

Life and Destiny——On the Guidance of Destiny Philosophy of *Tao Te Ching* to Life

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Abstract: *Tao Te Ching* contains rich philosophical thoughts, which not only elucidate the thought of heaven and nature, but also deeply reflect on the theory of human moral society. In Lao Zi's philosophical system, attention to the question of life and destiny is its core content. Lao Zi's philosophy of life and destiny systematically expounds a series of philosophical issues of life and destiny, such as the origin, the characteristics, the special mode of existence, and the way of life and destiny. With the theme of discussing the philosophy of life and destiny, this article discusses several aspects of Lao Zi's philosophy of life and destiny from the analysis of the article *Tao Te Ching*. Based on this, the metaphysical significance of Lao Zi's philosophy of life and destiny is revealed, and the unique charm of Lao Zi's philosophy of life and destiny is displayed. For ordinary people, only by being true to the source of life and destiny can they truly understand the meaning of life and destiny to live their lives well. Therefore, the interpretation of Lao Zi's philosophy of life and destiny has important practical significance for guiding people's lives.

Keywords: Lao Zi, Life and destiny, Philosophy of life and destiny.

1. Introduction

Life and destiny is an eternal philosophical proposition. Where life and destiny comes from and where it goes, what is the meaning of human life, and how to view the connection between the life and destiny of the subject and the life and destiny of the object are at the core problem of the discussions of various philosophical schools throughout the ages. The pre-Qin thinker Lao Zi made a series of systematic expositions on the philosophy of life and destiny in his book *Tao Te Ching*, who put forward unique insights to solve these problems.

2. Lao Zi's Life and Destiny Thought of Valuing Oneself and Life

2.1. Three levels of Lao Zi's thought of life and destiny

Lao Zi's thought of life and destiny can be divided into three levels, one is valuing oneself and life, the other is to be spoiled, and the third is to be in harmony with the Tao, which can be understood as the three levels of human life and destiny, namely biological life, spiritual life and value life. A person is first of all a physical life with natural attributes, followed by his conscious activities and spiritual life above animals, and finally as a value life and a transcendent moral life in society.

Valuing oneself and life is the first level of Lao Zi's thought of life and destiny, which is also Lao Zi's basic attitude towards his life. In the Chapter 50 of *Tao Te Ching*, the phenomenon of human longevity and early death is discussed, the causes of both is revealed, which expresses Lao Zi's unique understanding of life. To know life, the prophet dies. In the Chapter 50 of *Tao Te Ching*, the view on life and death is expounded: "Born into death, the living man, three out of ten; Dead people, three out of ten; There are also three out of ten times when a man lives, moves in the place of death. Why? With the thickness of its life. Gai Wen is good at regents, Lu Xing does not meet the tiger, and he is not attacked by the armor soldier when he joins the army. The tiger has nothing

to throw at its horns, the tiger is at a loss for its claws, and the soldiers have nothing to tolerate their blades. Why? With its deathless. (Chapter 50) (This article quotes the text of Lao Zi based on Chen Guying's *Lao Zi Jinji Zhu Jin Translation*, Beijing: Commercial Press, 2003 edition, the same below)

Lao Zi divides people into four categories according to life span, the first category is long-lived people, which refers to people who have a relatively long natural life span because of their good health, and there are three tenths of such long-lived people. The second category is short-lived people, which refers to people who die early due to their own insufficient conditions, and three out of ten of them die in this short-lived life. The third category is people who could have lived a long life but put themselves to death, and this type of person could have lived a long time, but went to death on his own, also accounting for three-tenths. The fourth category is those who are good at health preservation, who are aware of the inside and outside, restrained and self-consistent, specialized in livelihood, not close to death, birds of prey and beasts do not come close to them, and military disasters do not involve them, but only one-tenth of such people.

"Born into death" means "place of birth, place of death" [1]. Lao Zi thus introduced the two opposing aspects of "birth" and "death" to explain the question of human life and death.

A person was born from the world and finally died on earth. A man is born, born to live, and to enter the earth to die. The baby is conceived in the belly, condensed by the qi of heaven and earth, which is the innate destiny. The innate destiny gives birth to the innate qi, and the innate qi is inexhaustible and inexhaustible, so it is said: "The immortality of the god of the valley is called Xuanmu." The Gate of Xuanmu is the root of heaven and earth. If it lasts, it is not used frequently. (Chapter VI). Innate Qi gives birth to innate destiny, and this is the place of birth.

