



# Teilhard, Taoism, and Western Thought

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**The present study is a condensation of a Masters Thesis, recently completed, for the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Leeds, under the supervision of Dr. Ursula King. Its formal title is 'A Comparison of Some Major Aspects of Western Thought, Taoist Philosophy and Teilhard de Chardin'. Allerd Stikker's thesis is an expansion of part of his recent book 'Taoism, Teilhard and Western Thinking', published in the Netherlands, (Elsevier, 1986). An English edition is being planned. These selections are intended to convey both the breadth and depth of the work and to illustrate the many parallels of Teilhard's vision with Taoist philosophy. Each section is generally divided into three parts: Western thought, especially in a historical context, Taoism, and Teilhard's views. We welcome this opportunity to introduce Allerd Stikker's vision to the English speaking peoples of the earth community.**

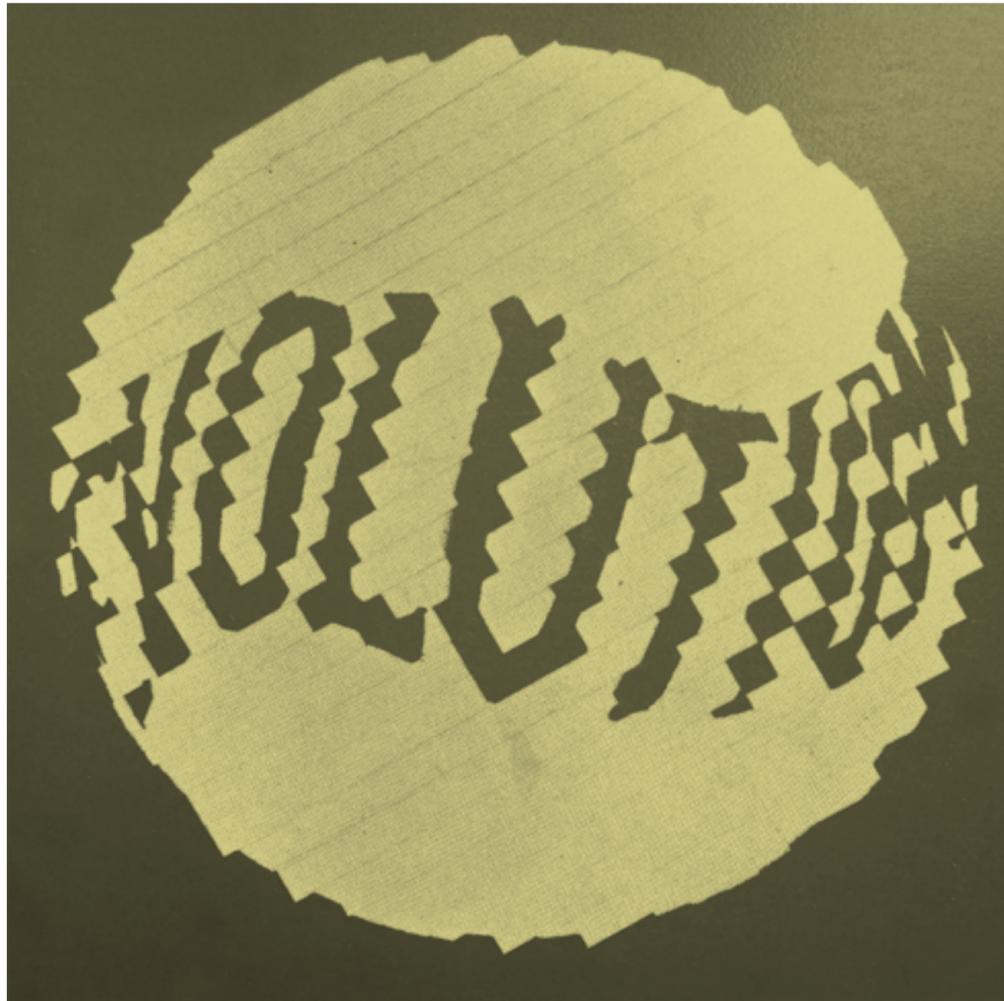
## Introduction

In this study an attempt is made to detect parallels and complementary aspects between some of the major insights of Taoist philosophy and Teilhard's thought, against the background of western thinking. The Chinese Taoist philosophers had very profound views on life and the universe based on intuitive, spontaneous, and original thinking. The western world lost much of the intuition, spontaneity, and originality concerning these questions as Christian and scientific attitudes increasingly alienated the human being from nature. Teilhard de Chardin was one of the first western thinkers to restore an effective unity in this regard within the unity and dynamics of the evolutionary process.

