

ONTO–HERMENEUTICS, CHONGXUANXUE AND THE *YIJING*

Friederike Assandri*

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1. Introduction

Daoist *Chongxuan xue*, Twofold Mystery teaching, was an important trend of Daoist philosophy in the early Tang. It is a philosophy that links Daoism with Buddhism, since it employs a Buddhist method, namely *tetra lemma* logic. It is also at the core of the developing Daoist religion in the late sixths and early sevenths century, because it created a logically sustainable philosophical theory that managed to

* [Germany] Friederike Assandri, researcher, Chinese department of Heidelberg University(friederike_assandri@yahoo.com).

integrate all the diverse traditions which had developed in early medieval China during the time of the Nanbeichao, where the fragmented state of the Chinese empire favored the development of a great diversity of religious groups, all claiming to be Daoist. *Chongxuan xue* was an important part of early medieval Daoist religion and philosophy, since it paved the way for the development of an integrated Daoism, which would become the official religion of the Tang Dynasty, after the early Tang Emperors, beginning with Gaozu, but more pronounced with Taizong, declared Li Laozi as their family ancestor.

This complex Daoist philosophy has been studied and discussed so far as a sophisticated combination of Buddhist Madhyamika teachings and Daoist teachings mainly of the *Laozi* and the Daoist Lingbao tradition. I will inquire if, and in what way, this teaching could be related to *Yijing* studies of its time.

2. Chongxuanxue

Twofold Mystery (*chongxuan* 重玄) is a Daoist philosophical method that was popular in the early seventh century. Its most salient feature is the creative use of a technique of reasoning, which is based on the logic of the four propositions (*tetra lemma*, *siju* 四句), a series of four statements where each negates the previous one:

<p>All dharmas are existing (<i>yǒu</i> 有) All dharmas are empty (<i>kōng</i> 空) All dharmas are existing and empty (<i>yì yǒu yì kōng</i> 亦有亦空) All dharmas are neither existing nor empty (<i>fēi yǒu fēi kōng</i> 非有非空)</p>

The tetra lemma (*sì jù* 四句)

The logic of the *tetra lemma* came from India, where it formed a

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conceptual tool intellectuals of all traditions used in debate. The foremost philosopher of the Buddhist Mādhyamika School or Teaching of the Middle Way, Nāgārjuna (2nd c. CE), relied on this logic not only to refute his opponents but also to develop his teaching. He used it to guide adepts through a process of successive negations to realize the ultimate unity beyond all possible distinctions, thus to reach enlightenment. His teaching counters the risk of nihilism or ethical relativism, inherent in a continuation of negation, by combining the logic of the *tetra lemma* with the theory of two levels of truth (cf. Kalupahana 1976, 137).

This theory postulates that any statement about being (like “everything exists” or “everything is non-existent”) has two different levels: worldly truth and absolute truth—depending on the capacity and the spiritual state of any being.^① Both notions are exemplified in the *tetra lemma*, so that each step serves as a move toward final realization of the absolute, forming a pedagogical device to overcome one-sided conceptions and eventually realize ultimate truth.

While ordinary people generally accept the statement “everything exists,” enlightened or spiritually advanced adepts find this a merely worldly truth (*shidi* 世諦) and consider it not valid. Their truth is: “everything is non-existent.” This is so because they have realized that everything exists only because of conditioned causation and thus does not have a “true existence.” Therefore, they understand that the nature of all things is empty.

On this level, their truth can be called absolute truth (*zhendi* 真諦). However, the progression does not stop here. The insight into the “non-existence” of being may still be considered one-sided and therefore just another variant of worldly truth. Someone on a yet higher level of spiritual realization may realize that everything is

① *Zhōnglùn* 中論 (*Mūla-mādhyamaka-kārikā*), T 1564. See especially chapter 24.

existing and non-existing at the same time. This realization again constitutes absolute truth. Nevertheless, even this new realization can be overcome and thus becomes yet again a form of worldly truth. The absolute truth of even more advanced spiritual beings is the realization that everything is neither existing nor not existing. This absolute truth cannot be refuted by further negation. It constitutes a realization of the ultimate, which is interpreted as enlightenment. A schematic representation of the idea looks as follows:

<i>Worldly truth</i>		<i>Absolute truth</i>				
Being	←Negation→	Nonbeing				
		<i>Worldly truth</i>		<i>Absolute truth</i>		
		Nonbeing	←Negation→	Being and nonbeing		
				<i>Worldly truth</i>		<i>Absolute truth</i>
				Being and nonbeing	←Negation→	Neither being nor nonbeing

The tetra lemma and the twofold truth

In this soteriological model, the logic of the *tetra lemma* is the tool to help to obtain correct insight, which leads to enlightenment, to the realization of ultimate truth, and in the Buddhist view to final liberation from the cycle of birth and death, the sea of samsara, in which man is trapped by his ignorance of the true nature of being and becoming.

This soteriological model, as well as the technique of *tetra lemma*

reasoning it relied on, were introduced in China with the translation of the main treatises of Mādhyamika teachings by Kumārajīva at the beginning of the 5th century^①. The teaching of the Middle Way took almost a century to find fertile ground in China. Eventually it became popular among literati monks and laymen of the southern dynasties: educated gentlemen active in the environment of the court or the princely mansions and monks who lived and worked in monasteries with close ties to the court. Here, facilitated by a vibrant culture of debate (Assandri 2004, 513; Jansen 2000), it became popular not only with Buddhists, but also among Daoists.

Daoists adopted the logical method of thinking, which they had come to know through the Buddhist teachings of the Middle Way, in the teachings of Twofold Mystery. They claimed that Laozi 老子 had employed the method of the *tetra lemma* already in the *Daode jing* 道德經 (The Book of the Way and Its Virtue), and they exemplified this in their interpretations. In fact, the very term “twofold mystery” derives from the first chapter of the text (玄之又玄, 眾妙之門).

