Deciphering Heidegger's Connection with the *Daodejing*

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This paper carries out an intensive study of Heidegger's famous reflection on the word dao and of his citations from the Daodejing, with the purpose of elucidating his complex relation with Daoist thinking. First I examine whether dao could be said to be a guideword for Heidegger's path of thinking. Then I discuss Heidegger's citations, in six places of his writings, from five chapters of the Daodejing, by situating them in the immediate textual context as well as against the broad background of the fundamental presuppositions and orientations of Heidegger and Laozi's thinking. My examination of Heidegger's citations from the Daodejing has for the first time gathered together all the relevant materials discovered so far.

It has been widely known that Heidegger engaged with Paul Shih-yi Hsiao in the summer of 1946 to translate a number of chapters from the *Daodejing*.¹ This story has been taken as the most convincing basis for the claim that Heidegger has integrated Daoist themes into his central thought and thus he is a trans-cultural thinker. In my view, it may well be the case that Heidegger carried on conversations with Hsiao with respect to the text of several chapters from the *Daodejing*. Nevertheless, the mere actuality of such an event cannot warrant exceedingly positive interpretations in relation to a 'dialogue' between Heidegger and Laozi.

Because of limitation of space, in this paper I refrain from investigating the ambiguities and controversies surrounding this event. Rather, I focus on the other points of Heidegger's connection with the *Daodejing* and attempt to elucidate his

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complex relation with Daoist thinking. In the first place, I inquire into Heidegger's reflection on and reference to the word *dao* (道) respectively in 'The nature of language' (1957/58) and 'The principle of identity' (1957). I point out that, only when interpreted in the particular manner, or thought in its proper nature as Heidegger may ascribe to it, can *dao* be said to refer to *Weg*. *Weg* is the standard against which *dao* is measured. This is because *Weg* is the primary and grounding word-thing in Heidegger's thought.

The rest of this paper is devoted to careful studies of Heidegger's citations from the *Daodejing*. According to my archival and textual investigation, Heidegger has cited from five chapters of the *Daodejing* (chapters 28, 11, 9, 47, 15) respectively in the lecture 'Basic principles of thinking' (1957), the essay 'The uniqueness of the poet' (1943), and the address 'To the seventieth birthday of Siegfried Bröse on August 8, 1965' (the latter two have remained unpublished until 2000), as well as in three letters: the letter to Ernst Jünger on 29 May 1965, the letter to Hsiao on 9 October 1947, and the letter to Andrea von Harbou on 6 August 1965. The last-mentioned letter is a new archival discovery concerning Heidegger's connection with the *Daodejing*. In addition, in his letter to Erhart Kästner on 30 July 1973, Heidegger makes a comment on chapter 15 of the *Daodejing* without quoting the related verses. This document has hardly been noted.

My examination of Heidegger's citations from the *Daodejing* has for the first time gathered together all the relevant materials discovered so far. I present scrupulous analyses of those citations by situating them in the immediate textual context as well as against the broad background of the fundamental presuppositions and orientations of Heidegger and Laozi's thinking.²

1. *Dao* and *Weg*

'The nature of language', where Heidegger's famous reflection on *dao* appears, consists of three lectures that he delivered at the University of Freiburg in 1957 and 1958. According to Heidegger, these three lectures are aimed at 'bring[ing] us face to face with a possibility of undergoing an experience with language' (Heidegger, 1971, p. 57/p. 159).³ The first lecture tries to achieve this by focusing on Stefan George's poem 'The word'. This lecture moves in the neighbourhood of poetry and thinking. The second lecture contrasts method with way. Method is derived from the corruption and degeneration of way. It is characterized by technical-scientific calculation. Heidegger does not conform to the common view according to which method is connected with scientific instruments or tools. For him, method is more primary than those. It is what has pressed science into its own service (cf. p. 74/p. 178). In contrast, *Weg* (way) belongs in the region (*Gegend*) that is the freeing and sheltering clearing. This freeing-sheltering is a kind of way-making (*Be-wägung*), in which ways that belong to the region are generated. *Weg* is that which allows humans to reach what concerns and summons them. The third lecture elaborates on the guide-word (*Leitwort*) that accompanies the region, that is, 'The being [*Wesen*] of

language: the language of being' (p. 94/p. 200). Language is proper to what moves all things, and what moves all things moves in that it speaks. What concerns humans as language 'receives its definition from Saying as that which moves all things' (p. 95/p. 202). *Weg* is concerned with the way in which humans undergo an experience with Saying, that is, with the nature of language.

Heidegger's meditation on *dao* appears in the beginning of the third lecture when he is summarizing the second one. In explaining that the word *Be-wägung* should be taken in the sense of 'to be the original giver and founder of ways' (p. 92/p. 198), Heidegger provides a gloss on the etymological connections and usage in the Swabian dialect of the German verb *bewegen* and its German cognates.⁴ Following this, he inserts a discussion consisting of two paragraphs in which the word *dao* appears five times. For the convenience of discussion, I quote these two paragraphs one by one. The first paragraph runs:

The word 'way' probably is a primal word [*Urwort*] of language that speaks to the reflective mind of man. The guideword [*Leitwort*] in Laozi's poetic thinking is *Tao*, which 'properly speaking' [*eigentlich*] refers to [*bedeutet*] way. But because we are prone to think of 'way' superficially, as a stretch connecting two places, our word 'way' has all too rashly been considered unfit to name what *Tao* says. *Tao* is then translated as reason [*Vernunft*], spirit [*Geist*], *raison* [*Raison*], meaning [*Sinn*], logos. (1971, p. 92/p. 198; tr. m.)

In this paragraph, Heidegger notes that *Weg* is probably an *Urwort*, and that *dao*, the *Leitwort* of Laozi's 'poetic thinking', 'properly speaking', refers to *Weg*. Then he regrets that *Weg* is often understood as a path stretching from one place to another, so it has been regarded as unsuitable for translating *dao*. Consequently, *dao* is rendered as *Vernunft*, *Geist*, *Raison*, *Sinn*, *Logos*. This recognizance may be partially based on Hegel's explanation of *dao*. The following are three comments on *dao* by Hegel:

Dao-dao: Direction, law of reason. [...] Abel Résuméat says that the best way it [i.e., *dao*] might be expressed is by the Greek word *λογος*. (*Lectures on the History of Philosophy*)

Dao is generally called the way [*Weg*], the right way of spirit, i.e., 'reason'. (*Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*)

The principle [of Chinese thought] is *Vernunft*, *dao*, this everything underlying essence, which moves [*bewirkt*] everything. (*Lectures on the Philosophy of History*)⁵

Note that Hegel was already using *Weg* to explain the meaning of *dao*, though he seems to equate *Weg* with the notions of *Geist* and *Vernunft*. One may speculate that Heidegger has borrowed Hegel's word *bewirkt*. Hence, it is somewhat surprising that Heidegger claims that the word *Weg* has been 'considered unfit to name what *dao* says'.⁶ In making such a claim, Heidegger does not seem to be concerned with the question how *dao* should be translated; rather, his purpose is to enhance the unique sense he ascribes to his notion of *Weg*.