Since birth, a person needs to eat and drink to supply energy, to breathe to maintain life, all they consume is acquired energy, the more they consume, the more they lose, the less they remain, and when they are exhausted, they are the day of death. If you do not regain your life and act recklessly, you

will accelerate the loss of vitality and your life will not be long in coming. So, for death. Lao Zi believes that the reason for the above situation is because people overly pursue unrealistic desires, overly self-feeding, and violate the way of nature, so they will enter the place of death. Those who are good at caring for their lives will not encounter vicious rhinos and tigers, and will not be harmed by weapons in war. The rhinoceros has nowhere to throw its horns, the beast has nowhere to extend its claws to it, and the scourge of weapons will not come close to it, because he has not entered the place of death.

It follows from this that in order to prolong human life, the first thing is to be free from danger, that is, "live without death". Most people can live a long life under normal circumstances, but in reality there are very few people who live a long life, the reason is because people do not know how to stay away from dangerous situations, often take personal risks, put themselves in the place of death, so that they die. This kind of "place of death" refers not only to the danger of the outside world, but also to the self-harm of people's own bodies, how to avoid the place of death, but also from both internal and external aspects. For the outside, those who are good at health preservation can be keenly self-aware, observe the environment, stay away from disasters, seek good fortune and avoid evil, so as to live a long life. For the inside, a person needs to be able to keep quiet, stay away from disputes, be restrained and self-nourishing, and pay attention to health preservation methods in nourishing the body.

2.2. Lao Zi's thoughts of health preservation

A person who wants to live a long life does not blindly protect himself to achieve long-term stability, but will be too self-conceiving and counterproductive, which causes himself to fall into death, which Lao Zi called "the life (birth) of a person, and the movement of death" (chapter 50) is precisely to illustrate this truth. This is "birth", the former "birth" as a verb, meaning germination, continuation, the latter "birth" as a noun, meaning life, "Han Feizi • Xie Lao" cloud: "the life of the people, birth and movement, the place of death of all moves"^③, the book version of *Tao Te Ching* is "and the a person's livelihood, the place of death of all moves"^④. This sentence explains Lao Zi's thought of keeping the middle, everything should not be excessive, too much, and vice versa, and the same is true for health preservation.

Health preservation is the fundamental method to prolong life, and simplicity and little desire are Lao Zi's way of health preservation and the manifestation of Lao Zi's lifestyle. Chapter 32 of *Tao Te Ching*: "The Tao is often nameless, although simplicity is not important, the world cannot be subjected." (Chapter 32). Lao Zi believes that "simplicity" is the root of the eternal cultivation of the world, the microscopic presentation of "Tao", and its essence is "truth". In Lao Zi's view, all things in heaven and earth run in the avenue, and we should abide by the cultivation concept of simplicity and inaction, hold a simple heart, and achieve "not to tire the truth with things, and not to harm their gods with things." (Chapter 32). If a person's heart is in a simple state, then there will be nothing in the world that can make him surrender, and he will not suffer from external objects and disturb his mind. It is precisely because Lao Zi knows the truth of simplicity that he can maintain inner peace and spiritual purity, not be agitated by the noise of the outside world, clear his mind, do not covet external things, do not participate in worldly disputes, and make himself in a

"simplicity" situation.

Lao Zi said that the key to simple health preservation lies in abandoning the temptation of fame and fortune and intelligence, believing that fame and fortune are things that arouse people's desires, intelligence is the door for people to flaunt meritocracy, benevolence and righteousness are people's behavior for others, and goods are the source of people's desires. "If you are not virtuous, let the people not fight." Inexpensive and rare goods, so that the people will not be thieves. There is no desire, so that the people's hearts are not disturbed. (Chapter 3). Lao Zi advocated that he was not virtuous, not expensive, and not lustful, believing that "virtuous" would cause strife, "precious goods" would lead to theft, and greed would lead to confusion. Only when people in the world are simple and undesirable, abandon the temptations of the material world, abandon the enjoyment of the five colors, five tones and five tastes, be open-minded and honest, weak and strong, and have no desire or desire, can they enjoy life without contention.

The so-called health preservation, both form and energy is the key to Lao Zi's thought of health preservation thought, and the whole life theory of essence, vitality and energy is the basic theory of Taoist health preservation thought. The three use each other, which is an important substance and function to maintain and restore human health and maintain normal physiological activities, and is the foundation for maintaining longevity. The theory of essence, vitality and energy is a holistic outlook on life gradually formed by ancient Chinese physicians and health practitioners under the guidance of holistic thinking, in the practice of exploring the mysteries of life, preventing old age and aging, and preventing and treating diseases.

