

# LAO TZU'S NON-ACTION THOUGHT AND ITS VALUE

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## ***Abstract***

*Lao Tzu's non-action thought (Wu wei) was born and developed in the historical period of Spring and Autumn - Warring States in which the society was dramatically turbulent. At that time, most ancient Chinese philosophical thought aimed at transforming society from being chaotic to being flourishing through the improvement of human awareness. Hence, Lao Tzu was not an exception when he gave the doctrine of Tao which consists of systematic views and a dialectical ideology with the laws of equilibrium, repetition and non-action theory. Also, the theory of non-action aspired to convert the current society into a peaceful and prosperous one. Up to now, his "non-action" thought still has certain positive value. However, when researching into Lao Tzu's "non-action" thought, we find that many scientists have had incomprehensive views towards his thought. Through this article, we hope to put them in the right place.*

**Keywords:** non-action, thought, value, Tao

## **I. Introduction**

Lao Tzu is an outstanding representative of ancient Eastern philosophy in general and Chinese philosophy in particular. He is considered the founder of the Taoist school of philosophy - one of the three huge philosophical schools in the Spring-Autumn period - the Warring States. Lao Tzu's work, which is *Tao Te Ching*, is one of the most remarkable treatises in the history of Chinese philosophy. It is his masterpiece which raises a numerous of significant philosophical questions. Lao Tzu's non-action thought is one of the quintessences that makes up the unique identity of Chinese culture. In addition, together with this great culture, the influence of Lao Tzu's non-action thought has spread to many countries in Eastern Asia, Vietnam and the world in the current international integration context.

In this article, we focus on researching into the emergence of Lao Tzu's non-action thought and its main content, from which we can draw several values and make discussions about it. In order to perform these tasks, we carry out some main research methods such as general analysis, logic and history.

## **II. Content**

### **2.1. The reason why the non-action thought emerged**

In the ancient times, in the East in general and in China in particular, the first brilliant civilized achievements of human history were formed and developed. During this period, China had a fairly well-organized

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society with the highest cultural routines ever. In the Spring - Autumn - Warring States period, there were a myriad of social events, plus the context of fierce competition, which was also the era when many schools of thought flourished most in China. Related to this, philosophical thought, which is considered as a form of social consciousness, is the spiritual aspect of social life, including all the views, thoughts, moods, emotions ... of the communal communities, all of which arise from social existence and reflect the social existence in certain stages of development. Chinese philosophical thought stemmed in prehistoric times; however, since the Spring-Autumn period - the Warring States period, it has become really systematic.

During this period, along with economic development and population growth, there were fierce battles among major countries for hegemony. The social situation underwent huge changes; along with dramatic alterations of social structure, this process made the society chaotic in order to be rearranged. The king's role was not as powerful as before, but it was shared by the vassal states. The Spring and Autumn period lasted in 242 years; however, there were about 500 wars happening in big and small scales at that time. These wars plunged Chinese society into chaos.

In order to wage war and expand the territory, the lords had brutally exploited both human and wealth. Social conflicts in China were becoming increasingly dramatic and social turmoil was gradually increasing. In particular, the previous strict and solemn rituals contributing to the protection and flourishing of the Zhou dharma regime, they were also despised so far. Also, respectfulness and morality were often reversed and degraded.

Lao Tzu's un-action thought was born not only from historical-social conditions during the Spring-Autumn period - Warring States period, but also from the inheritance of previous theoretical premises. To be outstanding in all early materialistic ideas at that time, it was the concept of the coordinated effects of the Five Elements. The first five basic physical elements which form everything in the universe are metal, wood, water, fire and soil, which was found in the *Book of Documents (Shangshu)* and the concept of the relationships, the complementary interaction between two opposing sides, the two fundamental forces of the world namely Yin and Yang, and the eight physical elements that make up all things including Heaven/Firmament; Lake/Marsh; Heart of Fire; Thunder; Wind; Water; Mountain and Ground, which explain the metamorphic origin of all things, phenomena and processes in the world. These explanations were derived from a long-lasting, arduous practices of ancient Chinese workers through their practical manufacturing experience, which are exposed in the *Book of Changes (I Ching)*, a greatest classical work of Eastern culture. It can be said that Yin and Yang and Five Elements are important categories in the ancient Chinese philosophical thought, which are the first abstract concepts of the ancient Chinese people for the creation and transformation of the universe.