Checking the four German versions of the *Daodejing* that Heidegger has quoted from or consulted,⁷ one finds that Victor von Strauss leaves *dao* untranslated, but adds in a note (1924, 1n 1) that *dao* should not be translated as *Weg*, *Wort* or

Vernunft, but as God. Alexander Ular (1903) translates *dao* as *Bahn* (way, course). Richard Wilhelm (1911) renders *dao* as *Sinn*, alluding to the beginning of St John's Gospel where *logos* is sometimes translated as *Sinn*. Heidegger may have this in mind when he includes *Sinn* into his list of translations. Jan Ulenbrook (1962) translates *dao* as *Weg* (it was published after Heidegger delivered the lectures 'The nature of language' in 1957/58). Other German translations of *dao* in the first half of the twentieth century include 'the unfathomable' (*das Unergründliche*) and 'the essence' (*das Wesen*). The contemporary versions either translate *dao* as *Weg* or leave it untranslated.

The second paragraph in which Heidegger discusses *dao* runs:

Yet *Tao* could be the way that gives all ways [*der alles be-wëgende Weg*], that which makes possible our power to think what reason, mind, meaning [*Sinn*], *logos* may say properly, that is, by their proper nature. Perhaps the mystery of mysteries of thoughtful Saying [*denkenden Sagens*] conceals itself in the word *Weg*, *Tao*, if only we will let these names return to what they leave unspoken, if only we are capable of this, to allow them to do so. Perhaps the enigmatic power of today's reign of method also, and indeed preeminently, stems from the fact that the methods, notwithstanding their efficiency, are after all merely the drainage of a great hidden stream which moves [*be-wëgt*] all things along its track-drawing way [*seine Bahn reiðenden Weges*]. All is way. (1971, p. 92/p. 198; tr. m.)

In this place, Heidegger suggests that *dao* could be the *Weg* that gives all ways, as that which makes possible for humans to think through what reason, mind, meaning, and *logos* may say out of their nature. In the second sentence, Heidegger seems to take *Weg* and *dao* as synonyms in saying that '[p]erhaps the mystery of mysteries of thoughtful saying conceals itself in the word *Weg*, *Tao*'. However, for sure, he is not suggesting that these two words are completely identical, because he immediately refers back to them in the plural, in terms of 'these names'. The final remark, 'All is way' follows up what is asserted in the preceding. Methods are the drainage of *Weg* that moves all things. *Weg* is that from which all the variety of methods arise in various forms. It is in this sense that Heidegger says, 'All is way'.⁸

When discussing *Ereignis* in 'The principle of identity' (originally delivered as a lecture in 1957), Heidegger says:

The word *Ereignis*, thought in terms of the matter indicated, should now speak as a guideword (*Leitwort*) in the service of thinking. As such a guideword, it can no more be translated than the Greek *λογος* or the Chinese *Tao*. (Heidegger, 1969, p. 36/p. 101)

This fleeting reference to *dao* has been ascribed a great deal of importance. In relation to it, Cho claims that *dao* can be called 'an other way' (*ein anderer Gang*) and that *dao* is the *Leitwort* of Heidegger's thinking (Cho, 1993, p. 150).⁹

Cho's claim seems to be insufficiently convincing. As a matter of fact, it is *Ereignis* that Heidegger says should speak as a *Leitwort* of thinking. *Ereignis* can no more be translated than the Chinese *dao* can. Their juxtaposition does not indicate Heidegger's adoption of *dao* as the *Leitwort* of his thinking (or, thinking as such). At most it means that, to the same degree in which *Ereignis* speaks as a *Leitwort* of

thinking, *dao* speaks as the *Leitwort* of ancient Chinese thinking. Heidegger leaves unaddressed whether and how *Ereignis* can be *related* to *dao*. Immediately after the remark cited above, Heidegger stresses the uniqueness and singularity of *Ereignis*. He writes:

The term *Ereignis* here no longer means what we would otherwise call a happening [*Geschehnis*], an occurrence [*Vorkommnis*]. It now is used as a *singulare tantum*. What it indicates happens only in the singular, no, not in any number, but uniquely [*einzig*]. (1969, p. 36/p. 101)

To elucidate the nature of the relation between *Weg* and *dao* in Heidegger's writings, I would like to call for aid Frege's (1980) terminology of sense (*Sinn*) and reference (*Bedeutung*). First of all, as a guideword of Laozi's thinking, *dao* is untranslatable. Yet, 'properly speaking' (*eigentlich*), *dao* refers to (*bedeutet*) *Weg*. Therefore, *Weg* could be said to be the *Bedeutung* of *dao*. However, *dao* cannot be said to be identical or freely interchangeable with *Weg*; at least it does not share the same *Sinn* as *Weg*. The ambiguous relation between *Weg* and *dao* provides possibilities of both universalist and relativist readings of Heidegger's thought. On the one hand, a universalist reading would consider that *Weg* and *dao* share the same reference, but have different senses. That is the basis on which *Weg* and *dao* could enter into dialogue. A relativist reading, on the other hand, would presuppose that *Weg* and *dao* have different sets of reference and sense. Therefore, there cannot be an intelligible dialogue between them.

In my view, both universalist and relativist readings neglect the fact that Heidegger does not treat *Weg* as merely a linguistic sign that refers to an object through the mediation of a certain sense. As the proper *Urwort*, *Weg* itself is a special entity. *Weg* has a kind of givenness or grantedness in spite of its appearance as a word. In other words, its sense and reference are not external, but internal. Both universalist and relativist readings fail to recognize the uniqueness of *Weg*, whose reference and sense are not on the same par as that of other words. *Weg* is what makes possible the experience of the nature of language; it is that in which the thoughtful Saying of language conceals itself. In this light, it would be more appropriate to describe *Weg* as the primary and grounding *word-thing*, rather than as a word among other words.

It is only 'properly speaking' (*eigentlich*) that *dao* can be said to refer to *Weg*. This means that only when interpreted in the particular manner, or thought in its proper nature as Heidegger may ascribe to it, can *dao* come into relation with *Weg*. *Weg* is the standard against which *dao* is measured. The same consideration applies to the relation between *Ereignis* and *dao*. In fact, with Heidegger, *Weg* is thought in a similar fashion as *Ereignis* is. Like *Ereignis*, *Weg* is associated with a sense of movement. Heidegger coins a word *be-wëgen* on the basis of *bewegen*, and speaks of *Weg* as that which moves all things.¹⁰ As a special word-thing, *Weg* expresses a similar movement as *Ereignis*, a movement of reversal by means of which both humans and language are returned to their proper nature.

In any case, Heidegger does not grant *dao* the same status as *Weg*, nor does he assert that *Weg* is no more than a translation for *dao*. It is *Weg*, not *dao*, that is

properly Heidegger's guideword. This is an initial conclusion I draw from a reading of Heidegger's references to *dao*. In the following, I consider Heidegger's citations from five chapters of the *Daodejing* one by one.

2. Light and Darkness—Chapter 28

In the lecture 'Basic principles of thinking' delivered in 1957 in Freiburg, Heidegger quotes a verse from chapter 28 of the *Daodejing*. In the following I expose the context in which this quotation occurs.

The basic principles of thinking in the Western philosophical tradition are: the law of identity, the law of contradiction, and the law of excluded middle. According to Heidegger, it is with Fichte and Hegel (on the basis prepared by Kant) that these laws are seriously deliberated on for the first time. They bring the laws of thinking to a higher dimension of possibility in that thinking becomes essentially dialectical. Heidegger distinguishes between dimension in the ordinary sense and dimension in the world-historic (*weltgeschichtlicher*) sense. The dimension with which he is concerned is the latter one.