The earliest representatives are Mèng Zhìzhōu and Zāng Xuánjìng, active in the south during Liáng 梁 (502–557) and Chén 陳 (557–587) dynasties^②. After the reunification, the main proponents lived in the capital Cháng’ ān 長安, where Twofold Mystery teaching became

① Between 401 and 404, Kumārajīva translated Nāgārjuna’ s *Dàzhìdù lùn* 大智度論 (T 1509), and the three basic treatises of the Mādhyamika School, *Zhōnglùn* (T 1564), *Shí’ èrmén lùn* 十二門論 (*Dvādaśadvāra-śāstra*, T 1568) and *Bailùn* 百論 (*Śāta-śāstra*, T 1569). While the *tetra lemma* logic, being rather common in India, is present also in texts that were translated earlier, it were these treatises, from which the Chinese Mādhyamika school (*sānlùn zōng* 三論宗) would take its name.

② See Assandri 2009, 33–39; see also *ibid.* 29–33 for a discussion of the (erroneous) attribution of Sūn Dēng 孫登 from Jìn 晉 dynasty to this tradition.

probably the main stream Daoist teaching of the late 6th and early 7th century. Other representatives were based in Sichuān^①. It's popularity in the early Táng capital of Cháng' ān was due not only to its sophistication but also to the fact that it managed to reconcile crucial issues arising in the process of integrating Daoism from the fragmented traditions of the Six Dynasties into a formally structured and state-supported religion (Assandri 2005, 2009).

After the middle of the Tang Dynasty, it seems that Chongxuanxue gradually faded, Du Guangting writing in the 9th century mentions it, but the main flourishing seems to be over. Chongxuanxue was almost completely forgotten, until in mid 20th century Chinese, Japanese and then Western scholars re-discovered it^②.

① See Assandri 2009, 15-39 for a detailed discussion of origin and spread of this teaching.

② Pioneer of his enterprise was Meng Wentong, (1946; 1948) who presented reconstructions of the commentaries to the *Daode jing* of Cheng Xuanying and Li Rong; twenty years later Yan Lingfeng (1965) published a collection of commentaries to the *Daode jing*, which comprised Cheng Xuanying's commentary. In France, Isabelle Robinet introduced Twofold Mystery teaching in 1977 based on on Meng Wentong's findings in her study of commentaries to the *Daode jing*. Meanwhile in Japan, Yoshioka Yoshitoyo (1959) and Kamata Shigeo (1965, 1966) studied several Daoist texts like the *Benji jing*, *Daojiao yishu*, and *Haikong zangjing*, which show strong Buddhist influence. The *Benji jing* was also published in a facsimile edition of Dunhuang manuscripts in France, by Wu Ch' i-yü in 1960. However, none of these mentioned Chongxuanxue. It was only since the 1980ies that the two subjects of Twofold Mystery thinking in *Daode jing* commentaries and early Tang Daoist scriptures with 'Buddhist influence,' were combined. The Japanese scholars Fujiwara Takao (1983, 1985) and Sunayama Minoru (1980, 1984) were the first to do this, in China chapters on Twofold Mystery philosophy appeared in general histories of Daoism in China, like Ren Jiyu (1990) or Qing Xitai (1994). In 1993 Lu

3. *Chongxuanxue* and the *Yijing*?

So far researchers, including myself, have focused on the interaction of Buddhist and Daoist thought in *Chongxuanxue*, which is the main and very obvious characteristic of this philosophy.

In Six Dynasties and the earlier Tang dynasty, we often assume that Buddhist philosophy was at a peak and Confucianism somewhat declined. Discussing *Chongxuanxue*, accordingly there has not been paid much attention to the role of Confucian teachings or a possible role of the *Yijing* in the development of *Chongxuanxue*.

However, it is acknowledged that *Chongxuan xue* is not only heir to different Daoist movements, but also has a debt to Wei Jin *Xuanxue*. Wei Jin *Xuanxue* emphasized the *Laozi*, just like *Chongxuan xue*, but also the *Yijing*. One of the major representatives of *Chongxuanxue*, the early Tang dynasty author Cheng Xuanying, wrote a commentary to the *Yijing*, which however is lost today.

Furthermore, we do know that in the great public court debates where during the early Tang time representatives of *Chongxuanxue* discussed against Buddhist scholars (see Assandri 2004, 2005 and 2009a), not only Buddhists, but also Confucians participated. One of

Guolong dedicated a book length study to Twofold Mystery teaching. In his History of Daoist philosophy published in 1997, Twofold Mystery teaching takes up literally half of the pages of the book. Li Gang followed in 2005 with another book length study of Twofold Mystery philosophy.

In the English speaking world, Livia Kohn, introduced Twofold Mystery thinking in a chapter of her study of the *Xisheng jing* in 1991; and Chongxuanxue has an entry in the major new reference works, like the Daoism Handbook (2000), the Companion to the Taoist Canon (2004), and the Encyclopedia of Taoism (2007). Robinet 1998, 1999, Sharf 2002, Assandri 2005 dedicated articles or chapters of books to it, and Assandri presented a monograph in 2009.

them was Kong Yingda, imperially appointed scholar of the five Confucian classics, who also wrote a [sub-] commentary to the *Yijing* (*Zhouyi zhengyi*). The Buddhist Daoxuan, who left us the most detailed records of these court debates in his *Jigujin Fo Dao lunheng* (T 2014), relates how Kong Yingda^① defended in one occasion the Daoist Cai Huang, prominent representative of *Chongxuanxue*, in a debate held in 639^② in the Hongwen-Academie^③ (T 2014. 383b20).

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- ① Kong Yingda (Biography in *Jiu Tang Shu* (JTS) 73; *Xin Tang Shu* (XTS) 198) 574-648; was the president of the imperial university since 638. (McMullen, 1988, 73.) Cf. T 2035, 39, S. 364c, which mentions Kong as participant in this debate, while his biography in JTS 73 and XTS 198 do not mention it.
- ② T 2104, 383b20, and T 2036, 11, p. 570a say 8th month of the 12th year of Zhenguan. T 2036, 3, S. 444a has 13th year, also T 2035, 39, 364c.
- ③ Hongwen dian, see McMullen, 1988, 14-15: "... the Hung-wen tien or Hung-wen kuan was founded originally in 621 as the Hsiu-wen kuan... This college was administered by the grand secretary of the chancellery. It had an important library and a support staff, and accepted thirty-eight students, preparing them for examinations... Scholars of the Hung-wen kuan, according to the Liu tien, were entitled to take part in discussions about changes in regulations or ritual questions. The college lasted throughout the dynasty. "(S. 15) Being a so-called "advisory college", scholars of the Hongwen dian belonged to the inner circle of advisors of the emperor himself, see McMullen, 1988, 14: "The advisory colleges were intended to fulfill loosely defined aims ... The advisory colleges were staffed by scholars whose basic offices were elsewhere in the central bureaucracy of the capital ... The establishment of advisory colleges was caused partly by the need to honor a tradition extending back into the period of disunion, but also because the sovereign needed, in times of both crisis and stability, a small, highly selected group of trusted scholars who would offer advice based on history and precedent...