Marie Ina Bergeron has made a deep study of relationships between Taoist and Teilhardian thought, presented in 1976 in her book *La Chine et Teilhard*.<sup>1</sup> with an emphasis on the spiritual and religious aspects. Joseph Needham, a great expert on both Taoism and Teilhard, mentions Teilhard in his monograph, *Three Masks of the Tao*.<sup>2</sup> Various experts in physics, psychology, and philosophy refer to Taoist philosophy and Teilhardian insights independently in their writings, However, no studies are available that offer a coherent picture of the multidisciplinary elements involved in comparing western thinking, Taoism, and Teilhard and the opportunities such an approach offers for a better view of the world and its future.

The present study attempts to show how western thinking has developed and has just now opened to new dimensions through which the alienation between man, nature, and the universe, can be reversed and how this process can benefit from Taoist and Teilhardian insights whereby both its universal and its human nature become more evident and comprehensive. The study aims to reveal that there is a coherence between Taoist, Teilhardian, and new western thinking and that these visions indicate that humanity has the potential of progressing towards a new transformation. The elements of Taoist philosophy have been extracted from translations of relevant works from between 500 BC and 1299 CE, such as *Tao Te Ching*, *Chuang Tzu*, *Huai Nan Tzu*, and *Meng Tzu* and from secondary sources such as *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* by W. T. Chan,<sup>3</sup> *The Chinese View of Life* by T. H. Fang,<sup>4</sup> *Sources of Chinese Tradition* by William T. de Bary<sup>5</sup> and *Science and Civilization in China* by Joseph Needham.<sup>6</sup>

Teilhardian thought is mostly derived from English translations of basic works, such as *The Phenomenon of Man* and *The Divine Milieu* published after his death in 1955, and also from later publications of Teilhard's essays and letters, such as *The Heart of Matter*, *Science and Christ*, *The Future of Man*, and *Human Energy*,<sup>7</sup> as well as from secondary sources such as *Towards a New Mysticism*, and *Teilhard de Chardin and Eastern Religions* by Ursula King.<sup>8</sup> New ideas and visions in the West have been found in publications such as *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* by David Bohm,<sup>9</sup> *God and the New Physics* by



Paul Davies,<sup>10</sup> *The Evolutionary Journey* by Barbara Marx Hubbard,<sup>11</sup> *Order Out of Chaos* by Ilya Prigogine,<sup>12</sup> *The Global Brain* by Peter Russell<sup>13</sup> and *A New Science of Life* by Rupert Sheldrake.<sup>14</sup>

### The Earth, the Human Being, and the Universe

One of the most troubling aspects of the so-called western developed civilizations in the present world are the distinctions that arose in its approach to the earth, humanity, and the universe. To be sure, with the advance of science, we have penetrated deeper into the structure of matter, organisms and the universe than ever before. On the other hand, by the very methods used in all these discoveries, namely the analytical reduction of the objects of study into separate parts, we have made radical divisions which causes us to consider the humanity, and the universe as separate categories. The pre-Renaissance harmony between religion, science, and philosophy even helped this tendency to come about by emphasizing the existence of two distinct worlds, the secular and the divine. Christian belief differentiates body and soul, the world and God, matter and spirit. This distinction originates from an epochal period that took place between 800 and 200 B.C., when a new thinking emerged almost simultaneously in several locations. The philosophies of Plato and Aristotle in Greece; the prophecies of Elijah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah in Palestine, the revelations of the Buddha and the Upanishads in India; the wisdom of Confucius and Lao Tzu in China and the dualism of Zoroaster in Persia represent these new patterns of thought. Karl Jaspers called this remarkable coincidental “leap” in human thinking the “axial period” in his important work *The Origin and Goal of History*.<sup>15</sup> These developments led, except in Taoism, to perceiving two separate worlds, the physical and the meta-physical, with varying degrees in interrelatedness.