Essence, vitality and energy are the three major elements of human life activities, and have been known as the "three treasures" of the human body since ancient times. Say in the *Suwen•Six Tibetan Elephants*: "Three and adults". The so-called "three" refers to the three aspects of essence, vitality and energy. The human body is an organic whole, and the essence, vitality and energy are indispensable, so the ⑥ "Spirit Hub • Decisive Energy" cloud: "Those who are deaf." The "Preliminary Edition of Medical Rights" says: "The life and death of people depend on energy." Energy gathering is life, energy is strong and healthy, qi is weak, and qi dispersion is death. The "Suwen•Theory of Shifting Essence and Changing Energy" says: "⑦ Those who gain God prosper, and those who lose God die." All of the above is to explain the importance of the spirit and spirit to the human body, and if people want to live a long and healthy life, they must achieve the overall balance of the essence and energy.

The unity of form and God in the maintenance of life is the essence of Lao Zi's health preservation concept. In Lao Zi's view, form is the way of existence of the living body, and vitality is the symbol of the vitality of life; Form and vitality are part of the individual life, the two that are interdependent and nurture each other; The maintenance of form and God should not be biased, and we must pay attention to both the cultivation of form and the cultivation of vitality, that is, form and vitality should be nurtured at the same time. Form, vitality or Lao Zi's ontology of life, that is, man's "life" is jointly constructed by "body" and "heart", and the two complement each other, and without one of the two, it cannot become a real "birth". Lao Zi and Zhuang Tzu's concept of form and god is basically the same, and its main point is the longevity of life. For Lao Zi, the combination of pure spirit and energy

and movement and static is the way of protecting the unity of form and spirit, and the combination of form and essence and nothing inside and outside is the way of nourishing his form and spirit.

3. Lao Zi's Open-minded Thoughts of "Not Indisputable", "Still Foolish", and "Seeking From Inside"

3.1. The Thoughts of "indisputable"

In the thought of Lao Zi's life, in addition to renewing health, the spiritual realm is a higher level of pursuit in human life. Lao Zi's indisputable thoughts run through the entire text. For example: "To be born and not to have, to be undaunted." (Chapter 2), which means: Let all things arise naturally without their creation, do something, but do something without adding their own tendencies, and achieve success without pretending to be themselves. Precisely because you don't take credit, you don't care about losing. "The avenue is long, it can be left and right. All things live and die, and there is no success. (Chapter 34), which means: The avenue is widely popular, and it is everywhere up and down on the left and right. All things depend on it to grow without giving up, to complete their deeds, to complete their careers, and not to occupy a reputation. "The way of heaven is good but not harm; The way of man is to fight for it. (Chapter 81) It means that the law of nature is to benefit all things without harming them. The code of conduct of the saints is to do nothing to compete with others. "Heaven and earth can grow long and long, because they do not give birth to themselves, so they can live forever." It is the saint who comes before him and exists outside his body. (Chapter 7), which means that heaven and earth can survive for a long time because they do not operate naturally for their own survival. Therefore, the wise saint is humble and uncontested when things happen, but can lead among all; Putting yourself out of the equation can save your own survival. It is precisely because he is selfless that he can be who he is.

Lao Zi's emphasis on indisputability is not blind concession and weakness. For example: "Water is good for all things without dispute" (Chapter 6), "The husband is not in contention, so the world cannot fight with it" (Chapter 22), "Do not dare to be the first in the world" (Chapter 67), "He who is good is not martial, he who is good at fighting is not angry, he who is good at defeating the enemy is not with him, and he who is good at using others is inferior, which is an indisputable virtue" (Chapter 68). All this shows that people should have the same characteristics as water and should not fight for themselves. Some people rely on this to accuse Lao Zi's doctrine of not meeting the needs of the development of the times, believing that Lao Zi's indisputability refers to blindly giving in, and eventually retreating into the mountains and forests, falling into a situation of self-isolation. In fact, Lao Zi's thought is not simply weak and indisputable, he is advising the world not to be reckless and hegemonic for their own development, to avoid direct conflicts with others, to do nothing but to do nothing, and every step back is for greater progress. It is necessary to clean up one's edge, not to be visible, not to be aggressive, "to frustrate its sharpness, to solve its differences, and to be with its light and dust." "If a person loves to show his wisdom too much, is arrogant and proud, has empty eyes, and always wants to compete with others, he often can neither effectively unite the people around him, nor can he create a good living environment for

himself, which is consistent with Lao Zi's thought of "harmony is precious". For the competition in the modern society, if a person isn't humble, he will not be able to achieve great development.