These colleges also supplied the company for entertainment or literary

So, given this social and intellectual background, could the *Yijing* or *Yijing* related philosophy possibly have had some impact in *Chongxuanxue*? And if so, in what way?

4. Onto-hermeneutics and the question of understanding of ultimate truth

In order to discuss this question I propose to consider *Chongxuanxue* in the light of the theory of understanding of onto-hermeneutics.

Professor Chung-ying Cheng has proposed this model of understanding, expanding the Gadamerian hermeneutical model of fusion of Horizons by integrating the element of explicit or implicit reference to ultimate reality.^① He proposed an interpretational model of an “onto-hermeneutic circle” represented in three interacting levels, namely first, the level of “Ontological truth on the philosophical level,” second, the level of “Theoretical cogency on the conceptual level” and third, the level of “Textual integrity/consistency on the linguistic level.”^②

diversion... They were associated with the tradition of Confucian learning and statecraft, and with Confucian ideals of learning and refinement ...”

① Chung-Ying Cheng, “Inquiring into the Primary Model: *Yijing* and the Onto-Hermeneutical Tradition” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 30, nos. 3-4(2003): 371. Cf. Hyun Höchsmann: “Foreseeing a Fusion of Horizons - Gadamer, Quine, and Chung-Ying Cheng,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 34, no. 1(2007): 139.

② Chung-Ying Cheng, “The *Daxue* at issue: An Exercise of Onto-Hermeneutics (an Interpretation of Interpretations),” in: *Classics and Interpretations: The Hermeneutic Tradition in Chinese Culture*, ed. Ching-I Tu (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2000), 27.

The emphasis on “ontological truth” as proposed by Cheng, “where the question of ultimate truth of the interpretation” is raised(Cheng, 2000, 26), is of particular interest in our context. This “is the question directed to the ultimate standard of validity of the theory which is presupposed or proposed in the interpretation of a given text” (Cheng 2000, 26). Cheng emphasizes that this presupposed “understanding of reality can be the goal or the starting point of understanding, it could be used as a basis for integrating and balancing considerations of the supports from other two levels.” (2000, 27)

As I have shown elsewhere(Assandri, 2009) in my analysis of passages of Cheng Xuanying’ s commentary to the *Laozi*, while he adopts extremely skillfully the difficult logic of *tetra lemma* thinking introduced by Buddhism, and while *Chongxuan xue* in general adopted many tenets and conceptions from Buddhism, *Chongxuanxue*’ s view of ultimate reality nevertheless remains entirely “Daoist” or better “Chinese.”

In fact, if we compare the view of ultimate reality as expressed in the commentary to the first chapter of the *Laozi* by Cheng Xuanying, one of the major representatives of *Chongxuanxue* in the early Tang, and active in the capital between 631 and the 650ies^①, with contemporary *Yijing* scholarship, like the *Zhouyi zhengyi* of Kong Yingda, we can find surprising parallels.

These parallels underscore not only that there may have been a dialogue among scholars studying the *Yijing*, like Kong Yingda, and Daoists developing *Chongxuan* thought, they also could indicate that the conception of ultimate reality developed from the study of the

① *Xin Tangshu*, 59(Ershiwushi vol. 6, 163b) mentions he was banned to Yuzhou 郁州 during the Yonghui era(650-656), without however giving any reasons for this. He continued to work and write in Yuzhou.

Yijing or in the least compatible with the *Yijing*, were at the very core also of the developing Daoist philosophy (義學). Thus, even if the development of *Chongxuanxue* seems to have derived from an interaction of Buddhist philosophy and Daoism, based mainly on the *Laozi*, the application of onto-hermeneutical models of understanding would indicate that also contemporary interpretation of the *Yijing* was part of the framework from which *Chongxuan xue* developed.

5. Ultimate truth, Cosmogony and Soteriology: Daoism, Buddhism, Confucianism

The term *chongxuan*, Twofold Mystery, came to designate the process of rejection of all possible statements about reality, which would lead the adept to realize Dao (*dedao* 得道).

Thus, the mental process adopted by the Daoist proponents of *Chongxuanxue* certainly has a strong Buddhist Madhyamika connotation; however - does this at the same time condition the conception of Dao, of ultimate truth? Can we assume that adopting or co-opting the way to reach ultimate truth from Buddhism would lead *Chongxuan xue* to adopt also the vision of ultimate truth as proposed by Buddhists?

We need to keep in mind also the level of linguistics or language here - the term employed by the Daoists to designate the ultimate truth reached by the process of continuous negation is *dedao* 得道, to reach the Dao.

Thus DAO, ultimate reality in the vision of *Laozi* and the *Daode jing*, which is ontological substrate and creative and regulative origin of all being at the same time, remains the term employed to designate ultimate reality presupposed by *Chongxuan xue*.

Thus we can say, *Chongxuan xue* proposes a way to reach insight and embodiment of ultimate reality, which is strongly influenced by Buddhist Madhyamika thought. However, it presupposes a concept of

ultimate reality which maintains characteristics that are in last analysis not even compatible with Buddhism. In terms of onto-hermeneutical understanding in the discussion of *Chongxuanxue* this question is crucial.

In fact, while *Chongxuanxue* proposes a soteriology based on insight similar to Buddhism, their vision of ultimate truth is different.

Twofold Mystery thinkers start with the premise that the indefinable *Dào* is ontological substrate and origin of being. Following logical considerations as proposed by the great third-century *Xuánxué* 玄學 scholar *Wáng Bì* 王弼^① in his interpretation of the *Dàodé jīng*, they equated *Dào* with “negativity” (wú 無) or “non-being”, because anything that contains all “things” must necessarily be empty, a “no-thing” or “non-being” - equally termed wú 無. This follows logically from the fact that *Dào* is origin of all being, because, if it had any definite characteristic(or thing-ness), it would automatically exclude the opposite. The ontological consideration entails epistemological consequences: what “is not” can not be “said” or defined with the means of human language or thinking.