The emergence of the concept of Yin and Yang as well as the Five Elements marked the first turning-point in scientific thinking of the ancient Chinese to escape the domination of the traditional Chinese religious mythological worldview at that time. The profound philosophical ideology of the universe and life in *Book of Changes (I Ching)* has not only profoundly affected the lives of the ancient Chinese people, but also influenced on the ideological views of most philosophical schools so far. It can be said that Lao Tzu philosophical thought has a profound impact on the original materialism since the Shang - Zhou Dynasty. Lao Tzu's thought used *Tao* as the basis but the spirit of his thought was in the word *Nature*. His human philosophy and political ideology take nature as the root by default, and his cosmology also takes nature as its principle. From observing and contemplating life, Lao Tzu discovered the permanent laws of existence and universal movement of nature and then applied those laws

to social activities and human thinking. These views are all simple materialism, which are opposite to traditional religious viewpoints of an omnipotent God who creates the universe of his own choice.

As can be seen that due to the social needs in the Spring-Autumn period - The Warring States, thinkers were required to solve many upheavals in Chinese society in this period, which created a revolution in the history of Chinese thought. The revolution directed the spearhead of philosophy to understand human issues. For the first time in the history of Chinese philosophy, people held the central position as the object of study. However, in Chinese philosophy, the conception of human nature in the ancient times originated from agricultural civilization, being ups and downs of philosophical characteristics, all of which were expressed through fable stories, poems, metaphorical sentences with generous, evocative and half-fictional expressions; so the views on human also seem magical, difficult to feel and express. However, these expressions created a strong attraction, causing philosophers of the next generation to be caught up in commenting, explaining, and enriching the original colors in the rustic picture about human nature, which in the course of research has given birth to different perspectives, forming different schools.

In terms of Lao Tzu's life, there have been many researches into Lao Tzu and *Tao Te Ching*, his nature and works, place and date of birth, lifetime, thoughts, compositions and influences on society ....Although it has lasted over thousands of years, scholars inside and outside China have not agreed on the facts about Lao Tzu and *Tao Te Ching* yet. Lao Tzu is commonly known as the philosopher with the famous Taoist doctrine in ancient China times. He is also considered to be the founder of the Taoist school, one of the three major philosophical schools of the Spring-Autumn period - the Warring States. However, his life and career are full of myths, which have been as ambiguous, half realistic- half fictional as his philosophy. According to Sima Qian, in the section of Veritable Records, chapter 63, Lao Tzu was born in State of Chu, Khong district, Chujen village, Khuc Nhan hamlet, in present-day Hunan province. Lao Tzu's actual personal name is usually given as Li Er, his courtesy name as Boyang, his prominent posthumous name as Li Dan. He worked as a mandarin, keeping the history of the Zhou Dynasty. According to many different opinions that Sima Qian recorded but did not confirm right or wrong, Lao Tzu could be Lǐ Ěr, Lǎo Dān or Lao Dam, who also lived at the same time with Confucius, living up to 160 years old or over 200 years. Sima Qian also recounted the meeting between Confucius and Lao Tzu. However, these supposed historical records are not much, and a variety of ancient and current scholars have still disagreed with each other and have not accepted them as a historical truth. To get a brief concept of Lao Tzu's life, we can temporarily record that Lao Tzu's estimated lifetime was from 430 - 340 BC.

“Non-action” is one of the concepts that has the meaning of a unique worldview and human view in Taoist philosophy. The whole thought of Lao Tzu is briefly presented in the work of *Tao Te Ching*. With a condensed and concise expression with metaphorical symbols, images and maxims, his philosophical ideas are therefore volatile, evocative, but profound and qualified. The main content of Lao Tzu's non-action thought is presented in three main issues which are the ontology, the dialectics and human morality.