Heidegger points out that our ordinary thinking does not follow those 'fundamental' laws of thinking but contradicts them. This kind of contradiction is the root of all movements and liveliness. Citing Hölderlin's verses 'life is death, and death is also life', Heidegger claims that here contradiction unfolds itself as 'that which unites and abides' (*das Einigende und Währende*) (Heidegger, 1976, p. 51/p. 87). Invoking Novalis' remark that 'to deny the logical law of contradiction is perhaps the highest task of logic', Heidegger states that this remark says exactly what Hegel is thinking, that is, one has to deny the law of contradiction in order to save contradiction as the law of the reality of the real (p. 52/p. 88).

For Heidegger, the origin of the basic principles of thinking and the place of thinking these principles are the same thing. Both of them remain concealed (*bleibt gehüllt*) in the darkness (*Dunkel*), which is the secret of light (*Lichten*). Darkness keeps light within it; and light belongs to darkness. Heidegger cites from Hölderlin's poem 'Remembrance' (*ibid.*):

But it passes,
full of dark light,
to me the fragrant cup

Heidegger explains, 'light is not *Lichtung* any more, if light is merely brightness, "brighter than one thousand suns"'. It remains difficult to safeguard the purity of darkness. That is to say, we have to keep far away the intermixing of inappropriate brightness in order to find the light that goes with darkness' (p. 56/p. 93). At this point, Heidegger cites from the *Daodejing*:

Laozi says (chapter 28, translated by V. v. Strauss): 'Who knows his light, will remain covered in his darkness' [*Wer seine Helle kennt, sich in sein Dunkel hüllt*]. To this we add the truth which we all know but few are capable of: mortal thinking has to go into the depth of a well in order to see the stars. This is difficult. It is even

more difficult to protect the purity of darkness, which is being interfered by a light that will only shine. That which only shines, does not give light. The scholastic presentation of the doctrine of laws of thinking just shines in such a way, as if the content of these laws and their absolute validity become clear at once to everyone. (p. 56/p. 93)¹¹

The Chinese original of this verse is:

zhi qi bai, shou qi hei 知其白，守其黑
In knowing the white, one needs to safeguard the black.

What Heidegger quotes is from von Strauss' translation (von Strauss, 1924, p. 140).¹² The import of the original verse concerns the relation between polarities. In quoting this verse, Heidegger shifts away from this concern.¹³ His focus does not fall upon the relation between white and black, or between light and darkness, but on a different kind of light that he is seeking.

According to Heidegger, Western philosophical tradition has been searching for inappropriate brightness. This is manifest in the presumption that the basic principles of thinking are clear and distinct without ambiguity or opaqueness. For Heidegger, this kind of light is not *Lichtung*. It is pure brightness without proper sophistication. One needs to keep away from this simplistic notion of brightness and look for the appropriate brightness that goes well with darkness. True light lies concealed in the darkness that is both the origin of the basic principles of thinking and the place of thinking these principles. Similarly, true darkness is not complete darkness without any light at all. It is pregnant with profound light.

In this framework of thinking, Heidegger may have found Laozi's verse concerning the dialectic relation between white (light) and black (darkness) well-serving his purpose of delineating an other kind of light, a deeper and more concealed origin of thinking.¹⁴ He adapts the literally ambiguous verse to what he is trying to say in the relevant context.

Heidegger's characterization of the origin of the basic principles of thinking in terms of true light concealed in true darkness resembles his description of truth (and of Being). To him, truth resides in *a-lethia*. It is unconcealment with reserved concealment. Concealment is a fundamental dimension of truth. Truth lies in the movement towards unconcealment which is continuously challenged or thwarted by the power of concealment.¹⁵ With Heidegger, the dynamic relation between the unconcealment and concealment, between light and darkness, is one in which each member of a relevant pair of contraries is indispensable. This appears to be similar to Laozi's idea about contraries as reflected in chapter 28.

However, there are two points of difference that set Heidegger away from Laozi. In the following, I sketch my views concerning their difference. First, according to Heidegger's characterization of unconcealment and concealment, of light and darkness, neither member of the pair of contraries has a determinate external reference. They represent internal mediation achieved by a movement called *a-lethia*. Although Heidegger's interpreters have often construed this movement as characteristic of an essential openness, one should notice that *a-lethia* is not a

neutral, arbitrary movement. What can be unconcealed presumably is already unconcealed partially in the first beginning of Western historicity. Unconcealment is a movement that possesses historic necessity. With Laozi, the opposites are externally recognizable and determinable. The distinction between the opposites is not logical, but concrete.¹⁶ The white and the black in the verse ‘know the white, yet safeguard the black’ do not constitute two internal sides of a certain logical or historic unity. They refer to concrete whiteness and blackness, or to concrete light and darkness.

Second, sometimes Heidegger speaks of Being in terms of ‘the single source’, the ‘origin’. This lends itself to the interpretation that he privileges a kind of metaphysical reservedness, a source that is inexhaustible, a super-concealment that makes possible any movement of unconcealment with concealment. However, in the last analysis, Heidegger’s most original contribution to contemporary continental philosophy is his emphasis on a kind of dynamic movement named as *Ereignis*, which features truth (and Being). No determinate way of being is taken as primordial and fundamental. What is primordial is none other than this momentary movement, or occurrence, or anticipation for this movement, which makes possible both unconcealment and concealment, both Being and man in each of their ownmost nature, both accomplishment and thwartedness, both authenticity and inauthenticity. The nature of ‘single source’ and of ‘origin’ rests upon this mode of founding act or movement. In contrast, Laozi does not seem to presuppose a singular movement in which opposites are enacted at the same time. His key word *dao* can be interpreted in terms of movement. However, there are different kinds of *dao* and thus different kinds of movement, for example, *tiandao* (heaven’s *dao*, 天道), and *rendao* (humans’ *dao*, 人道). Different kinds of things in the world also have their own *daos*.

3. Sages do not Travel?—Chapter 47

In a letter to Ernst Jünger (dated 29 May 1965), just before Jünger set upon a journey to East Asia, Heidegger quotes the whole of chapter 47 of the *Daodejing* as translated by Jan Ulenbrook.¹⁷ Below are the Chinese original, the German version in Heidegger’s letter, and my English translation of this chapter (see Table 1).

Heidegger keeps to all of Ulenbrook’s text except for one place in the fourth line. It was originally ‘und des Himmels Weg sehen’.¹⁸ *Himmel’s Weg* (*tiandao* 天道) literally means heaven’s way(s). Should *dao* be one of his favourite *Leitworten*, it is difficult to explain why Heidegger drops the word *Weg* (which translates *dao*) and changes the translation to ‘und den Himmel ganz sehen’. The expression ‘the whole of heaven’ may have to do with his idea of the unitary oneness of heaven, earth, god and man.¹⁹

Heidegger sharply criticizes any exoticist interest in and adventure to the foreign. In his lectures on Hölderlin’s hymn ‘The Ister’, he speaks disparagingly of ‘whatever is merely foreign in the sense of the alien and exotic, that which the adventurer sets out in search of in order to settle his conscience’ (Heidegger, 1996, p. 131/p. 164).

Table 1 Chapter 47 of the *Daodejing*.

不出於戶， 以知天下。	Nicht zum Tor hinausgehen und die Welt kennen	One does not need to go beyond one's house To know the world
不窺於牖， 以知天道。	Nicht zum Fenster hinausspähen und den Himmel ganz sehen	One does not need to look outside one's window To know the <i>dao</i> of heaven
其出彌遠， 其知彌少。 是以聖人	Geht man sehr weit hinaus, weiss man sehr wenig Darum der Weise	The farther one goes, The less one knows For this reason, sages know
不行而知，	nicht reist er, doch er kennt	Without going anywhere out of the necessary
不見而明，	nicht guckt er, doch er rühmt	Understand without seeing anything out of the necessary
弗為而成。	nicht handelt er doch er vollendet	And get things done without doing anything out of the necessary

For him, Jünger is the prime example of this way of attending to the foreign.²⁰ One may say that Heidegger is using Laozi to illustrate his point that one needs to concentrate on what belongs to one's own world, instead of going after distant and strange things outside. Would this be what Laozi is edifying in these verses?