Chéng Xuányīng writes in his commentary to the first chapter of the *Dàodé jīng*:

① *Wáng Bì* (226-249) was one of the most brilliant commentators of the *Dàodé jīng* history has seen. The early *Táng* emperor *Taizōng* included him among the twenty-one “sages and teachers of antiquity” honored in the imperial university (*Jiù Tángshū* 189.595a). We can thus assume that his interpretation was current and well known among intellectuals of the early *Táng*. For the particular point in question compare *Wáng Bì*’s commentary to the first chapter of the *Dàodé jīng*, see *Wagner* 2003, 82-83 for a critical edition with English translation

常道者不可以名言辯不可以心慮知。妙絕希夷理窮恍惚。故知言象之表方契疑常 可道可說非常道也。

The “eternal *Dào*” cannot be discussed with words and names, and it cannot be known with deliberation of the mind. Its mystery is beyond the invisible and the inaudible. Its principle goes to the depths of the elusive and indistinct.^① Therefore, only when one knows that words and images merely scrape the surface, one can conceive the unchanging eternal. Whatever can be said, whatever is talked about, is not the eternal *Dào*. (Chéng Xúanyīng, ch. 1; Yán 1983, 297)

Epistemological considerations like this presented a fertile ground for a co-option of the tetra lemma thinking, which not only introduced new stimuli to the discussion on being or nonbeing, which was a prominent topic of Xuánxué and Pure Talk meetings, but also offered a constructive soteriological model.

However, *Dào*, while its main attribute is “negativity” wú 無, is not intended as a negation of existence of the myriad things. On the contrary, it is their very source, it is an ultimate reality that embraces all being:

大道者何也? 虛無之系, 造化之根 。 。 。 萬象以之生, 五音以之成, 。 。 。 生生成成, 今古不移, 此之謂道者也 “What is the great *Dào*? It is the guideline of empty non-being, it is the origin of creation and change... The

① This couplet refers to *Dàodé jīng* 14.

myriad things are born by it, the five sounds are completed by it. ... Bringing forth and bringing forth, completing and completing, this has always been unchanging. This is what we call the great *Dào*. (Chéng Xuányīng, commentary to chapter 1 of the *Dàodé jīng*, Yán 1983, 295)

Dào is thus origin and source of all being, and at the same time it is non-being.

This paradoxical or multi-level conception of *Dao* and the world, or of transcendence in relation to things is what distinguishes this teaching from any Buddhist teaching.

Buddhism relegates the world of being, creation and becoming, to the “sea of samsara” (*kuhai*) caused by illusion. The transcendent is completely separated and beyond this dimension of being and becoming. Consequently also reaching ultimate reality implies total separation from the world of being and becoming. When the Buddhists speak of *WU*, nothingness (which they use occasionally instead of *KONG*, emptiness, *śūnyatā*), they imply a transcendent which is completely different and detached from his world of being. When the Daoists speak of *WU* or negativity, they speak of something that embraces all being and is the very origin of being.

Here is a major and inseparable difference between Daoism and Buddhism; the vision of ultimate reality, no matter how many concepts were adopted or co-opted from Buddhism, remained in a Chinese frame, in a frame in which also the *Yijing* and its interpretation may have played a role.

Keeping in mind, that the scope of the *Yijing*, in the eyes of its commentators, is rather to interpret and understand the workings of *Dao* with regard to the phenomenal world (divination), while the scope

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of the *Laozi*, in the vision of the commentators of *Chongxuanxue*, is to show a concrete way to the adept to “return to Dao” by retracing step by step the process that leads from eternal Dao to being, we can still see commonalities in the perception of the underlying ultimate reality.

Comparing Cheng Xuanying’s view of Dao as Ultimate reality expressed in his commentary to the first chapter of the *Laozi* with Kong Yingda’s view of Dao as ultimate reality as expressed in his commentary to the Xici 5, “一阴一阳之谓道”, we find parallels not only on a conceptual level but even on the linguistic level.

→ Both emphasize that Dao is beyond words and images:

Kong has: 「寂然無體，不可為象」者，謂寂然幽靜而無體，不可以形象求，是不可為象。“Still and without substance, it can not be an image” means that he says it is still, dark and motionless and without substance, one can not search for it by means of form or image, this means “it can not be an image.”

Cheng has: 故知言象之表方契疑常 可道可說非常道也。Therefore, only when one knows that words and images merely scrape the surface, one can conceive the unchanging eternal. Whatever can be said, whatever is talked about, is not the eternal Dào. (Chéng Xúanyīng, ch. 1; Yán 1983, 297)

→ Both emphasize Dao as empty negativity or non-being - with the rationale that only as such it is able to penetrate and encompass all being:

Cheng has: 大道者何也? 虛無之系, 造化之根, 神明之本, 天生之源
What is the great Dào? It is the guideline of empty nonbeing, it is the origin of creation and change, it is the root of the light of

the spirit [*shēnmíng* 神明], and the source of natural becoming [*tiānshēng* 天生].

Kong says: 道是虛無之稱，以虛無能開通於物，故稱之曰道。云「無不通，無不由」者，若處於有，有則為物礙難，不可當通。道既虛無為體，則不為礙難，故曰「無不通」也。「無不由」者，言萬物皆因之而通，由之而有。

Dao is a designation of empty negativity; since empty negativity can penetrate (kaitong implies being without obstacles, but also explaining and understanding) all things, therefore it is called Dao. When [Han Kangbo] says “Nothing it does not penetrate, nothing that doesn’ t come from it,” means that if one stays in [the realm of] being, then since there is being, the things have obstructions (ai as physical obstruction and nan as intellectual obstruction), so it can not be “penetrating” (tong). Since the Dao has empty negativity as is substance, it has no obstructions, therefore he says “nothing it does not penetrate.” “Nothing that doesn’ t come from it” means that all the ten thousand things, following it are encompassed/penetrated [by Dao] and coming from it, exist.