In terms of ontology, the idea of *Tao* plays a very important role in Lao Tzu's philosophy. It is the foundation of all other issues, which governs throughout his entire doctrine and most of the ancient Chinese people's views on cosmology and human life. The word *Tao* is a Chinese term of philosophy, politics, and sociology, which has been widely used since the pre-Lao Tzu times. *Tao* originally means "the way", but even in ancient Chinese language, *Tao* also means "means", "principle", "the right way". So, *Tao* which means the way or 'the line', which is understood as the moral rule, the law of thought, theory and method; Also, *Tao* in religion studies is understood in the sense of "method", art or supernatural power to create sympathy between the heaven and the

earth, gods and people. *Tao* in Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching* is understood as the essence of the universe, as the total principle of the universe throughout all things, as the ancestor of all things. It is the ultimate mystery, which is absolute and entire things including the non-existent and the non-existent things. Perhaps, Lao Tzu was the first person among Chinese philosophers to use the word *Tao* to refer to the absolute principle of the universe, existing before the creation of the world, which was either spontaneously born or dead. The "nature" of *Tao* here refers to the primordial origin of the universal universe. It is the total principle that governs the birth and transformation of the heaven and the earth, which is a wonderful and extremely magical thing for all things to follow. In terms of the issue of "the origin of the universe", it can be seen that Xiantin Dynasty was the period of "Bǎi jiā zhēng míng" - the golden age of Chinese academic thought. However, the issues that the scholar discussed focused on the perspectives of human cultivation and the political techniques, a few thinkers studied in depth about cosmology. Only Taoism, in addition to the study of human life and politics, also goes into the study of the problems of the universe. In this field, Lao Tzu is the thinker who most mentioned cosmology in the most systematic way, which then became the basis of Lao Tzu's philosophical doctrine.

Lao Tzu wrote as "All living beings are born from living beings, living beings are born from non-being", and so *Tao* is from non-being state to the stage of being, after that the universe of all creatures is born. "The first was born from *Tao*, the second was born from the first, the third was born from the second," which means that *Tao* has been transformed from a chaotic state into giving birth to the universe gradually. After *Tao* gave birth all things, it is the same state as all things, being hidden in all things, relying on all things and nurturing all things. However, *Tao* which is intrinsic in all things is not *Tao*, which is called *Te*. *Tao* is the root of *Te*, *Te* is the effect of *Tao*, *Tao* and *Te* are only different in form and application. *Te* is the existence of all things, it also means that everything obtained with *Tao* is *Te*. Therefore, after all creatures were born, they still preserve the inherent nature of *Tao*. Lao Tzu used many words to talk about the states of *Tao*. He argued that *Tao* was the first basis of all things, which is not a particularly fixed state but an entity of chaos, with no discipline other than the objectivity, nature, simplicity, emptiness and miracle.

The objectivity and nature of *Tao* are understood that they are rustic, pure and not molded by human. It produces all things without will or purpose. *Tao* gives birth all things but it does not consider everything to belong to it. In chapter 5, Lao Tzu wrote as "The heaven and the earth are inhuman and consider everything as dogs which are made from straw". Its objectivity and nature can be understood that the heaven and the earth are born without relying on nature as well as no interference, no compassion while everything is natural, which is born and transformed naturally. The nature in *Tao* is not the same as the Western materialistic philosophy of "matter" - which is the opposite of consciousness- *Tao*, with its natural nature, contains and conveys all existent and non-existent things, both meditation and changes, both metaphysical and the tangible things. So it cannot be said that Lao Tzu stands on a materialistic or idealistic stance to discuss the origin of the world. *Tao* is latent in all things and these things can only manifest through their implementation. Appreciating the natural and pure nature of *Tao*, Lao Tzu did not acknowledge the transformation of the world according to the predetermined purpose of some supernatural forces. He also objected to using human's will and voluntary action as being attributed to the natural world. He recognized the objective laws of all things movement and transformation, advising everyone to act in harmony with the law of nature. Everything is rich and diverse, but they eventually return to their origin. Their origin is stasis, stasis is its nature, so returning to their origin is also returning to their nature. Non-being is the origin of beings, stasis is origin of movement. Hence, which thing was born from non-being finally returns to non-being; movement which was born from stasis finally returns to stasis. From being to non-being, from movement to stasis, all of which are also returning to *Tao*. The great *Tao* encompasses the whole universe without form, which are eternal and not

being seen or heard, so it cannot be explained by language. *Tao* never dies; it exists throughout the universe, which is the head of the earth and the heaven, the mother of all things. Therefore, it cannot either be expressed by words or called by ordinary names. *Tao* is something vague, discreet, which is deep in nostalgia and chasm, containing the quintessence and perfection inside. Although it is vague, it is realistic, which contains the beliefs until now. Thus, its name has been still intact as it is. *Tao* has no form but it still exists. The existence of the *Tao* is manifested in each thing and an existing phenomenon that have been changed infinitely.