Laozi does say something to the effect that one does not need to bother about the outer world in order to acquire better knowledge and more skilful practice. This is an idea which Heidegger may have found catering to his taste. However, Laozi does not claim that not going outward constitutes the necessary condition for knowing and of practice. His point is that one needs to concentrate on what is within access, instead of chasing after superfluous things impertinent to what is at issue. This holds true especially in Laozi's time, when, with frequent wars, everything fell into a chaotic condition and travelling was sometimes almost equal to emigration or exile. Laozi's idea may also be targeted against those political strategists who travelled to various states with the purpose of obtaining power and position by doing such things as persuading the kings to instigate wars.

As Ames and Hall point out, the commonly consulted Wang Bi version of the *Daodejing* has for the last line *bu wei er cheng* (不為而成) which literally means 'And gets things done without doing'; whereas both Mawangdui A and B texts have *fu wei er cheng* (弗為而成), which literally means 'And gets things done without doing something'. Since the two lines preceding this are missing in the Mawangdui texts, one could well extrapolate this sentence structure starting with the word *fu*, and assume that both these lines have *fu* and thus a similar meaning. This is because *fu* 弗 is a negation word that entails an object after the verb it negates, while *bu* 不 does not. Ames and Hall translate the last three lines as (Ames & Hall, 2003, p. 150):

It is for this reason that sages know without going anywhere out of the ordinary,
Understand without seeing anything out of the ordinary,
And get things done without doing anything out of the ordinary.

Ames and Hall's point is that Laozi is expressing a localistic view of knowledge. That is, knowledge is obtained through 'responsive and efficacious participation in ones' environments, and through one's full contribution at home in the local and the focal relationships that, in sum, make one who one is' (p. 150). Ames and Hall have made an important contribution to revealing the sentence meaning of the last three verses, and they rightly stress the role participation in one's environments plays in the constitution of knowledge. However, to state Laozi's view exclusively in terms of localism (or contextualism) may risk taking the local as something immutable and self-evident. Ames and Hall place such a strong emphasis on the local that, for them, leaving home would endanger one's defining roles and relationships. They even take concentrating on local life as a necessary condition for knowing the world (p. 151).²¹ This interpretation is suggestive of deterministic ideas that do not accord with Laozi's fundamental insight that there are many ways of going about in the world.

In my view, what Laozi stresses is not that knowledge is definitely acquired through focusing on the local and the ordinary, but that, to obtain knowledge, or *dao*, one does not need to be concerned with impertinent matters. The negation word *fu* 弗 entails an object for the verb *wei* 為. On this ground, the misunderstanding that the sages need not do anything can be cleared up. The point is that they need not do unnecessary things. So, I follow Ames and Hall's exegesis about the sentence meaning of the last three line based on the findings from the Mawangdui texts, but disagree on the interpretation they ascribe to it.

In Heidegger's times, convenient means for travelling and transportation makes going beyond one's dwelling place much easier and even necessary. It could be said that one's dwelling place has been significantly broadened and become more complex. Often necessity arises for one to travel afar, which could not be imagined in ancient times. Heidegger's awareness of this is shown in what he writes in the beginning of the essay 'The Thing':

Man now reaches overnight, by plane, places which formerly took weeks and months of travel. He now receives instant information, by radio, of events which he formerly learned about only years later, if at all... (Heidegger, 1975, p. 163/p. 165)

In Heidegger's eyes, the fact that distant sites have become accessible in a heretofore unprecedented way is necessarily complicit with forms of inauthenticity. He is worried that apparent nearness of formerly far off events and people would cause confusions and alienations such that one cannot concentrate on and preserve what properly belongs to oneself. This conviction could account for the fact that during his lifetime, Heidegger has never travelled further than France and Greece, which according to him are the only two places belonging to the same lineage as Germany does. In a letter of 1955, he could not help expressing irritation at being invited to go to Japan.²²

Heidegger feels fully justified in viewing things in such a way. However, in the contemporary world one can no longer make sense of one's dwelling place without paying attention to other places that have also become part of one's own world.

In addition, one's defining roles are open to changes. This in some cases may bring a new lease of life, rather than necessarily leads to loss. Laozi's succinct verses may lend themselves for Heidegger to make his case. Nevertheless, in the light of a careful analysis, his case is not supported by chapter 47 of the *Daodejing*.

4. You and Wu—Chapter 11

In an article entitled 'The uniqueness of the poet' (*Die Einzigkeit des Dichters*), written in 1943 (Heidegger, 2000a), Heidegger cites the whole of chapter 11 from the *Daodejing*. In this essay, he deals with the question where the uniqueness of the poet resides. Two ready approaches offer themselves. One approach is historical, that is, one can discover the poet's singularity through a comparative study of poets in the history of literature. Another approach is unhistorical, that is, one can find the distinctive characteristics of poets in accordance with the nature (or measure) of poetry. In the eyes of Heidegger, these two approaches, or their combination, fail to provide an adequate answer to this question. Because they are both separated from the originary event (*Ereignis*) that makes a poet poet, a poem poem, these approaches are necessarily arbitrary, external and superficial.

In accordance with his distinction between *Historie* and *Geschichte*, Heidegger claims that poetry can only originate in and be determined by *Geschichte*. He writes, 'Were the poet to have to compose the complete essence of poetry in particular, with this essence understood as *Geschichte*, that is, what is coming (*Kommendes*), then . . . the uniqueness of the poet enters into light immediately' (Heidegger, 2000a, pp. 36–37). The unique poet Heidegger has in mind is no other than Hölderlin, since his poetry takes its origin in the coming time.

'What is coming', the future, characterizes the essence of time. It is intermingled with what is past and what is present. The uniqueness of Hölderlin is sent by destiny (*Schickung*). His poetry is post-saying and at the same time pre-saying (*nach-sagenden Vorsagen*) in response to the call (or the word) of Beyng. Hölderlin's poetry says (*dichtet*) 'that and how Beyng appropriates itself and is sent only in appropriation and that is called destiny [*Geschichte*]' (p. 37).

Now the question is whether man remains inattentive to the uniqueness of the poet and to what is always coming, the authentic time, or tries to learn the attentiveness, out of which we learn the originary remembrance of what is to be thought. This is the unique historic decision man has to make. Heidegger continues:

How do we *learn* attentiveness, we, the late-born ones during centuries of inattentiveness?

We learn attentiveness, in that we see the unseemingly simpleness [*das unscheinbare Einfache*], which we appropriate originarily ever and ever, and *before* [*vor*] which we become more and more awesome.²³

Already the unnoticeable simplicity of simple things brings to us what we call, according to old habit of thinking, Being [*Sein*] in its distinction from beings [*Seiende*].