→ In both visions SHEN, spirit plays a crucial role setting in motion the process of becoming

Kong has: 是「有之用極，而無之功顯」，是神之發作動用，以生萬物，其功成就，乃在於無形。應機變化，雖有功用，本其用之所以，亦在於無也。故至乎「神無方，而《易》無體」，自然無為之道，可顯見矣。當其有用之時，道未見也。

This means “The function of being must be at its highest, and then the merit of negativity becomes visible.” This means the initiating doing and active functioning of the spirit, in order to bring forth the ten thousand things, its merit accomplishes, this lies in it having no form. Responding to stimuli and changing, even if this has merit and function, originally that where its function comes from, is also

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in negativity(*wu*). This is why it comes to “Spirit has no direction/place, and the ‘changes’ have no substance” –this is where the Dao of out of itself so not acting consciously(*ziran wuwei*), can be made manifest. When it is functioning, one can not see the Dao.

And, commenting on Xici xia zhang 6: (子曰：乾坤其易之门邪？乾阳物也，坤阴物也。阴阳合德，而刚柔有体，以体天地之撰，以通神明之德。)

正義曰：「以通神明之德」者，萬物變化，或生或成，是神明之德。When he says “through being penetrated by the power of the brilliance of Spirit”, he means that the changes of the ten thousand things, if they are brought forth or completed, it is the power of the brilliance of spirit [that causes this].

Cheng has:

然則生天地人物之形者，元氣也。授天地人物之靈者神明也。

Thus, what brings forth the form of heaven, earth, humanity, and things is primordial *qi*. What gives numinous power [*ling* 靈] to heaven, earth, humanity, and things is the brilliance of the spirit.^①

And: 本無神也。虛極而神生。本無氣也。神運而氣化。氣本無質，凝委而成形。

Original nonbeing is spirit. At the height of emptiness the spirit is born. Original nonbeing is *qi*. The spirit moves and the *qi* transforms. *Qi* is originally without qualities. It coagulates, and [that’ s how] form emerges.

And: 萬象以之生，五音以之成，生者有極，成者必虧，生生成成，今古不移，此之謂道者也。The myriad things are born by it; the five sounds are completed by it. What is born has its end-point; what is completed

① Compare Laozi 39: 神得一以靈.

must wane. Bringing forth and bringing forth, completing and completing, forever this is unchanging. This is what we call Dao.

→ Specific terms from the *Yijing*

Cheng Xuanying employs and combines often terms which derive rather from the *Yijing* than from the *Daode jing*. Some examples are contained in the citations above, another one is here:

Cheng has: 故乾坤統天地，精魂御人物。氣有陰陽之革，神無寒暑之變。雖群物糾紛(=糾紛)不可勝紀，滅而復生，終而復始，而道德之體，神明之心，應感不窮，未嘗疲於動用之境矣。

This is why Qian 乾 and Kun 坤,^① govern heaven and earth, and essence and spirit soul [*hun* 魂] control people and things. *Qi* has the change of yin and yang; spirit does not have the transformation of cold and hot. Although all the things seem chaotic, they cannot overcome these regulations. Die and be born again, finish and begin again. Yet the substance of Dao and its virtue, and the heart of the spirit—their responding is never exhausted, they never tire in the realm where they are employed.

The terms 乾坤, 精魂, 陰陽, 寒暑, 神明 are all terms used in the *Yijing*, in particular in the Xici section, as also cited below. With regard to the *Daode jing*, the terms QIANKUN and HUN do not appear at all, nor does SHENMING appear as a binomial expression. Yin and Yang appear only once in chapter 42, and HANSHU (SHU in a different writing) appear only once in ch. 45.

Kong has: 精氣為物，遊魂為變，精氣煙燼，聚而成物。聚極則散，而

① This refers to the first two hexagrams of the *Yijing*.

遊魂為變也。游魂，言其遊散也。[疏]正義曰：云：「精氣為物」者，謂陰陽精靈之氣，氤氳積聚而為萬物也。「遊魂為變」者，物既積聚，極則分散，將散之時，浮游精魂，去離物形，而為改變，則生變為死，成變為敗，或未死之間，變為異類也。

是故知鬼神之情狀。盡聚散之理，則能知變化之道，無幽而不通也。

The examples above should be considered as a preliminary exploration; detailed research and comparison of Cheng Xuanying's commentary to the *Laozi* and Kong Yinga's commentary to the *Yijing* could probably render many more concrete examples of inspiration - common inspiration by a common vision of ultimate truth or mutual inspiration between *Yijing* and *Chongxuanxue*.

6. The Buddhist view of the issue

Lastly, it has to be noted that I am not the first to claim an affinity of the conception of underlying ontological truth between the Daoists which are counted as representatives of *Chongxuan xue* and the *Yijing*.

In 663 (Longshuo 3), on the 14th day of the 4th month, in a public debate in the Penglai palace^① the Buddhist Lingbian asked the Daoist Fang Huichang^②, who had presented a lecture on the *Laozi* [T 2104, 393b14f]: “So far in your presentation of Dao and De, you refer only to the teaching of *Laozi*, yet Dao and De exist also in the Confucian teachings!”

The Daoist responded that the *Daode jing* has something which the teachings of the Confucians (RU) do not have. The Buddhist countered the argument with reference to the *Xiao jing* (1: 先王有至德要道) and the

① I. e. Daming gong; the Penglai Hall was part of the imperial living quarters at the time. See Ma Dezhi 馬德志 and Ma Honglu 馬洪路, *Tangdai chang'an gongting shihua* 唐代長安宮廷史話, Beijing : 1994, 37.

② Fang Huichang • | ≈↑≥: vgl. S. 159 XX der vorliegenden Arbeit.

Yijing with the sentence “一阴一阳之谓道” cited above. He maintains that “this Dao” can be found also in the teachings of the Ru, so the Daoist should not try to claim a monopoly on it. [393b16] The Daoist instead defends his claim with the words: “ [Our Daoist] Dao is out of it self so (*ziran*) and it is the origin of all being (the root, *ben*); for all others (probably referring to the Confucians) it refers to the world (the branches, *mo*). ” [393b18]

While the Daoist certainly has a point here, since in the *Xiaojing* quote Dao is an attribute of the King, and in the *Yijing* quote, at face value, Dao is the sum of two other things, namely Yin and Yang, the Buddhist is quick to point out that the *Yijing* does value the Dao as a basic “root” and origin: “While it is true that the Dao of *ziran* is not only contained in Yin and Yang, and thus the statement that in Daoism Dao is the root, is correct, [we have to state] that Yin and Yang are also contained in *ziran* - so how could we say that the Zhouyi treats Dao as something belonging to the branches (*mo*)? [393b18]

In fact, Kong Yingda’s commentary cited above closes “Even if Dao is non-being in Yin and Yang, it is not separate from Yin and Yang; even if Yin and Yang originate in Dao, they are not identical with Dao.”^① The Daoist tries to defend himself by re-stating that in Daoism Dao is origin and ancestor of all being, however the Buddhist is quick to rebut that in respect to Dao being the origin, *Laozi* and the *Yijing* have the same conception, and eventually he wins the argument.