Through Lao Tzu's ideology of *Tao*, his pure materialism thought can be seen clearly, which is a bright spot in his philosophical thought and a progressive leap in ancient Chinese philosophy. *Tao Te Ching* contains about five thousand words, eighty-one chapters, on which the word *Tao* appears many times, which proves that *Tao* plays an important role in Lao Tzu's philosophical thought. Particularly in chapter 42, he describes accurately and clearly that *Tao* produces all things; he also manifestly answers the question of the origin of the world, and obviously reflected the view of ontology in Lao Tzu philosophical thought. In general, through Lao Tzu's expression in *Tao Te Ching*, *Tao* is understood to be a kind of material entity which is both immaterial, tangible and invisible; *Tao* exists before everything appears; *Tao* is a form of gas that is unheard to ears, invisible to eyes; however; thanks to *Tao*, all things are born; *Tao* moves according to the rules without stopping forever; *Tao* moves in harmony with the natural and social laws which are called "The God's *Tao*" and "Human's *Tao*"; who can rely on the law of *Tao* to work is a "saint" who puts himself in *Tao*. Thereby, we see that all things are born by *Tao*, all things destroyed will return to *Tao*. Everything that is born and destroyed is a cyclic law according to *Tao*. The law of movement of *Tao* is something that can be perceived and mastered by everyone. This view has been proved throughout more than 5000 words of the book *Tao Te Ching* which systematically reflects the philosophical materialism thought of Lao Tzu.

The thought about Dialectics is the most valuable part of Lao Tzu's philosophy. Lao Tzu said that the entire universe and things controlled by *Tao* are always in the constant process of movement and transformation. He said that "each phenomenal object has each its own features which are either positive or negative; either tough or soft; either hot or cold; either beneficial or harmful ... etc". According to Lao Tzu, all things and phenomena in the universe consist of two opposing sides based on each other, relating and interacting with each other. According to Lao Tzu, the entire universe is governed by two basic laws, the law of equilibrium and repetition (復fu4). The law of equilibrium is originated from *Yi Ching*, which is the balance and neutral. This law is manifested in the 泰 *tāi* hexagram of *Yi Ching*, which is a state in which the heaven and the earth are in harmony and everything goes smooth. Developing these above thought, Lao Tzu supposes that the law of equilibrium triggers the universe to move and change in a balance state and a naturally harmonious order, all of which are nothing outrageous or unsuitable. What is missing will be filled in, what is curved will be straight, something out of stock will be restocked, something old will be renewed, as he wrote in chapter 22. That is the " *Tao* of God in which if the height is forced to be down, the lower one will be pushed up, then something abundant will be shared; if something is not enough will be fulfilled." The God's *Tao* is to share something abundant for the lack "(chapter 42). If the law of equilibrium and the balanced motion of the universe are broken, everything will be chaotic, stagnant and in danger of being destroyed: "If you step on your heels, you cannot stand. If you remove your legs widely, you cannot step. Considering oneself to be opulent is not opulent; Considering something to be right is not bright "(chapter 24). The symbol of the law of equilibrium is water. Its nature is soft, so when getting a void, water will flow into it; If there is a place full of water surplus, it will flow out. Hence, it constantly flows day and night; On the sky, it becomes rain, permeating all things; on the ground, it becomes the rivers and streams, watering all kinds of species. He

wrote: "The water is good for all things without competing against them, it lives in hollow places, it can cope with deep places, if water is blocked, it will stop; and it will flow on an unblocked way"