Being in *this* distinction is spoken of by Lao-Tse in the eleventh saying [*Spruch*] of his *Tao-Te-King*. (p. 42; emphasis original)

In what follows, Heidegger cites the whole of chapter 11 of the *Daodejing*:

Dreißig Speichen treffen die Nabe,
Aber das **Leere** zwischen ihnen gewährt das *Sein* des Rades.
Aus dem Ton ent-stehen die Gefäße,
Aber das **Leere** in ihnen gewährt das *Sein* des Gefäßes.
Mauern und Fenster und Türen stellen das Haus dar,
Aber das **Leere** zwischen ihnen gewährt das *Sein* des Hauses.
Das Seiende ergibt die Brauchbarkeit.
Das Nicht-Seiende gewährt das *Sein*. (p. 43; emphasis added)

Heidegger's version is the closest to Ular's translation among the four to which Heidegger has access. It is as follows:

Dreißig Speichen treffen die Nabe,
aber das **Leere** zwischen ihnen *erwirkt* das *Wesen* des Rades;
Aus Ton entstehen Töpfe,
aber das **Leere** in ihnen *wirkt* das *Wesen* des Topfes;
Mauern mit Fenstern und Türen bilden das Haus,
aber das **Leere** in ihnen *erwirkt* das *Wesen* des Hauses.
Grundsätzlich:
Das Stoffliche birgt Nutzbarkeit;
Das Unstoffliche *wirkt* *Wesenheit*. (Ular, 1903, p. 17; emphasis added)

Heidegger's text differs from Ular's translation in several places. He changes both *erwirkt* which occurs twice and *wirkt* which occurs once into *gewährt*, and puts a dash within the word *entstehen*, and thus writes *ent-stehen*. He replaces Ular's word *Töpfe* (qi 器) with *Gefäße*, and modifies *birgt* in the next to last sentence as *erbirgt*. He uses *zwischen* twice, once more than Ular does, and replaces Ular's *Stoffliche* with *Seiende*, and *Unstoffliche* with *Nicht-Seiende* correspondingly. The most important change is his replacement of Ular's word *Wesenheit* (yong 用), with *Sein*.²⁴ Meanwhile, Heidegger follows Ular in rendering *wu* (無) as *Leere*.²⁵

Below (Table 2) I provide a Chinese version as well as my paraphrasing translation of chapter 11. I give the *pinyin* after the Chinese characters in order to make it easier for the reader to locate the relevant characters.

The lack of a definite system of periodization in classical Chinese writings gives rise to multiple possibilities of reading. One of the things important for understanding chapter 11 concerns whether the three *you* characters should go with the *wu* character preceding them, or with the following words to form such phrases as 'you . . . zhi yong ye'. Most translators or interpreters have read this text in the latter way. Accordingly there are formed three phrases: *you che zhi yong* (there comes the use of a cart), *you qi zhi yong* (there comes the use of a vessel), *you shi zhi yong* (there comes the use of a room). In James Legge's (1969) bilingual version, the *you* characters are listed in the former way. That is, they follow the *wu* characters. However, Legge does not seem to have considered seriously whether *you* here is functioning differently from what is commonly assumed. Taking the *you* characters as going with their following words

Table 2 Chapter 11 of the *Daodejing*.

卅幅共一轂， 當其無有， 車之用也。	<i>sa fu gong yi gu</i> <i>dang qi wu you</i> <i>che zhi yong ye</i>	Thirty spokes unite round a nave. Adapting the space between the spokes [<i>wu</i>] and the spokes themselves [<i>you</i>], one uses it as a cart.
埴埴而為器， 當其無有， 器之用也。	<i>shan zhi er wei qi</i> <i>dang qi wu you</i> <i>qi zhi yong ye</i>	Moulding clay to make a vessel. Adapting the void within the vessel [<i>wu</i>] and the shape of the vessel itself [<i>you</i>], one uses it as a vessel.
鑿戶牖而為室， 當其無有， 室之用也。	<i>zao hu you er wei shi</i> <i>dang qi wu you</i> <i>shi zhi yong ye</i>	Cutting out doors and windows out of walls to make a room. Adapting the space of the doors and windows [<i>wu</i>] and the walls that stand on the ground [<i>you</i>], one uses it as a room.
有之以為利， 無之以為用。	<i>you zhi yi wei li</i> <i>wu zhi yi wei yong</i>	Where something is present [<i>you zhi</i>], it makes a basis for adapting. Where nothing is present [<i>wu zhi</i>], it leads to an actual use.

makes it easier to isolate *wu* from the particular context and interpret it as an abstract notion.

I suggest that the first way of reading *you* is more adequate. That is, *you* immediately follows *wu*. *you* literally means ‘to have’, ‘there exists’, as contrary to *wu*, which means ‘not to be present’, or ‘not to be around’. In the three cases that involve a particular use of a certain object (a cart, a vessel, a room), it is more convincing to attribute what makes such a use possible to *both* the space or void where there is nothing (*wu*) and the concrete tangible materials that make the space or void what it is (*you*) than only to the former (*wu*). That is, *wu* is not an abstract philosophical notion. It refers to the particular space. In the penultimate line, *you* appears as a word on itself, followed by the word *zhi*. *zhi* is here used as a pronoun to represent the things that are said to be present in the previous cases: the thirty spokes, the clay shape of the vessel, the walls of a room. In this light, it is rather incredible to explain away the role *you* plays in the earlier occurrence by taking it as a word that forms the phrases ‘there comes the use of a cart’, ‘there comes the use of a vessel’ and ‘there comes the use of a room’. A. C. Graham’s reading supports my explanation. According to him,

[this chapter deals] not with Nothing in general, but with the parts of the wheel, vessel or house which do not exist (*qi wu*). Each is a combination of something and nothing; the hole in the wheel which takes the axle, the empty space inside the vessel, doors and windows in the house, are nothing yet belong to the things which could not be used without them. (Graham, 1990, p. 346)²⁶

The point of my discussion about the meaning of *wuyou* resides in the following. Treating the word *wu* as unrelated to *you* and translating it as ‘nothing’, or ‘Leere’ as Heidegger adopts, enhances the tendency to regarding it as a metaphysical term.

For example, Lin Yutang's translation is, 'From their not-being (loss of their individuality)/Arises the utility of the wheel'. D. C. Lau's is, 'Adapt the nothing therein to the purpose in hand,/and you will have the use of the cart'. Victor Mair pays attention to the concreteness of *wu*, 'but it is the empty hole in the middle which makes a cart possible'. However, in the last verse he renders *wu* as an abstract notion: 'Therefore, while benefits may be derived from something,/it is in EMPTY NOTHING that we find usefulness' (emphasis original).²⁷

Here I would follow current established interpretation of *you* and *wu*. According to this view, the classical Western metaphysical notion of Being is generally conceived as ontological ground, or reality behind appearance, while Non-Being constitutes its strict negation. In Chinese thought, the word *you* overlaps with the sense of 'having'. It has nothing to do with 'Being' or existence. *wu* does not indicate strict opposition or contradiction, but absence. While *you* means 'to be present' or 'to be around', *wu* means 'to not be present' or 'to not be around'. Thus, the *you-wu* distinction suggests contrast in the sense of presence or absence of *x* rather than assertion about the existence or non-existence of *x*. *you* and *wu* should not be treated as ontological categories with loads of metaphysical implications, but as interdependent explanatory categories of 'something' and 'nothing', of 'presence and absence'.²⁸

Heidegger may have found the word *Leere* (as translating *wu*) in Ular's translation very interesting and corresponding to his way of philosophizing. In the essay 'The thing' written in 1950, he speaks at length of the *Leere* (emptiness) of the jug. This point of Daoist connection has been noticed by a few scholars without the knowledge that Heidegger quotes the whole of chapter 11 that contains important verses bearing on *wu*.²⁹ In 'A dialogue on language', he talks about the 'sameness' between the Japanese notion of *Leere* (*ku* 空) and his idea of Nothing (Heidegger, 1959, p. 108). Nevertheless, granted that Heidegger has learned such apt expressions as *Leere* from Laozi, his learning is always subject to fundamental orientations of his thought. While paying attention to the emptiness of the jug, he claims that the 'thingliness' of the jug consists in earth from which it comes to be and by virtue of which the jug can be self-supporting. In addition, the implication of the word 'sameness' in Heidegger's pairing of *Leere* as a Japanese notion and his idea of Nothing is multifaceted and cannot be dealt with here because of limitation of space. Briefly speaking, Heidegger's 'sameness' is not the same as 'same' in its ordinary sense.