APPENDIX 1: Cheng Xuanying’s view of Dao as ultimate reality

Excerpt from Cheng Xuanying’s commentary to Daode jing 1^② with

① In *Shisan jing zhushu*, Zhouyi zhengyi, 7, S. 78/66 a.

② Cheng’s commentary to Daode jing 1 has been reconstructed in two different

translation

大道者何也？虛無之系，造化之根，神明之本，
天生之源，其大無外，其術無內，浩曠無端，杳
冥無對，至幽靡察 而大明垂光，至淨無心，而
品物有方，混漠無形，寂寥無聲，萬象以之生，
五音以之成，生者有極，成者必虧，生生成成，
今古不移，此之謂道者也

What is the great *Dào*? It is the guideline of empty nonbeing, it is the origin of creation and change, it is the root of the light of the spirit [*shēnmíng* 神明], and the source of natural becoming [*tiānshēng* 天生]. Its greatness has nothing that could go beyond it; its tininess has nothing that could go inside. Unlimited, it is without beginning; dark, it is without peers. Ultimate dark, it is inscrutable; yet the great light sheds its radiance. Ultimate silence, it is without mind, yet all things have its plan. Confused and vast, it is without form. Silent and still, it is without sound.

The myriad things are born by it; the five sounds are completed by it. What is born has its end-point; what is completed must wane. Bringing forth and bringing forth, completing and completing, forever this is unchanging. This is what we call *Dao*.

元氣大虛之先寂寥何有，至精感激 而真一生焉。真一運神，而元氣自

versions by Meng Wengtong(2001, orig. 1946) and Yan Lingfeng(1983, 295-305). In Meng' s reconstruction, there is a short preface to the first scroll, which is missing in Yan' s text. Also, Yan' s reconstruction is much longer -642 versus 246 characters. Meng *ibid.* considers the long portion that Yan renders as part of the commentary a later insertion. However, the exceptional length of this first section as reconstructed by Yan makes sense in view of the preface in Meng' s version. Cf. Assandri 2009, 201, note 1.

化。元氣者無中之有有中之無，廣不可量，微不可察。氤氳漸著，混茫無倪，萬象之端，兆朕於此。。。。

Before primordial *qi* [*yuanqi* 元氣] and great emptiness, in absolute stillness, what could have been there? The subtlest essence [*jing* 精] arose, and the True One [*zhenyi* 真一] emerged. The True One moved spirit [*shen* 神] and primordial *qi* transformed. Primordial *qi* is the being in the center of nonbeing [and at the same time] the nonbeing in the center of being. Its expansiveness is immeasurable; its tininess is inscrutable. The generating forces [i. e. Yin and Yang] become manifest gradually, vast and vague, without beginning [and yet] the beginning of the myriad beings. This is where the subtle mystery lies.

於是清通澄朗之氣而浮為天。煩味濁滯之氣積而為地。平和柔順之氣結而為人倫。錯謬剛戾之氣散為雜類。自一氣之所育播萬殊而種分既涉化機遷變罔極。

Upon this, the clear, penetrating, pure, and bright *qi* floated up and became heaven. The troubled, dark, muddy, and obscure *qi* coagulated and became earth. The peaceful, moderate, yielding and agreeable *qi* combined and became humanity. The confused, mistaken, hard, and violent *qi* dissipated and became the different kinds^① [of things/beings]. From one *qi*, ten thousand differences are nourished and sown, but that the kinds are separate is due to the boundlessness of transformation and change, of receding and changing.

然則生天地人物之形者，元氣也。授天地人物之靈者神明也。

Thus, what brings forth the form of heaven, earth, humanity, and things is primordial *qi*. What gives numinous power [*ling* 靈] to heaven,

① The term *zalei* 雜類 (different or mixed kinds) could refer to all kinds of species of beings. However, it could be also intended as a synonym of *zachong* 雜種 (mixed breeds), used as a derogative designation for barbarians.

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earth, humanity, and things is the brilliance of the spirit.^①

故乾坤統天地，精魂御人物。氣有陰陽之革，神無寒暑之變。雖群物糾紛(=糾紛)不可勝紀，滅而復生，終而復始，而道德之體，神明之心，應感不窮，未嘗疲於動用之境矣。

This is why Qian 乾 and Kun 坤,^② govern heaven and earth, and essence and spirit soul [*hun* 魂] control people and things. *Qi* has the change of yin and yang; spirit does not have the transformation of cold and hot. Although all the things seem chaotic, they cannot overcome these regulations. Die and be born again, finish and begin again. Yet the substance of Dao and its virtue, and the heart of the spirit—their responding is never exhausted, they never tire in the realm where they are employed.

道重說包億萬之天而不為大。貫秋毫之末而不為小。先虛無而不為始，後天地而不為終，昇積陽而不為名為明，淪重陰而不為晦。

Dao, to say it again, contains billions of heavens and yet cannot be taken as big. It could fit in the tip of an autumn down^③ and yet cannot be taken to be small. It was there before empty nonbeing and yet cannot be taken for the beginning. It exists after heaven and earth and yet cannot be taken to be the end. It rises to the most concentrated yang and yet cannot be taken to be bright. It sinks down to the heaviest yin and yet cannot be taken to be dark.

本無神也。虛極而神生。本無氣也。神運而氣化。氣本無質，凝委而成形。形本無情，動用而虧性，形成性動，去道彌遠。故溺於生死，遷於陰陽，不能自止。非道存而忘也。故道能自無而生有，豈不能使有同於無乎。有同於無則有不滅矣。

Original nonbeing is spirit. At the height of emptiness the spirit is born. Original nonbeing is *qi*. The spirit moves and the *qi*

① Compare *Laozi* 39: 神得一以靈.