Lao Tzu's non-action doctrine is after all a matter of morality, human life and social politics. Although Lao Tzu highly appreciates human nature, his un-action point of view still deeply shows the art of living, human behavior, water treatment ...etc, and this is also the focused practical value of his system of philosophy. "Non-action" is a moral philosophical concept of ancient Chinese people, which is a natural, rustic, pure, unrestrained, coercive way of life. Lao Tzu's concept of "non-action" also comes from this sense, but its real core is the human art of living in harmony with nature and in accord with human nature. All creatures are born, moving, transformed and develop to the extreme state and then return to the origin to have the motivation to revive according to the law of nature (Tao). This natural law is independent from the human will, Lao Tzu said that the optimal human philosophy must also be non-action and in accord with the natural law, which is expressed such as; Everything has its natural nature; they exist, move and are transformed according to nature law, which means that they live with their natural, rustic and pure properties. Lao Tzu's "non-action" thought is just consent to nature, not using mind to create anything; "Non-action" also means always protecting, preserving our natural characteristics, knowing how to prevent and eliminate anything that harms the natural properties of all things. Accordingly, Lao Tzu's "non-action" does not mean "not doing anything but doing nothing contrary to the law of nature", contrary to each one's nature; do not avoid doing anything but finish everything like doing nothing. In order to do so, according to Lao Tzu, we have to "follow *Tao* to become gradually less desirable, until reaching the non-action level "(chapter 48), as well as mastering the degree of each living activity, keeping the balance, do not do anything too much or inappropriately; "Non-action" also means absolute freedom, which is not constrained by any ideas, desires, ambitions and passions. If someone tries to chase any ambitions that are contrary to their own abilities and nature, they will lose themselves. Lao Tzu's non-action philosophy applied to social politics is the policy of "applying non-action in governing a country" that the ruler needs to obey the law of nature, not showing political power, not intervening the activities of the people, not using punishment and official troubles. What a ruler should only do is to use *Tao* to inspire the people, setting himself a simple and humble example with little desires for people to follow. Then, the society will be at peace without strife or theft.

### **III. Values and discussion on Lao Tzu's non-action thought**

Lao Tzu's non-action thought expresses the primitive materialistic spirit and lays the foundation for the earliest natural philosophy of the ancient East philosophy. Although Lao Tzu's thought uses *Tao* as the basis, the spirit of his thought is expressed in the word "Nature". His human philosophy and his political thought take nature as the origin, as well as his cosmology also takes nature as its rules. Lao Tzu believes that *Tao* is the common source of everything in the world, the objective natural law of the material world. *Te* is the nature by which the concrete things exist by *Tao*. The reason why *Tao* and *Te* are revered by all things is thanks to their natural properties, from which it can be seen that the value of *Tao* and *Te* is their natural features, if not taking nature as the rule, *Tao* and *Te* will lose their value. *Tao* is often non-action, claiming that *Tao* gives birth and raises all things without will or desire. The law of the natural world itself is also the law by which *Tao* produces and brings up all creatures. Everything contains two opposing sides, relying on each other and closely sticking together. Thereby, Lao Tzu said that *Tao* moves according to the law of repetition (復fu4) which balances the Yin and Yang. It is the objective law on which nothing is an exception.

Lao Tzu's non-action thought was formed from the life reality; he discovered the permanent laws of existence and universal movement of nature and then applied them into social and mental activities of human. These are the views of simple materialism, contrasting with the traditional religious views of an omnipotent God who creates the universe of his own choice. Lao Tzu considers *Tao* as the origin of the world. He also made the findings and genius predictions based on the material basis of the development law of nature to apply them into society and human thinking. Lao Tzu's cosmology is a crucial dedication to Chinese philosophy, unlike Confucius who did not mention cosmological and metaphysical issues but only discuss reality matters including politics, morality and human life.