For the West, the Platonic contrast of an ideal, perfect metaphysical plane as opposed to an imperfect physical world and the later Aristotelian subject/object duality led eventually to categorizing the universe into sharp distinctions. The notions of divine immanence in neo-Platonic thought, proposed by Plotinus and later developed by Augustine, re-introduced the mystical element, but could not overcome this division. The reformulations of Christian philosophy, following Aristotle, by Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Contra Gentiles* and *Summa Theologica* did not heal the split, which still holds authority today. During the same period Bonaventure conceived a theological synthesis influenced by Francis of Assisi’s love of nature. Theology, mysticism, and the world were united again in his conception. His integral vision has been interpreted by Ewert Cousins as embodying the principle of the *coincidentia oppositorum* or the coincidence of opposites, in a way similar to Taoism. Writing on the subject of unity and difference and the complementarity of opposites Ewert Cousins says in *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*:<sup>16</sup>

*An example of this can be seen in the doctrine of the complementarity of the Yin-Yang, of the female and male principles, in Taoism. The principle of complementarity becomes a cosmic principle of evolution in the thought of Teilhard de Chardin. On all levels of the universe and at all stages of the evolutionary process, Teilhard sees a simple law operating — the law of creative union, which he articulates in the terse formula: union differentiates.*

In order to understand the purpose and the ways of God, western thinking went on to seek the laws and the patterns of the universe. This was done primarily through analyzing, reducing and measuring the material and natural world, which resulted in a mechanistic worldview. This divisive scientific method thus led to further distinctions between the physical and the spiritual realms.

At this point it is useful to leave the western scene and investigate how Taoist thinking perceived the relationship between the earth, human beings and the universe. The Tao has many different meanings. It is the principle of everything, in everything, the origin of everything and still indefinable and impersonal. The Tao leads to the One, the One leads to the Two principles of Yin and Yang. These lead to Three and to the Ten Thousand Things, the external manifestations of our world.

Their basic origin is the unity to which everything will return. All manifestations are dualistic, originating from the Two. Yet these are not separated, conflicting opposites, but complementary, interacting and dynamic counterparts of a whole. They exist by the grace of their mutuality: the one pole would not exist without the other. In the Chinese view-point radical distinctions do not occur.

The earth, humanity, and the universe are thus part of a unified, dynamic and coherent system. The human being, although especially gifted, is clearly seen as within nature and not above nature. Life on earth is connected with the universal process and through earthly existence living beings are in continual interaction with the universe. The human being is, as a whole, an integral part of the total system. Taoist philosophy is world-affirming and not world-negating in its fundamental orientation.

Accordingly there is no law or fixed pattern imposed from outside the world. This is an important reason why science did not develop in China as it did in the West. Chinese culture evolved much earlier and to a more advanced level than the West; especially in the area of the practical use of available materials and natural processes. But these were nature-based technologies, not science-based processes, and were founded upon the internal order of the universe.

The unnatural division in western thought was recognized by Teilhard de Chardin as he formed his integral understanding of the earth, humanity and the universe culminating in *The Divine Milieu* and *The Phenomenon of Man*. His contribution was to reinterpret the creation story of the Old Testament Book of Genesis in terms of an evolving universe. Whereas the biblical

version assumes a fixed universe, Teilhard envisioned a dynamic “cosmogensis.” In this view the whole cosmos consists of mutually interdependent and interacting elements without partition.

Teilhard emphasizes the creative role of the individual on earth rather than a redemptive liberation from earth. His mode of thought also affirms the world. Through work on earth the human being can increase the development of consciousness, both individual and collective. In this way two purposes are served: personal development on the micro-scale and the completion of the world on a macro-scale as part of cosmogenesis. Teilhard’s conviction that union differentiates, that the individual elements are strengthened and not annihilated in union, made him take distance from eastern thinking in general because, to his understanding, there the individual identity is lost in union. Interestingly enough, it is exactly the core of Taoist philosophy that the elements of Yin and Yang remain individual but complement each other and interact in union. These several issues show that there are clear parallels in the teachings of Taoism and the cosmology of Teilhard; they share a harmonious, unified and natural vision.

### The Relationship Between Energy, Spirit and Matter

As we have seen, the concept of separateness dominated Christian views on matter, spirit, and energy. The general tendency was to consider our material world as imperfect and of secondary importance. The true reality was the spiritual realm. What people were learning, seeing, and touching in the material world was a distortion of the ultimate reality. The relationships between body and soul, matter and spirit, manifestations and mind, earth and heaven, the human and God were debated and analyzed, but could not be unified.