② This refers to the first two hexagrams of the *Yijing*, symbolizing male and female. See Wilhelm 1950.

③ This refers to a well-known image used in *Zhuangzi* 2.39.

transforms. *Qi* is originally without qualities. It coagulates, and [that' s how] form emerges. Form is originally without feelings. It moves and is utilized and [that' s how] it loses its inner nature. Form becomes complete and the inner nature moves [this is what] drives one ever farther away from the *Dào*. This is why one is given over to life and death, and moves away from yin and yang; and [no-one] can stop [this process] by himself. It is not so, that the *Dào* is [first, when man is born] there, and then [when he begins to decay] forgotten. This is why the *Dào* can bring forth being from nonbeing. How should it not be [also] capable of making being the same as nonbeing!

APPENDIX 2: Excerpt from Kong Yingda's Commentary to Xici

shang 5 with a tentative translation:

Kong Yingda (574–648) was called by Tang taizong in 638 to produce an officially recognized orthodox sub-commentary to the Classics, including the *Yijing*, after their definitive text had been established by Yan Shigu (see Cambridge History, 3, 215)^①.

① A modern translator, Richard Lynn, calls Kong' s *Zhouyi zhengyi* “largely a subcommentary” to Wang Bi' s *Zhouyi zhu*, (“which is also included in the *Zhouyi zhengyi* in its entirety” Lynn *ibid*, 5). Richard Lynn judges Kong' s commentary as “often wordy and redundant, but he seems to have tried to read the *Changes* as he understood Wang to have read it...” (*ibid*, 5).

Wang Bi (226–249), the great Xuanxue scholar and famous commentator of the *Laozi*, had written a commentary to the *Yijing*, however leaving out the *Xici zhuan*, *Xu gua*, *Zagua* and *Shuogua* sections. These sections instead were commented by Han Kangbo (d. 385), who in the view of Richard Lynn “was not an original thinker but his remarks seem to consistently reflect Wang [Bi]’ s approach” (*Ibid*, p. 5). Kong Yingda incorporated Han’ s commentary in addition to Wang’ s in his *Zhengyi*, and added further explanations.

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We will look at his commentary to one sentence of the Xici zhuan, 《易经·系辞上传》第五章, namely “一阴一阳之谓道, 继之者善也, 成之者性也。”

Long before Kong, Han Kangbo (4th century) had commented this sentence equating the Dao with Negativity (*wu*). 一陰一陽之謂道, 道者何? 無之稱也, 無不通也, 無不由也, 況之曰道。寂然天體, 不可為象。必有之用極, 而無之功顯, 故至乎「神無方, 而易無體」, 而道可見矣。故窮變以盡神, 因神以明道, 陰陽雖殊, 無一以待之。在陰為無陰, 陰以之生; 在陽為無陽, 陽以之成, 故曰「一陰一陽」也。

The reciprocal process of yin and Yang is called Dao. What is this Dao? It is a name for nonbeing [*wu*]; it is that which pervades everything; and it is that from which everything derives. As an equivalent we call it Dao. As it operates silently and is without substance, it is not possible to provide images for it. Only when the functioning of being reaches its zenith do the merits of nonbeing become manifest. Therefore, even though it so happens that the numinous is not restricted to place and change and is without substance, yet the Dao itself can be seen: it is by investigating change thoroughly that one exhausts all the potential of the numinous, and it is through the numinous that one clarifies what Dao is. Although *yin* and *yang* are different entities, we deal with them in terms of the unity of nonbeing. When the Dao is in the *yin* state,

If we want to accept Lynn' s view of Kong Yingda or not, we can note that Kong' s reading of the Yijing is in line with Wang Bi' s reading.

it does not actually exist as yin, but it is by means of yin that it comes into existence, and when it is in the yang state, it does not actually exist as yang, but it is by means of yang that it comes into being. This is why it is referred to as “the reciprocal process of yin and yang.” That which allows the Dao to continue to operate is human goodness [shan], and that which allows it to bring things to completion is human nature [xing].

(Lynn, 2004, 53 ??)

Kong’ s sub-commentary here reads:

[疏]「一陰」至「謂道」。

正義曰：一謂無也，無陰無陽，乃謂之道。一得為無者，無是虛無，虛無是大虛，不可分別，唯一而已，故以一為無也。若其有境，則彼此相形，有二有不得為一。故在陰之時，而不見為陰之功；在陽之時，而不見為陽之力，自然而有陰陽，自然無所營為，此則道之謂也。故以言之為道，以數言之謂之一，以體言之謂之無，以物得開通謂之道，以微妙不測謂之神，以應機變化謂之易，總而言之，皆虛無之謂也。聖人以人事名之，隨其義理，立其稱號。

The Zhengyi says: One designates Negativity(wu). There is no Yin and there is no Yang, this is then called Dao. One can be Negativity(wu), is because Negativity is “empty nonbeing”, empty nonbeing is Great Emptiness, which can not be analyzed by distinguishing it from something else, it is only One and that’ s it; this is why One can stand for Negativity(wu).

If it has an object of knowledge (*jing*, a Buddhist term, originally designates a sphere that corresponds to a sense organ, in relation to the mind it designates Objects), then that and this give each other form (by distinguishing themselves from each other); since there are two, then being can not be One anymore. Therefore, when it is in YIN,

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but you cannot see it, this is the effect of YIN, when it is in Yang, but you can't see the force of Yang, naturally out of itself there is Yin and Yang, naturally out of it self there is no consciously interfering action, then this is the designation of Dao. Therefore, if we use words we designate it Dao; if we speak about it in terms of numbers, it is ONE, if we speak of it in terms of Substance, it is Negativity(wu), if we speak about it in terms of it penetrating and creating all things, it is Dao, if we speak about it in terms of subtlety that is unfathomable, it is Spirit(shen), if we consider that it responds to stimuli and produces change, we call it YI(changes), to sum it up, these are all designations of Empty Negativity. The Sage names it in order to serve the people/ according to the affairs of man, and following its meaning and principle, he establishes the designations and names.

