e.g., ethnic and cultural) conflict may be significantly reduced. Probably different from Christianity, Islam, or other religions, Laozi's Daoism and other Eastern religions have never been in conflict with each other. They coexist well. Historically, China has never had a war due to religious conflict.⁵

Third, as a humanistic philosophy in ancient China, Daoism may become more and more understandable and appreciable in a global village. If in this day and age the world is like a small village, on this planet human issues (e.g., interpersonal and intergroup/cultural relationship, ethnic conflict or ethnic cleansing, hate crimes, discrimination against females or minorities, violence against women), as well as ecological and environmental problems around the world (e.g., pollution, destruction of natural environment), are major concerns for all global citizens. Laozi encouraged us to follow Dao and De for the purpose of being harmonious with Mother Nature and with other human beings. Daoistic humanism and/or its philosophy may provide us with solutions to those major world problems, and it may be useful, helpful, and valuable to almost all global citizens who follow Laozi's Dao and De. About half a century ago, Blakney (1955) made some trenchant comment on Laozi and *Dao De Jing*. Let me close the article with Blakney's quote, as follows:

At any rate, the *Tao Te Ching* is evidence that mysticism was important in China once, and the continued interest in its scripture indicates that it can be so again. The message of the book is still of general interest, and that is important in a day when the old compartmentalization of the world is so shaken by the idea of "One World." In "One World" the *Tao Te Ching* would be quite at home. (Blakney, 1955, p. 49)

NOTES

1. Through this article, standard Chinese pronunciation and spelling of such terms as *Laozi*, *Daoism*, and *Dao De Jing* are adapted to replace less accurate English expressions of *Lao Tsu* or *Lao Tzu*, *Taoism*, and *Tao Te Ching* except in original English quotations.

2. As far as the influence and significance of those ancient Chinese philosophers are concerned, people may argue that Confucius (or Kongzi) and Confucianism seem to play a more important role in Chinese life and behavior. Confucianism has been more important politically and has been more valuable for governmental officials or scholars, whereas Daoism (Taoism) has been better received by and become more important to ordinary people outside politics. Moreover, according to the most reliable historical record of more than 2,000 years ago, Confucius or Kongzi, who once became a student of Laozi, respected Laozi highly (Sima, 150 B.C./1994).

3. There are many English versions of Laozi's book *Dao De Jing* (or *Tao Te Ching*), for example, Blakney (1955) or Lao Tzu (500 B.C./1993), which may be different from each other in their translations due to much philosophical and linguistic difficulty and complexity of the book. For the purpose of understanding and comprehending Laozi's ideas accurately, this article quoted Laozi's *Dao De Jing* based on the translations by Wing (1986) and Shi (1988), who provided readers with both English and Chinese versions. But the author also modified and adjusted their translations when investigating other original versions of Laozi's *Dao De Jing* in either modern or classic Chinese (e.g., Fei, 1984; *Laozi's Dao De Jing*, 500 B.C./1961). Thus, the author is 90% confident that the modified translations and quotations are consistent with what was meant by Laozi. He will be more than willing to discuss the accuracy issue with readers if discrepancy occurs in comprehension and translation.

4. The original quote by Jung is different from what I used in the previous section on openness and tolerance. But Jung did not indicate where he cited the quotation in his book.

5. The Buddhist belief in Tibet is exactly similar to the Buddhist belief of many ordinary people in China. The issue of Tibet today is more politically related to government and ruling than to philosophical or religious issues.

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