The West was thus led to invent the two worlds of the secular and the divine. This led in turn to a world-negating religion, dualistic traditions, a covenant between man and God, a strong hierarchal church organization and dogmatic rules for the faithful. These faithful were seen to be incapable of coping, intellectually and mentally, with the mystery of the physical and spiritual aspects of life. Conversely, the intellectual concepts diminished the creative potential of mythic, archetypal and magic processes.

As spirit, soul, and mind, apart from matter, body, and earth, became more and more difficult to define and differentiate, other explanations were sought. The fact that they were directly related to the mystery of life, and life is related to movement, and movement is related to energy, meant that energy became an important element. A special moving force was theorized, by the vitalists and the animists, such as the *élan vital* of Bergson. This psychic energy was related to cosmic energy in the thought of Teilhard in his attempt to explain and relate the inner energy of organisms and the sustenance of living matter. A breakthrough came with the relativity theories

of Albert Einstein in physics and the holistic approach of Carl Jung in psychology in the first half of the twentieth century. Einstein showed that energy and matter are mutually interchangeable and interdependent.

Jung found that the mental processes in human beings are related to a complex of interdependent factors of collective and individual unconsciousness and consciousness.

With these new approaches, western thinking was moving in the direction of looking at matter, energy, and consciousness as a total, dynamic system. The most recent findings in physics confirm its correctness. At the micro-level the nature of the observer and the measuring method dominates what will be found. The new discoveries in physics and psychology now point to synthesis instead of analysis, to integration instead of reduction, to relations instead of identities, to dynamic processes and universal forces. They open new possibilities for breaking through the rigid boundaries of western religions and science. The Taoist philosophers did not struggle with a supposed contrast or distinction between matter and energy. Their strong belief in the fundamental unity of the cosmos transcended such dualistic thought. It is based on the pre-existence of the indistinct unity out of which emerges a driving force, *ch’i*. *Ch’i* is a basic or primordial force that leads to the manifestations of the Ten Thousand Things resulting from complementary duality. *Ch’i* exists before matter, and it is the origin of matter and energy, both physical and psychic. The Chinese ideogram for *ch’i* can be translated into both matter and energy, a symbol of the unity between the two. This notion does not exist in western language. Marie Ina Bergeron describes the meaning of *ch’i* as “souffle” in conjunction with spirit (*shen*). Both emerge simultaneously from the primordial indistinctive void. *Ch’i* is the flow of energy in the human body, the human energy or spirit. In the Taoist exercises for harmony and control of the body, called *T’ai-chi-chuan*, the major objective is to channel the *ch’i* harmoniously among the centres of the body so as to balance spirit and matter. The manifestation of matter-energy as it arises from the *ch’i* is governed by *li*, the universal principle or pattern, a concept developed by the later Taoists and neo-Confucianists.

Teilhard considered primordial energy the original and ever present dynamic element of the universe, of our planet and of life itself. He writes in *The Phenomenon of Man*: “In last analysis, somehow or other, there must be a single energy operating in the world”. As Marie Ina Bergeron asks,

*“cannot the primordial “souffle” (ch’i) of the Chinese be identified with the primordial energy that dynamises the world? Both fulfill the same role, fulfill the same mission.”*

Teilhard considers primordial energy to be the basic single energy that differentiates later into manifestations of physical energy, matter, and spiritual energy. He concludes that all elements of the universe (including inert material) contain, even if infinitely

small, non-material traces. Spirit is thus immanently present in matter. Teilhard's theory holds that the non-material aspect becomes increasingly manifest the more complex the composition of matter is. This interaction between the material and the spiritual, accounts for the appearance of life, consciousness and self-consciousness, culminating in the human. More specifically, he calls the spiritual, psychic or internal energy the "radial" or "axial" force and the physical, external energy the "tangential" force. The radial force is creative, consistent, and evolutionary, leading to the development of mind and consciousness. The tangential force leads to physical/chemical formations. The radial and tangential aspects bear a great resemblance to the two manifestations of *ch'i*, one linked with heaven (creative) and the other substantial one (physical), linked with earth. This leads Teilhard to his major conviction and concern that the radial type of human energy, the zest for life, the urge to create, the self-organizing spirit, should be maintained and fostered above everything else, in order to fulfill our role in the evolutionary process.