In addition, Heidegger's translation of *yong* as *Sein*, in contrast with *Seiende* and *Nicht-Seiende* in the last two verses indicates the extent to which he has taken liberty with Laozi's saying. For sure, it is as an exemplification of Being in its distinction from beings that chapter 11 of the *Daodejing* is brought into Heidegger's text. After citing it, Heidegger explains:

In this word [by Laozi] there resides the hint, which says that that which as the between [*das Zwischen*] of everything, first holds itself open, and distances in the distance [*Weite*] of the duration [*Weile*] and region [*Gegend*], which to us may too easily and too often appear as something without significance [*das Nichtige*]. (p. 43)

Admittedly, Laozi's text is open to multiple interpretations. However, it seems impossible for Laozi to have said exactly what Heidegger makes him to say.

5. Paraphrasing Translations from Chapter 15

One year after their attempt at translating the *Daodejing* in the summer of 1946, Heidegger sent Hsiao a short letter of greetings (dated 9 October 1947), in which he cites from chapter 15 of the *Daodejing*:

‘Wer kann still sein und aus der Stille durch sie auf den Weg bringen (be-wegen)
etwas so, dass es zum Erscheinen kommt?’
[Wer vermag es, stillend etwas so ins Sein zu bringen? Des Himmels Tao]
‘Who is able to be still and from and through stillness move something on to the
Way so that it comes to shine forth?’
[Who is able through making still to bring something into Being? The Tao of
heaven]³⁰

It may have been through his collaboration with Hsiao that Heidegger was particularly impressed by these two verses. They were apparently dear to his heart, as he had requested Hsiao to explain the original Chinese words one by one and to write them out in traditional Chinese calligraphy on a pair of vertical parchment rolls. Hsiao added a horizontal scroll with two characters *tiandao* 天道 (the *dao* of heaven) to form a standard set. This set of calligraphy hung in Heidegger's study (Petzet, 1993, p. 168). In Chinese they are:

shu neng zhuo yi jing zhi xu qing 孰能濁而靜之徐清
Muddy water, when stilled, slowly becomes clear
shu neng an yi dong zhi xu sheng 孰能安而動之徐生
Something settled, when agitated, slowly comes to life

The Wang Bi and the Guodian versions of the *Daodejing* have the words *shu neng* in the beginning of both lines (which literally means ‘who could’); whereas the Mawangdui A and B versions do not contain these words. The English translation I choose dispenses with these two characters (Ames & Hall, 2003, p. 98). This seems to be more consistent with the preceding verses, which are a series of descriptions of ancient *dao* masters. Von Strauss (1924) and Wilhelm's (1911) translations are, respectively, ‘Wer kann das Trübe, indem er es stillt, allmählich klären? Wer kann die Ruhe, in dem er sie verlängert, allmählich beleben?’ (p. 80) and ‘Wer kann (wie sie) das Trübe durch Stille allmählich klären/Wer kann (wie sie) die Ruhe durch Dauer allmählich erzeugen?’ (p. 17).³¹ These two versions are very close to Hsiao's own German translation, ‘Wer kann das Trübe stillend allmählich klären? Wer kann die Ruhe bewegend allmählich beleben?’ (Hsiao, 1977, p. 127).³² An English translation of this is, ‘Who can, settling the muddy, gradually make it clear? Who can, stirring the tranquil, gradually bring it to life?’ (Hsiao, 1987, p. 100).

It can be seen, in comparison with these translations, Heidegger has obviously found something bearing affinity to his way of saying. One example is the word *Stille*

and its cognates. In von Strauss and Hsiao's German versions there occur the words *stillt* and *stillend*, both of which come from the verb *stillen*, meaning 'to settle, to stop'. Apart from *stillen*, Heidegger also uses the adjective word *still*, meaning 'quiet, secret', and the noun *Stille*, meaning 'silence, quietness'. He may have been inspired by Wilhelm's phrase '*durch Stille*' and may have derived the expression '*aus der Stille*' from it.

Heidegger's use of *Stille* as a technical notion has so far been rarely noted. As early as 1936–38, he employs this word in the *Contributions to Philosophy* (From Ereignis): 'In and as *da-sein*, Beyng enowns the truth which it manifests as not-granting, as that domain of hinting and withdrawal—of stillness—wherein the arrival and flight of the last god are first determined' (Heidegger, 1999, p. 15/p. 20). 'Stillness' indicates the region that gives hints and at the same time withdraws itself. Toward the end of the essay 'Language', almost two pages are devoted to *Stille*. It is delineated in the same manner as Ereignis (Heidegger, 1959, pp. 29–30). In 'A dialogue on language', *Stille* is used to characterize the Japanese notion *iki*: '*iki* is the breath of the stillness of luminous delight (ibid., p. 141). *Stille* and *Weite* (vastness) form the pairing mode in which Ereignis occurs (ibid., p. 153).

It remains difficult to decide whether Heidegger drew inspirations concerning *Stille* from his reading of German versions of the *Daodejing* before he met Hsiao, or he happened to find striking similarity of wording in Laozi's verses after he collaborated with Hsiao. In any case, it can be seen that certainly Heidegger is very fond of the image this word denotes in using it three times in his version of the verses.

An innovation Heidegger makes with the couplet is his use of the word *Weg*, which is neither in the original text nor in its translations. Furthermore, instead of the more or less literal translation of *klären* (*qing* 清) Heidegger uses the expression '*zum Erscheinen kommt*' (comes to shine forth). *Erscheinen*, signifying 'appearance, phenomenon', is strongly suggestive of Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology.

According to Hsiao's report, Heidegger told him that one could extend some of the motives in these two sayings and consider the idea that 'clarifying finally brings something to light, and subtle motion in the tranquil and still can bring something into being' (Hsiao, 1987, p. 100). It is clear that Heidegger has changed the literal translation *beleben* (*sheng* 生) in the second verse into the phrase '*ins Sein zu bringen*' (bring something into Being). This is completely of Heidegger's own innovation. It seems that he would never fail to coin different phrases to express his concern with Being. In the meantime, Heidegger has completely neglected the words *Trübe* (*zhuo* 濁) and *allmählich* (*xu* 徐).

One could conclude that the alleged citation from chapter 15 of the *Daodejing* in Heidegger's letter is an integration of his own ideas with Laozi's saying. It resulted from ignoring irrelevant words while highlighting relevant ones. As May rightly explains, the verse in quotation marks is Heidegger's appropriated paraphrase on the basis of the collaboration with Hsiao; while the verse following the square bracket 'can be ascribed to Heidegger alone' (May, 1996, pp. 2–3).

6. A Struggle between Technology and Art?—Chapters 9 and 15

On 7 August 1965, Heidegger gave a brief speech on the occasion of the seventieth birthday of Siegfried Bröse (Heidegger, 2000b). Bröse is Heidegger's friend, working with the Freiburg Art Society. He had organized an exhibition on Chinese art, which would open the day after Heidegger delivered his speech. Heidegger started his talk by saying that he wanted to hold on to 'a word' (*ein Wort*) from Laozi's book 'Vom Weg', which also spoke for Bröse. He quoted the translation by Ulenbrook of the following lines from chapter 9 of the *Daodejing*:

Dem Werk nachgehen,
sich selbst entziehen,
das ist des Himmels Weg.