3.2. The thought of "still being foolish."

In addition to the idea of "indisputable", "still being foolish" is another unique feature of Lao Zi's thought, Lao Zi believes: "He who is good in ancient times will be foolish unless he is a wise person" (Chapter 56). It advocates that people are simple and seek truth, and opposes power and fraud. He believes that rulers should renounce the sacred, do not act recklessly, conform to the way of nature, and respect human nature. How can it be "foolish"?

First of all, it is necessary to be "content" psychologically. Contentment lets a person to abandon material desires in order to achieve spiritual happiness, just as Yan Hui "eats poorly, drinks a scoop, and is in a bad alley", the world feels sad because they can't bear that poor life, but Yan Hui never changes his original happiness, and still lives a simple life of "willing to eat, beautiful to obey, live in peace, and enjoy his customs" (Chapter 80). Therefore, a truly rich person does not care about how much material wealth he has in this life, but lies in spiritual satisfaction, the so-called "rich of the contented" (Chapter 33). If you know how to be satisfied and know that moderation can stop, you will be "not humiliated" and "immortal", and you can be "always enough". Conversely, if the selfish desires of the individual are satisfied without limit, it will inevitably bring disaster. Li Si, the minister of the Qin state, had reached the highest position among the courtiers, but he was still burdened by worldly fame and fortune, which led to the final beheading by Qin II. Before his execution, he said to his neuter: "If I want to go out to Cai Dongmen with Ruofu to chase the rabbit, how can I get it?" Isn't this an example of "great misfortune and lack of contentment" (Chapter 46)? ③ On the negative side, Lao Zi wants people to "abandon wisdom and argument" and abandon wisdom and sophistry; On the positive side, Lao Zi wants people to "have less selfish and desire" and not to have more desires except to meet the most basic needs for survival.

3.3. Lao Zi's transcendent thoughts of transcendence and unity with the Tao

"Tao" is the supreme existence in Lao Zi's philosophical thought, and "unity with the Tao" is the ultimate pursuit of man. Lao Zi emphasized "human law earth, earth law heaven, heaven law Tao, Tao law nature", which expounded Lao Zi's idea of "Tao", indicating that the highest goal of life is to be one with the Tao, and the first two levels serve this ultimate goal. Lao Zi expounds in chapter 25 as follows: "Things are mixed together, and they are born a priori. Lonely, independent and not changing, circumferential and not dying, can be the mother of heaven and earth. I don't know its name, the word is Tao, and the name of strength is great. The great is passing, the passing is far away, and the far is reversed. Therefore, the way is great, the heavens are great, the earth is great, and the people are also great. There are four major domains in the domain, and people live in one of them. Human law earth, earth law heaven, heaven law Tao, Tao law nature. (Chapter 25). Regarding the concept of Tao, Hu Shi believes: "Lao Zi's greatest merit lies in going beyond heaven and earth, don't assume a 'Tao'. The role of the Tao is not the role of the will, but just a 'nature'. Self is so, as it is, 'natural' is just being like itself. " ④ Hu Shi's view goes

beyond the conceptual category of religion and has progressive significance, but it still does not convey the whole picture of "Tao". ...

"Human law earth, earth law heaven, heaven law Tao, Tao law nature." The "Tao", "Heaven", "Earth" and "Man" are the four major of heaven and earth, of which the Tao is born of nature and can be the mother of the world, and man lives in heaven and earth, so the Tao is the largest of the four, that is, the origin of all things in heaven and earth. Yuanwucheng said: "The reason why the Tao is great is because of its nature, so it is called 'law nature'." There is no other nature than the Tao, and the natural one is also nameless. "Nature is the essence of the Tao, the highest code of conduct followed by the Tao. It is precisely because the Tao naturally operates according to its own laws of motion that it can be called the largest. It is precisely for this reason that Lao Zi proposed that the four major majors should be based on "nature", and he hoped that the alienated human way at that time could be used as a reference for the nature of "Tao", so as to return to the natural nature of human beings, that is, to meet the requirements of the Tao. As Gaocheng said: "The king's law and earth are the same virtue, the law and the heaven are the same virtue, the law and the Tao are the same virtue, in short, the law and nature." @Yet the Tao, which "does not see its first and then does not see it" (Chapter 14), is elusive and difficult to grasp.