○注「道者」至「一陽也」。○正義曰：云：「道者何？無之稱」者，此韓氏自問其道而釋之也。道是虛無之稱，以虛無能開通於物，故稱之曰道。

The Zhengyi says: When it says “What is Dao? It is a designation of negativity(wu),” this is Han Kangbo's explanation of the Dao. Dao is a designation of empty negativity; since empty negativity can penetrate(kaitong implies being without obstacles, but also explaining and understanding) all things, therefore it is called Dao.

云「無不通，無不由」者，若處於有，有則為物礙難，不可當通。道既虛無為體，則不為礙難，故曰「無不通」也。「無不由」者，言萬物皆因之而通，由之而有。云「況之曰道」者，比況道路以為稱也。

When he says “Nothing it does not penetrate, nothing that doesn't come from it,” means that if one stays in [the realm of] being, then since there is being, the things have obstructions(*ai* as physical obstruction and *nan* as intellectual obstruction), so it can not be “penetrating” (tong). Since the Dao has empty negativity as is substance, it has no obstructions, therefore he says “nothing it does not penetrate.” “Nothing that doesn't come from it” means that

all the ten thousand things, following it are penetrated [by Dao, possibly here intended as that which provides existence?] and coming from it, exist.

When he says “Analogizing it, we say Dao,” he means we compare it to a street as a designation.

「寂然無體，不可為象」者，謂寂然幽靜而無體，不可以形象求，是不可為象。至如天覆地載，日照月臨，冬寒夏暑，春生秋殺，萬物運動，皆由道而然，豈見其所營，知其所為？是「寂然無體，不可為象」也。

“Still and without substance, it can not be an image” means that he says it is still, dark and motionless and without substance, one can not search for it by means of form or image, this means “it can not be an image.”

When it comes to Heaven covering, earth carrying, the sun shining and the moon rising, winter being cold and summer being hot, spring bringing forth and autumn making decay, the movements of the ten thousand things, all are from Dao the way they are, how could they see its workings or know where it comes from? This is what “Still and without substance, it can not be an image” means.

云「必有之用 極而無之功顯」者，猶若風雨是有之所用，當用之時，以無為心，風雨既極之後，萬物賴此風雨而得生育，是生育之功，由風雨無心而成。是「有之用極，而無之功顯」，是神之發作動用，以生萬物，其功成就，乃在於無形。應機變化，雖有功用，本其用之所以，亦在於無也。故至乎「神無方，而《易》無體」，自然無為之道，可顯見矣。當其有用之時，道未見也。

When he says “The function of being must be at its highest, and then the merit of negativity becomes visible,” this is like wind and rain are what being has as function. When it has to be used, it does this without intentional mind, after wind and rain reach the highest, the ten thousand things are born and nourished by this wind and rain; this is the merit of bearing and raising, which is completed by wind and rain without intention. This means “The function of being must be at its highest, and then the merit of negativity becomes visible.”

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This means the initiating doing and active functioning of the spirit, in order to bring forth the ten thousand things, its merit accomplishes, this lies in it having no form. Responding to stimuli and changing, even if this has merit and function, originally that where its function comes from, is also in negativity(wu). This is why it comes to “Spirit has no direction/place, and the ‘changes’ have no substance” – this is where the Dao of out of itself so not acting consciously(ziran wuwei), can be made manifest. When it is functioning, one can not see the Dao.

云「故窮變以盡神」者，神則杳然不測，千變萬化。聖人則窮此千變萬化，以盡神之妙理，故云窮變化以盡神。

When he says “Therefore [the sage] studies exhaustively the changes in order to [understand] exhaustively the spirit”, this means that the spirit is dark and not fathomable, [yet it causes] the thousand changes and ten thousand transformations. The sage then studies these thousand changes and ten thousand transformations exhaustively in order to understand exhaustively the wondrous principle of the spirit, this is why he says “studies exhaustively the changes in order to [understand] exhaustively the spirit.”

云「因神以明道」者，謂盡神之理，唯在虛無，因此虛無之神，以明道之所在，道亦虛無，故云「因神以明道」也。

When [Han Kangbo] says “following the Spirit to illuminate Dao,” he refers to exhaustively studying the spirits’ s wondrous principle. This is only in empty negativity; therefore the spirit of empty negativity serves to illuminate where the Dao is. Dao is also empty negativity; that’ s why he says “following the spirit to illuminate Dao.”

「陰陽雖殊，無一以待之」者，言陰之與陽，雖有兩氣，恒用虛無之一，以擬待之。言在陽之時，亦以為虛無，無此陽也。在陰之時，亦以為虛無，無此陰也。

“Although Yin and Yang are different, nothingness and one [are used to] discuss it,” means that when we speak about the relation

of Yin and Yang, even if they are two different *Qi*'s, we always use the Oneness of empty negativity, in order to discuss/propose about them. When we say “within Yang,” this also is empty negativity, there is no “this Yang.” When we say ‘within Yin’, then this is also empty negativity, there is no ‘this Yin.’

云「在陰為無陰，陰以之生」者，謂道雖在於陰，而無於陰，言道所生皆無陰也。雖無于陰，陰終由道而生，故言「陰以之生」也。「在陽為無陽，陽以之成」者，謂道雖在陽，陽中必無道也。雖無於陽，陽必由道而成，故言「陽以成之」也。道雖無於陰陽，然亦不離於陰陽，陰陽雖由道成，即陰陽亦非道，故曰「一陰一陽」也。

When [Han] says “within Yin it is not Yin, yin brings forth relying on it”, this means that although the Dao is within Yin, it is also not within Yin, this says that everything the Dao brings forth is not Yin. Even though it is not in Yin, Yin ultimately is born from dao; therefore he says “Yin is born by it”. When he says “Within Yang it is not yang, Yang completes relying on it,” he means that Dao although it is within Yang, within Yang there can not be Dao. Even if it is not in Yang, Yang must necessarily complete from Dao. This is why he says “Yang completes relying on it.” Although Dao is not in Yin and Yang, it is also not separate from Yin and Yang; Although Yin and Yang are completed by Dao, Yin and yang are still not Dao, this is why it says “One Yin and One Yang.”

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<摘要>

南北朝時期，中華帝國的宗教信仰呈現出多樣性。重玄學是中世紀早期道教和哲學的重要組成部分，也是唐代宗教的一個特色。本文討論了道教重玄學的複雜性，以及其發生的背景和原因。

關鍵詞：本體，詮釋學，重玄學，易經，考證

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