### The Within and the Without

The sharp split between the tangible and intangible aspects of existence and the shift in emphasis towards the tangible has had great influence on the lifestyle of western society. The approach to daily life has become more and more externally and technically oriented. This first became apparent in the fascination with machines and instruments, which led to the industrial revolution in the 19th century. Industrialization brought new power structures and the alienation of the individual from the final product. The protest against this development by Karl Marx in the 19th century was and has remained a legitimate concern. But the western world never ran into the fundamental breakdown he predicted, nor did his ideological successors ever put into practice his concept of a democratic proletarian state. Over the long term the capitalist system steadily improved the standard of living of the average citizen. In communist states power was transferred from one elite to another and people are more oppressed than ever.

Capitalism today is much more socially conscious than in the 19th century. Socialism in western and Eastern Europe is becoming increasingly aware of the dangers of confusing the equality of individual rights with the equality of individual excellence. Communist countries are carefully introducing, recently in both China and Russia, the principles of market economy and private enterprise. While politicians still use the language of the past and the national and international power struggles continue, there seems to be an underlying trend of convergence in the long term with respect to the balance between individual and collective rights and obligations.

Today we are living in an externally oriented society where the ornaments and apparent wealth, formerly reserved for royalty and nobility, have become part of the daily life of the successful citizen and the ultimate

goal of a great number of people. These developments are labelled as progress, but there is a need to evaluate the meaning of progress. Clearly the improvements in medical care, education and social security are good. On the other hand, an increasing emphasis on material and military display is growing out of balance with the nature of the human, the earth, and the universe. Taoist thinkers such as Lao T'zu and Chuang T'zu believed that the most important resources for harmonious living on earth are within the human and within nature. They claim that a person who distances oneself from external influences and seeks no recognition nor shows any pride and follows his or her own pattern, can be in balance internally and through that balance can be in tune with the environment and the universe. The most harmonious way to live on earth is to be as near as possible to the original unity; the Tao within, where you originated from. Every step away leads to a less natural situation, a shift from internal to external, leading eventually to disorder. The Taoists recommend that the individual concentrates on moving from outer manifestations to the origin, the inner self. The newly born human is, through confrontation with the outer world, initially developing and differentiating in the external direction, which results in dualities. In reversing the direction later in life, unity is regained. Throughout his works Teilhard emphasized the interiority and the exteriority of all phenomena in the universe. All manifestations have internal and external aspects. With respect to the without of things, he differentiates not only form, shape and size, but also complexity. As evolution proceeds the human and humanity appear to be the highest manifestation of complexity in the universe, on the planetary level. Teilhard felt that while the external aspects can be quantified in size and configurations, from the very large to the very small, these are only quantitative, mechanistic descriptions. Implicit potentials of consciousness within these configurations will manifest themselves when certain complexity levels are reached. This is his noted law of complexity/consciousness. The human being can be aware of this interior force because of the phenomenon of self-reflexive consciousness which only appears in the super-complex human nervous system.

Teilhard thus makes clear with his principle of complexity/consciousness that the human species is a unique creation within the universe. We may be impressed with the infinitely small that we have discovered in subatomic physics; we may be overwhelmed by the incredible depth and vastness of the universe with its myriad galaxies; but we should be able to see beyond sheer size and quantity. In complexity we find the ultimate subtlety of the universe: fragile, interdependent, and evolutive. We can notice an interesting parallel between Teilhard's thought and Taoism's reference to the origin, the inner-self. It is clear from both approaches that emphasis on size and quantity, which are external appearances, will not lead to a harmonious and balanced future. The coincidence between Teilhard and Taoist thinking on harmony between quantity and

quality, between attachment and detachment, strengthens the case for a reconsideration of the present course of western civilization.

### The Human Being and Nature

As the modern world increasingly adopted a dualistic view of matter and spirit, and of exteriority and interiority, this bifurcation alienated organic relationships between nature, life, humanity, and spirit. Humanity is seen as separate from and superior to nature, instead of being in and part of nature. This led to a cultural attitude where natural resources are to be used, transformed, controlled, and directed. The mechanistic philosophy of science reinforced this attitude and the conquest of nature is hailed as a triumph.