In Chinese they are:

gong sui sheng tui, tian zhi dao ye 功遂身退，天之道也
To withdraw when the work is done is the way of heaven.³³

Laozi's chapter 9 purports to draw analogy between the way of heaven and the way of human conduct. When the vessel is filled to its brim, it will fall over; when the blade is made too sharp, it will not hold its edge; when there is abundant treasure one may not be able to maintain it. Wealth and station may well incur calamity. Therefore, one should try to avoid excess or extremes and keep to a life of moderation and balance. To retreat when the deed is accomplished accords with the way of heaven.

Heidegger states that artworks from a profound tradition of four-thousand-year old constitute the thought from which the exhibition on Chinese art has sprung (*entsprungen*). This tradition has entered the technological world-epoch in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Its artworks are now presented at a moment when the power of scientific technology is dominating forms of experience. Heidegger suggests that instead of following the latest technical innovations, art should engage in a struggle (*Widerstreit*) between the restfulness of the work of art and the raging of technology. This is a struggle in which art is in the process of losing. Following this, Heidegger remarks that the thinking of the ancient Chinese world may have pre-thought this struggle in its own way (Heidegger, 2000b, p. 618).

It can be seen that, in quoting the verse 'To withdraw when the work is done is the way of heaven', Heidegger has borrowed and at the same time revised the thought embodied in it. Originally, this saying concerns an analogy between the way of heaven and the way of humans. The implication is that one should not be over-relying on one's achievements and become dominated by it. Instead, it is better to let alone what is accomplished, rather than taking advantage of the benefits coming with it. This rule resembles the cyclical patterns of nature in which one season gives way to the next, with the full range of natural forces playing their roles in due course. In this way, the environment always remains lively.

For Heidegger, 'To withdraw when the work is done is the way of heaven' means something different from the above. He reads into this verse a depiction of the

struggle between technology and art. Although he does not specify the details in which this could be understood, what he has in mind may be something like this: to stay in a triumphant and dominant position is the way of the *Ge-stell*. What needs to be cherished is the way of letting-be as manifest in art. The way of art is well depicted in the verses he cites.

In order to enhance his point, in the same lecture, Heidegger also quotes from chapter 15 of the *Daodejing* (Heidegger, 2000b, p. 618):

Wer aber ist imstande, ein quirlend Wasser
durch die Behutsamkeit der Stille zu klären?
Wer aber ist imstande, die Ruhe
durch die Behutsamkeit dauernder Bewegung zu erzeugen?

These are exactly the same verses as covered in the previous section, where I have discussed Heidegger's own paraphrasing of them. On this occasion, he quotes from Ulenbrook's translation (published in 1962) without any modification. For him, the modes of *klären* and *erzeugen* represent something like the restful ways of art.

This pair of verses is the one Heidegger likes the most and cites most often. Among Heidegger's *Nachlass*, there is a letter addressed to Andrea von Harbou dated 6 August 1965, one day before he delivered this lecture in relation to the exhibition on Chinese art. In this letter, he quotes exactly the same verses of chapter 15 as translated by Ulenbrook.³⁴ It seems that Heidegger was aware that his own version of these verses in the letter to Hsiao in 1947 diverged significantly from what is being said in the original text. Thus, in quoting them on these two occasions, he deemed it suitable to use an existing translation. He might also have considered that Ulenbrook's translation surpasses the others or captures well what he wanted to express.

On reading a collection of essays by Erhart Kästner, Heidegger for the last time refers to this pair of verses in a letter to the author on 30 July 1973. In a short essay entitled 'Quirlwasser' in that book, Kästner discusses whether *Trübwasser* (turbid water) or *Quirlwasser* (whirling water) might be the best translation of the word *zhuo* 濁 in chapter 15 of the *Daodejing*. He concludes that it might be better not to decide for one or the other, but to keep both in view (Kästner, 1973, pp. 59–62). Heidegger comments that he finds Kästner's reading of chapter 15 'nice and convincing' (Heidegger & Kästner, 1986, p. 122).

7. Conclusion

My scrutiny of Heidegger's reference to *dao* and of his citations from the *Daodejing* so far discovered, I hope, could help us obtain a clear vision of his complex relation with Daoist thinking. Because of his exacerbating worry about the *Ge-stell*, Heidegger has occasionally considered the possibility that ancient Asian thought, Daoist thinking in particular, insofar as it is unaffected by the *Ge-stell*, may be of help to the enactment of the other beginning of Western historicity. Nevertheless, he has all along kept the way in which Daoist thinking could play a role within the limit of his

own *Denkweg*. As I argue in Section 1, it is *Weg*, not *dao*, that is Heidegger's proper *Leitwort*.

Despite obvious affinities between Heidegger's locution and Laozi's, there are crucial differences in their concerns and orientations, some of which I sketch in Section 2. In Section 3, we observe Heidegger's severe criticism against what are for him alien and exotic foreign things. This tells against some scholars' presentation of him as a transcultural thinker. In Sections 4 and 5, we see Heidegger's heavy-handed modifications of Laozi's verses in order to suit them to his central concern with Being. His most innovative renditions are: using *Sein* four times to translate the original *yong* character in chapter 11 (rendered as *Wesen* and *Wesenheit* by Ular) and grafting a concern with Being to chapter 15 in adding the phrase *ins Sein zu bringen*. In the last section, we see how Heidegger's anxiety about the *Ge-stell* led him to consider the possibility that ancient Chinese thought might have something to contribute. Nevertheless, in borrowing from chapter 9, Heidegger all the same revised the thought embodied in it so that his citation could fit well into his pre-conceived scheme of thought.

Some scholars such as Cho, Ōhashi and Zhang consider that Heidegger's reflection on *dao* has brought out its true meaning and his integration of passages from the *Daodejing* into the fundamental question of Being has demonstrated the depth and profundity of his engagement with ancient Chinese Daoist thinking. These views need to be seen in the light of the fact that *dao* has for long been treated as a typical Chinese philosophical term and has been compared with various Western concepts. This paves the way for a relatively easy acceptance of yet another new interpretation. Certainly, one can find a large number of strikingly similar phrases and ideas in Heidegger's writings when compared with the *Daodejing*; yet, while it surely sounds absurd to reason on this basis that it is Heidegger who has exerted influence on Laozi, *contemporary* understanding and interpretations of Laozi's *Daodejing* may well have been under the sway of Heidegger's thoughts as well as his image as *the* philosopher.

Notes

- [1] See Paul Shih-yi Hsiao (1977) and (1987). According to Hsiao, 'a tenth of the work had been completed' (Hsiao, 1987, p. 97).
- [2] Chan Wing-tsit (1963) and A. C. Graham (1989) have questioned the legitimacy of attributing the authorship of the *Daodejing* to a single person called Laozi. In this paper I use the name 'Laozi' as the implied author(s) of the verses from the *Daodejing*.
- [3] When applicable I give the pagination of Heidegger's work in the order of English version followed by the German original, and use 'tr. m.' to stand for 'translation modified'. The year in the reference accords to what appears in the 'References'. I often omit Heidegger's name and the year in a section where a particular work of his is under focus.
- [4] The etymological details that Heidegger provides pertain so closely to the German language that the English translator has simply omitted the relevant paragraph.
- [5] The first quotation is from Hegel (1971, Vol. 18, p. 146); the second from Hegel (1982, Vol. II, p. 556); the third again from Hegel (1971, Vol. 12, p. 71).