Unity with the Tao is the ultimate life pursuit in the thought of Lao Zi's life. "Tao" is the origin of all things in heaven and earth, and has the characteristics of transcendence, universality and eternity. First of all, the "Tao" is unperceptible and beyond the realm of human perception, that is, "it is the state of nothingness, the image of nothingness, and it is for trance." Miss the first, and then disappear. (Chapter 14). Second, "Tao" is universal, the basic law that governs the operation of the universe, that is, "the great road is vast, and it can be left and right." (Chapter 34). Third, the "Tao" is eternal and immortal, which is called "mixed with things, born congenitally, lonely, independent without change, circumferential and undying, which can be the mother of the world." I don't know its name, the word is the way, the name of the strong is great. The great is passing, the passing is far away, and the far is reversed. (Chapter 25), the Tao loops through the universe, "circumferentially and without dying," accompanying the birth and destruction of all things. Compared with the characteristics of "Tao", transcendence, universality, and eternity are the state that people in the world cannot seek in their lives, and they are also the highest ideal of life, which is a kind of life aesthetics full of romantic colors, pointing out the ultimate path for us to pursue life.

4. Practical Guiding Significance of Lao Zi's Life Thought to Life

Lao Zi's philosophy thought of life is not only a simple philosophical discussion, but is put forward to solve the problems existing in the real society, which has a strong practical guiding significance.

First, understand the nature of life.

As individual, if you want to know how to live your lives well, you must first understand the essence of life, only by having a deep understanding of the essence of life, can you better grasp your own life and find the way forward. The so-called "want to know life, prophet die", death is the end of life, but also the core of understanding life, only by fully understanding death, can you deeply understand the meaning

of life. Lao Zi's life thought tells us that under normal circumstances, people can live a long life, but in reality it is difficult for people to achieve longevity, the reason is because people cannot correctly understand the essence of life, act recklessly for their own desires, sacrifice their own essence to the end, wantonly consume their innate qi, in order to satisfy their own desires and take risks, put themselves in danger, put themselves in death, and so on, how to talk about longevity. The "good at life" can correctly understand the importance of life, cherish life, be good at observing the situation, stay away from dangerous places, turn from external to inward, restrain their desires, pay attention to self-cultivation, protect themselves in troubled times, and live a long life in prosperous times.

Second, the way of health preservation.

Understanding the essence of life, grasping the correct direction of life, and staying away from disasters are the foundation of life, which is the way of life, but understanding that the way of life does not guarantee that people can live long, and whether people's health can be healthy is also the determinant of whether they can live long, which involves the "art" of life, that is, the method of health preservation. If you want to maintain health, you must know the way of health preservation, the overall theory of essence and spirit is the basic theory of health preservation, and the core of health preservation is the harmony and unity of essence and energy. The essence and qi are combined into the form, the form is the carrier of human life, God is the leader of life, and the combination of form and God can achieve a healthy and long-lasting life. Regarding the cultivation of essence, qi and god, since ancient times, many health practitioners have paid attention to this, and have written many books, such as Emperor's Inner Method, Embracing Puzi, Cultivation of Life Extension, Waiting for Death and other well-known books on self-cultivation. Systematically studying and studying these health preservation theories can enable us to establish a correct outlook on health preservation, attach importance to health preservation, and achieve health preservation methods, which can maintain life and achieve health and longevity.

Third, transcendent life beliefs.

Lao Zi's philosophy of life tells us that in addition to pursuing health and longevity in reality, people should also have a higher pursuit, pursue the perfection of their own morality, and pursue the realization of social values, so as to pursue the great road of heaven and earth and become one with the Tao. Satisfying people's natural needs is the lowest level, the pursuit of self-worth is a utilitarian pursuit, abandoning the desire for merit and fame, and pursuing moral perfection is the realm of saints, and selflessness and no other, regard all things as one, and unity with the Tao is the highest state of life.

Lao Zi's transcendent life concept provides a solid shield for our lives, allowing us to maintain the vitality of life even in the face of adversity. Life is often full of suffering, but most of these sufferings are caused by excessive desires, people want a lot in life, need little, unnecessary desires often make people lose themselves, lose their original intention to maintain life, and fall into the place of death. A person has transcendent life belief, he or she will not be troubled by the immediate suffering, no matter how big the difficulties are just an episode in the human growth drama. Having seas and stars in heart, he or she has firm faith, who is not afraid of gains and losses.

The transcendence in Lao Zi's philosophy of life is like a

large number of blank spaces in ink paintings, which extends infinite possibilities in a limited picture, a person's real life is just a little ink in the painting. The painting has artistic conception because it is left blank, and life has a realm because of transcendence. Life in heaven and earth is like a drop in the ocean, in the flood and desolation is like a snap of the fingers, the road is turbulent, and there is no self, only then can we are on the way.

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