This position can be traced to Plato and his emphasis on knowing the laws of nature. The drive for knowledge led to an objectification of nature instead of a subjective communion with nature. The botanists and conservationists of the 18th century, such as Linnaeus, were driven in their researches by an anthropocentric motivation. Everything was judged according to human usefulness. Consequently in later industrial developments, technology bypassed the processes of the biosphere. There was no concern for the environmental impact of micro-scale construction, such as local industrial complexes. The exponential growth of industry has now led to macro-effects, which are of global importance.

In the field of human medicine, for example, there has also been the trend of analytical, reductionist practices. The anatomic taking apart of the human body and the separate study of its components and their functions has on one hand led to an understanding of their ills and enabled us to find cures. Yet, this approach has also led to separate treatments of symptoms without sufficiently taking into account the dynamic interactions between the organs themselves within the total organism, as well as the mechanical or chemical interventions from outside. With the explosive growth of operational and pharmaceutical treatments, a dangerous imbalance is becoming apparent. As with industrial complexes, the micro-approach is ignoring the macro-effect, this time not on the organism of the earth but on the organism of the human being and humanity.

The intuitive feeling of relatedness to nature permeates Taoist thinking. The Chinese have a deep respect for nature and have, throughout their history of thought, systematically observed the processes and phenomena of the mineral, vegetable, and animal world. There is not primarily an anthropocentric point of view. They observed nature from an aesthetic and holistic perspective, not taking things apart but looking for the coherence and interrelatedness of single and collective appearances. From this attitude stems the ancient method of acupuncture as a treatment of illnesses as well as the use of herbal medicine. Both approaches respect the wholeness of the organism and the organic whole of nature.

The modern economic and industrial development of main land China, its population explosion and its relatively limited geographical area have already had a noticeable effect on the balance of nature. The primary strategic objectives of the People's Republic of China are related to agriculture, industry, science, and defense. However, a "China 2000" study launched by the government of the People's Republic of China emphasizes caution and planning on environmental conservation. How far its ancient philosophy will influence future industrial growth and its relation to nature is difficult to say. Hopefully the traditional respect for nature will return to the minds and hearts of the policy makers and the general public in both Chinas in order to avoid the experiences of the West. Teilhard sought to emphasize the unifying effect of collective knowledge generated by research and development at numerous places on earth and the growing density of technological exchange and mutual inspiration. He identifies this advance as a new phenomenon in the evolutionary process, which he called the "noosphere." It is the reservoir of human knowledge and collective consciousness that is building up around the biosphere. Teilhard concentrated his attention in his evolutionary theory on this emerging phase of the collective consciousness of humanity. The increasing density of the noosphere is to be the foundation for a new evolutionary leap. The challenging aspect of this road to progress and spirituality mainly caused him to leave behind the preceding phases of evolution. His fascination with the dynamic forward movement of the universe in an irreversible direction predisposed Teilhard to see the emergence and superiority of human consciousness.

Thomas Berry has, in his Teilhard Study *Teilhard in the Ecological Age*,<sup>17</sup> come to the conclusion that

*Teilhard is committed to the imperial view of human-earth relation. Examination of his writings reveals no significant passage to mitigate the intensity of his intellectual and emotional dedication to this position. The opinion is correct that Teilhard does not in any direct manner support the ecological mode of consciousness.*

Teilhard became so caught up in the story of the human conquest of the natural world that he considered the artificial technologies inherently superior to the spontaneous productions of the natural world. His focus on the decisive role of human progress in evolution made him unable to relate to the total system of the earth. Although Teilhard clearly saw the interconnectedness of everything in the universe, including earth and humanity, he did not extend this integral vision to the role of technology. He inherited from his culture its sense of anthropocentricity which implied that nature is to serve humanity. Science and technology were, for Teilhard, only the instruments for the evolutionary advance into the ultra-human. Teilhard ignored, in this respect, the interrelatedness of humanity with the earth, as an integral component of a functional biological

community and of the larger earth process. The ecological side effects through the artificial transformations of nature were not apparent to Teilhard in his time and were as such not part of his philosophy or concern. Although he recognized the danger of the plundering of the earth, especially with regard to food production, he was optimistic as to technological solutions. He did not foresee that the very technologies that could assist humanity in reaching a new phase in evolution could, at the same time, block its progress due to environmental impacts. The ultimate phase of evolution will never be reached if the planet would be destroyed either in a nuclear war or by gradual but accelerating ecological destruction.