- [6] Stanislaw Julien translates *dao* as *voie*: *Le livre de la voie et de la vertu* (Paris: L'Imprimerie Royale, 1842). The common English translation of *dao* is 'way'. For example, Waley, Arthur (1934) *The Way and its Power*. New York: Grove Press.
- [7] The German translations Heidegger has used are: Victor von Strauss (1870), Alexander Ular (1903), Richard Wilhelm (1911), and Jan Ulenbrook (1962). Von Strauss was a Sinologist with many scholarly publications. His version adopts the prose style without line breaks. Ular claimed that his version was based on a close reading of the components of pictorial Chinese characters. According to him, this is the only way by which one could have access to the meaning of this ancient work. Wilhelm was a protestant minister and missionary to China. Ulenbrook offers two translations: a character-by-character literal one and an interpretative one. Heidegger's favorite is this one, from which he quotes with little modification in his later correspondence. All these four translations went through several reprints. By present academic standards, the translation by Ulenbrook is more professional; yet Wilhelm's version is the one that has been the most widely read.
- [8] Reinhard May (1996, pp. 35–44) and Zhang (1996, pp. 424–454; repeated in 1998, pp. 315–328) claim that Heidegger's use of *dao* in these two paragraphs show that he is pursuing transcultural thinking.
- [9] Cho's idea is shared by other scholars such as Ōhashi Ryōsuke (1989) and Zhang Xianglong (1998).
- [10] Pöggeler considers that Heidegger's connection of *Weg* and *bewegen* is etymologically plausible in German, but these words do not belong together in Chinese (1999, p. 113).
- [11] In the original publication of the lecture 'Basic principles of thinking' in *Jahrbuch für Psychologie und Psychotherapie*, Vol. 6 (1959), it is incorrectly printed, 'Laotse sagt (Kap. XVII; übersetzt von V. v. Strauss)'. In the English translation by Hart and Maraldo (1976), this mistake is retained: 'Lao Tzu says (Ch. 17)', and the reference to von Strauß is deleted. Although this is corrected in the *Gesamtausgabe* (Vol. 79, 1994) with more detailed bibliographic information provided in a note (p. 93), the mistaken reference to chapter 17 (instead of 28) has been repeated throughout the secondary literature (e.g. Elberfeld, 2000, p. 154; Zimmermann, 1981, p. 256). Henceforth I refer to this lecture as Heidegger (1976).
- [12] Ular's translation is, 'to feel oneself as clear, to show oneself as dark' (*Klar sich fühlen, dunkel sich zeigen*) (p. 20); Wilhelm's translation is, 'Who recognizes light, and nevertheless dwells in darkness' (*Wer Licht erkennt, und dennoch im Dunkel weilt*) (p. 30). Almost all English translators render the word 白 *bai* literally as 'white', or 'whiteness', and take this verse as illustrating the relation between polarities.
- [13] Other pairs of contraries mentioned in chapter 28 of the *Daodejing* are male versus female, and clean versus soiled.
- [14] Pöggeler's interpretation of Heidegger's use of Laozi's verse is quite different from mine. He puts emphasis on the phrase 'dark light' in Hölderlin's verses, which Heidegger quotes before citing from the *Daodejing*. Pöggeler connects the 'dark light' with the red Bordeaux of southern France. In the wine pressed from the grapes Hölderlin sees the fruit of earth and sky. Pöggeler explains, 'Humans, who live in a world which features a finite historical openness from the midst of a concealing mystery, are themselves a light that must conceal itself in the darkness of that mystery' (Pöggeler, 1998, p. 281). According to Pöggeler, the theme of Laozi's chapter 28 concerns the unity within which male and female, light and dark, honour and disgrace are combined. Compared with this, the light that science and technology bring into the world is destructive in its measureless glare. Pöggeler considers that the contraries used in Laozi's chapter can be interconnected with Heidegger's characterization of the world as a 'limited openness of a livable world' (ibid.). However, he does not address Heidegger's twist in using Laozi's verse.

- [15] Cf. Heidegger (1998).
- [16] Cf. D. C. Lau (1958, p. 350).
- [17] See Heidegger *Nachlaß* catalogue number 85.3/17; also cited in Petzet (1993, p. 181). In the 1983 German edition of this book, Petzet ascribes the translation to Richard Wilhelm. This is corrected in the English translation. Ernst Jünger (1895–1998) is a well-known novelist and essayist. In the early period of his career, he was allegedly an ardent militarist and nihilist. This outlook changed in the 1940s to one characterized by a strong belief in peace, European federation and individual dignity.
- [18] Ular translates this sentence as ‘Ohne hinauszusehen, kann man durchschauen’ (p. 34); Wilhelm’s translation is ‘Ohne aus dem Fenster zu blicken, kann man des Himmels SINN erschauen’ (p. 52); von Strauss’ version is, ‘nicht ausblickend durchs Fenster, sieht man des Himmels Weg’ (p. 214).
- [19] Cf. Heidegger (1975).
- [20] A defense of Heidegger is that he is only disparaging the superficial and insignificant foreign, while concerned with the authentic foreign. I have shown in another writing that the authentic foreign Heidegger has in mind is the Greek.
- [21] Ames and Hall think that phrases in D. C. Lau’s translation of chapter 47 such as ‘By not setting foot outside the door . . .’ and ‘By not looking out of the window . . .’ are suggestive of this idea (p. 151).
- [22] Heidegger writes, ‘To be someone with a famous name is a gruesome thing. Even the Foreign Institute in Stuttgart has sought me out *here* and has sent a Japanese person, who invited me to Japan for several months during next year’ [2001, p. 251; emphasis original].
- [23] The word *vor* which Heidegger emphasizes may indicate a sense of future. We are before the unseemingly simplicity, since it is always coming.
- [24] Von Strauss translates *yong* as *Gebrauch*, Wilhelm translates it as *Werk*.
- [25] Von Strauss’s translation of *wu* is *Nichtseyn*; Wilhelm’s is *Nichts* except for *Nichtsein* on the last occasion.
- [26] A Chinese author claims for the same way of periodization as mine. But the point he makes out of this is different. He argues that *wu* is as important as *you*, both being abstract notions (He Shibin, 2005, p. 41). Zhu Qianzhi’s version (1996) of this chapter also reads *you* as going with *wu*.
- [27] All the above quotations are from <http://home.pages.at/onkellotus>.
- [28] See Ames and Hall (2003, p. 91) and A. C. Graham (1990, pp. 343–351).
- [29] For example, May (1996, pp. 30–31); Wohlfart (2003) considers that Heidegger may have been inspired by the original meaning of the Chinese character *wu* 無.
- [30] Hsiao (1987, 102–3). Quotation marks original; there is only one square bracket in the original manuscript.
- [31] Ular’s rendering of these two lines is,
 Wer von den Jetzigen dürfte, durch seiner Klarheit Grösse,
 die innere Finsternis klären?
 Wer von den Jetzigen dürfte, durch seines Lebens Grösse,
 den inneren Tod beleben? (p. 12)
- [32] In Hsiao’s ‘literal’ Italian translation the two lines read ‘non trabocca mai/e poichè non trabocca.’
- [33] Heidegger indicated the source as, ‘IX. Spruch (übers. v. J. Ulenbrook [Bremen: Schünemann 1962])’ (Heidegger, 2000b, p. 617).
- [34] Heidegger *Nachlaß*, catalogue number 94.143.2/7 (Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach).

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