It is on the subject of ecology that the Taoist worldviews should be revived to complement the anthropocentric orientation of the western and contemporary Chinese attitudes. Taoist philosophy has less of an evolutionary notion, but a strong and consistent respect for nature and an awareness of humanities integral bond. Maintaining Teilhard's dynamic vision while incorporating a Taoist reverence for nature, would be an important step to a higher level of consciousness of humankind, supportive of a biological instead of an anthropological interpretation of the evolutionary process.

### Concepts of Oneness

(The following selections describe the emergence, at the frontiers of twentieth century science, of a new sense of a cosmic unity which again integrally contains the human. Ed.)

The western differentiation of unity gave way, in the first half of the twentieth century, to creative breakthroughs in the fields of physics and psychology. Physicist Albert Einstein and psychologist Carl Jung pioneered a new holistic thinking. Both emphasized the interdependence of the parts of a whole and the limited value of isolating one factor in a system, without taking into account its interaction with other factors, including the observer. Interacting relations between particles, waves, time, consciousness, unconsciousness, and individuals brought a new oneness to the universe.

The emphasis on relations led to further research in the macrodimensions of the universe, the bio-dimension of the human being and the micro-dimensions at the subatomic level. These developments, leading to new approaches in physics, such as relativity and quantum theories, field theories, and new forces in addition to the traditional gravity and electromagnetism, revealed more and more the interdependence of all existence. The great importance of relationships and complementarity confirmed a total unity wherein relations between phenomena shape the phenomena themselves. Niels Bohr, an originator of the quantum theory, introduced the notion of complementarity into physics in which particle and wave are interrelated concepts. He was deeply impressed by the ancient Chinese model of complementary opposites and chose for his coat of arms the *T'ai-chi* emblem with the inscription *Contraria sunt Complementa*.

The general term *holism*, used to describe the interconnectedness of the separate components of a whole, was first coined early this century by Jan Smuts in his book *Holism and Evolution*.<sup>18</sup> Dennis Gabor contributed to its scientific validity through the development of the holographic method. This is a photographic technique whereby a “negative” is produced which can recreate the total image of the object from any localized spot on the negative. Holistic thinking today has achieved universal dimensions and a dynamic content, wherein the entire universe is seen as changing and unfolding.

A significant advance in this respect is the theory of non-equilibrium thermodynamic systems formulated by Ilya Prigogine. Originally a technical subject in the field of physical chemistry, it won him the Nobel Prize in 1977. Prigogine was also intrigued by the philosophical and religious consequences of his findings. In a whole system there is a creative potential that becomes increasingly evident when it is complex and far from equilibrium. Such a system is strongly interacting with its environment to take in energy and matter and dissipate entropy. This is what Prigogine calls a “dissipative structure.” At a specific point in time it will show strong, localized fluctuations that can suddenly lead to revolutionary new configurations not related to the previous situation.

This phenomenon is also called the self-organizing principle of matter. Systems scientist Erich Jantsch describes its universal nature in his book *The Self-Organizing Universe*,<sup>19</sup> which starts with a quotation from the Taoist philosopher Chuang Tzu. The important aspect of these new theories is that they provide scientific evidence for the evolutionary dynamics of whole systems. Here is the essence of what Teilhard calls cosmogenesis. The self-organizing principle could explain past leaps in the evolutionary process and suggests that the high degree of complexity and far from equilibrium status of human society presages a new positive transformation.

One of the latest contributions to this emerging image is the hypothesis of “formative causation” by the British biologist Rupert Sheldrake. His theory states that the code of forms or patterns of systems in any place of the universe is accessible to similar systems at any other place in the universe. New codes, once applied in sufficient numbers, become simultaneously accessible in the whole universe. This means, for instance, that once in a laboratory somewhere on earth a new molecule or crystal is formed, the formation of such a molecule and crystal in any other laboratory will now proceed faster because the code or know-how is available throughout in the universe. There is a growing awareness in the new sciences of the presence of codes or stored information systems within the individual and the cosmos. Codes start producing manifestations once the systems are activated by energy. These information systems are present all the time and everywhere, but human beings (fortunately) do not notice all of them, because we do not yet have the ability to activate them.

A simple example is the presence in the “noosphere”

of music of Bach, Bartók, or the Beatles, but we only notice this when we set the radio dial at a certain frequency and feed energy into it. The universe as such should be considered as a total web of all codes, in the final analysis, as one basic code, of which all other codes are flexible and evolving subsystems. This is near to what the physicist David Bohm describes in *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*.<sup>9</sup>

Creative science, psychology, and the arts are coming to understand evolution as the recognition and creation of codes, without “knowing” them. The universe is in this way unfolding gradually, without indicating beforehand the moment and the direction of transformations, and yet within a basic harmonizing code. The “subcodes” of the existing physic all components are chemically and genetically uniform and consistent, based on a limited number of elements and changing slowly compared to noospheric changes. In psychology, the “code” of the human being is not merely a genetic and physical formula, but also a mental, cultural formula partially stemming from an archetypical background and partially from the first 15-20 years of the individual's confrontation with private and cultural surroundings during childhood and youth. While the physicists are developing methods to better understand the universal coding and the place of the individual, the psychologists develop methods to understand our cultural and personal coding to fulfill this role. In essence psychology guides the individual on the road of transformation at the micro-level, which, in the context of the oneness of the universe, is directly connected with the macro-level and therefore, in Teilhardian terms, with cosmogenesis.

### Female and Male

It is common knowledge that the notion of male supremacy entered both western and Chinese civilization at an early stage. Women clearly formed the basis for stability, continuity, and creativity in early civilizations, but in the subsequent division of tasks in the emerging communities men became the dominant members of the family and society. This transition from matriarchy to patriarchy happened worldwide. Unnatural and contrived divisions into female and male have now penetrated so deeply into the cultures of the world that they dominate the social structure and human behavior.

In western civilization this development was supported by the male-oriented Judeo-Christian tradition, starting with the story of Adam and Eve and the subsequent emphasis on the primary role of man, up to today's restriction of ordination to male priests. In China it was the strong male orientation of the teachings of Confucius that sustained the secondary role of women. The reverence for the Mary figure in Christianity and *Kuan-Yin* in Chinese worship are remainders, in both cultures, of a fundamental female source for human inspiration and consolation. Taoist philosophy, on the other hand, is based on a dynamic, balanced harmony of the female and male aspects of the manifestations in the universe, the

earth and humanity. This is embodied in the *Yin/Yang* principle. Taoists also have a strong notion of a primordial female origin, from which male and female aspects differentiated.

Sukie Colegrave has extensively studied Taoism and described its appreciation of the feminine origin and of the male/female aspects of nature including the human being in a book entitled *The Spirit of the Valley*.<sup>20</sup> Her study of androgyny offers substantial support that Taoist views can shed new light on the unnatural process of radical sexual distinctions which human societies have developed over the ages. There is also a connection here between the thought of Carl Jung and Chinese philosophy. The unconscious male aspect in the female, which Jung called the animus, and the unconscious female aspect in the male, the anima, have an affinity with the *Yin/Yang* principle of complementary opposites. Jung's approach of a personal and a collective male/female unconsciousness is also paralleled in Chinese thinking by the concepts of *hun* (male, personal, spirit soul) and *p'o* (female, personal, earth soul) and *hsing* (human nature, male, logos) and *ming* (human life, female, eros).

Teilhard, for instance, in *Human Energy* and *The Heart of Matter*, values the feminine aspect of nature and specifically of the human being. He speaks of the necessary synthesis of the two principles, male and female, in the building of human personality and a new humanity. The masculine can only escape from isolation through the awakening of the feminine, through which the wholeness of the world and the interconnectedness of everything can be achieved.

Yet such an image of a creative unity is hardly new in the Christian world, as evidenced by the *Second Epistle of Clement*. When Jesus was asked at what moment the Kingdom would come, He replied:

*When the two shall be one, the outside like the inside, the male with the female neither male nor female.*

But this emphasis on the principle of androgyny is rarely cited today in a Christian context although it is pronounced in Teilhard's view. It is also quite explicitly expressed in Chinese philosophy through the central importance of the *Yin/Yang* principle.

The Taoists' and Teilhard's very profound emphasis on the equal and mutually complementary aspects of the feminine and the masculine can reestablish the balance of these two elements in human society, each necessary for a harmonious transformation to a higher level of consciousness.

### Summary and Conclusion

The visions of Taoism and Teilhard with regard to wholeness, transformation and human worth can each be of great value for contemporary western thought. When these visions are taken together and combined, they present an even stronger attraction, either by mutual reinforcement when they converge, or by their complementarity when they diverge.