Non-action thought and "ruling a nation by non-action policies" are correctly understood that doing everything is according free-flowing spontaneity and not using mind to create anything, respecting the self-development of things, depending on the internal power of things to have proper action, not coercing and subjectively intervening any problems arbitrarily, not obstructing or harassing such development - that is consent to God's will and human heart - and forever remains an eternal wisdom. Non-action is not contrary to nature; it can be seen that Lao Tzu highly appreciated nature. Recognizing the pure nature and forever embracing that natural property are the purposes of Taoist practitioners. Ancient Chinese society was built on two different but complementary systems of traditional thought, namely the systems of Confucianism and Taoism. Hence, Lao Tzu reckoned that knowing what adequacy is means always adequate. The heaven and the earth have an equilibrium law, *God's Tao* is to share something abundant for the lack; Human's *Tao* is not the same, sometimes imbalances can be caused, which will result in danger. Thus, if someone does not know what adequacy is, they do not suit *Tao* of God. Reality shows that disasters coming to humans are caused by too many ambitions and lust; there is no excessive competition and fight, they can win. The incompetence in Lao Tzu's philosophy is not cowardice or surrender since *God's Tao* is impartial, creating all things because of virtue, humility, flexibility and without claiming those belonging to the Heaven. *God's Tao* is pure like water, "Water skillfully benefits all things without competing with anything. Water always flows into hollow places where everyone is not keen on, so it is close to *Te*. Good people know how to choose a place of humility, thinking deeply, behaving lovingly, keeping their words, treating others in a peaceful way, using their energies wisely at doing jobs, and not trying too much when their affairs are successful. "The reason why the heaven and the earth have existed for a long time is the heaven and the earth do not live for themselves, which means living forever. A *saint* stands backwards, then he stands in front; or not supporting himself, then he is still safe. That is when a saint does not take care of himself, so his affair is done, does not he? " (Chapter 7). That really is a public-spiritedness and selfless, one for all, an infinite kindness, carrying out any jobs without caring about the merits, compensation or requisition. " A wise person knows how to stop doing his job timely" because if he is still greedy for fame and wealth, it is difficult for him to avoid jealousy or danger even. In the past, in order to maintain their throne, the feudal lords and Kings who ascended to the throne were often suspicious, even killing meritorious officials of their country; they always took *Tao* for revenge. In relationships with everyone, we should be generous and ignore something unsatisfied or others' mistakes; Saints often skillfully save people without leaving anyone behind. It is a generous and tolerant heart of an eternal *Tao* practitioner. "A saint does not have a nasty mind, taking everyone's thought as his thought, being kind to both good people and bad people, so everyone is inclined to kindness; trusting those who are trustworthy then everyone turns out to be trustworthy too"(chapter 49).

Lao Tzu's non-action thought expresses the spirit of human liberation. In *Tao Te Ching*, it can be seen that Lao Tzu always maintains an attitude of criticizing the laws, customs and contemporary political and social regime, all of which made most of all his ideas contrary to the actual situation at that time. Lao Tzu called on people to

return to their natural, uncompetitive and humble characteristics ... However, Lao Tzu did not have a policy of alienating the human world or renouncing the community; in contrast, Lao Tzu's philosophy was showed through democratic ideology. Thus, the ideal men in Lao Tzu philosophy are ones who have freedom. The freemen in Lao Tzu philosophy completely have peace in mind, being unconcerned and having non-action.

Studying Lao Tzu's non-action thought, we find that there are a variety of scientists who said that "Lao Tzu's non-action thought is a thought that advises people to turn their backs towards reality". We believe that this statement is not true for the following reasons; Lao Tzu's non-action thought is not to do nothing, on the contrary, he wished to reduce the state governing apparatus in a compact and efficient system. This reduction happens step by step until this scope is minimized. In order to do that, it is essential to promote people's ability and capacity, in which all people have to show their role according to the inherent law of nature. When people are satisfied, the superiors and inferiors will be happy and the society is peaceful. Lao Tzu said that a state that only put embargoes or interferes too much into people's lives as well as do many things contrary to natural law will become a disaster because if the state put excessive taxation on the people, they will be starved; if they are starved, they will not be able to work, then the land will be fallow; the heavier the punishments are, the more contrary to the nature they are, the more the people will not obey their ruler.

Some other scientists said that Lao Tzu's non-action thought did not leave much value. We believe that basically his ideas are clearly showed in three fields that are academics, politics and literature. In terms of academic ideology, Lao Tzu's influence on academic ideology was the earliest thinkers of the Xian Dynasty, followed by Wei Xun literature, then Buddhism, and finally philosophy under Jin Dynasty. The thinkers under Xian Dynasty were most deeply influenced by Lao Tzu's thought; the first one is Zhuang Zhou, followed by Shen Puhai, Han Fei Zi. The political influence of Lao Tzu's thought was manifested in details in the three dynasties, namely Jianwen Emperor, Wen of Han Emperor and Jing of Han Emperor in the early Han dynasty, until the Wu Emperor. In terms of the influence on literature, Lao Tzu's thoughts impacted on literature as early as a hundred years from the middle regime of Emperor Huai of Jin to Kangxi Emperor.

After many centuries, people still dream of a peaceful life as one in the *Tao Te Ching* of Lao Tzu. Although having influence more or less on many aspects of social life and ideology, the thought in *Tao Te Ching* was less warm-welcomed than other philosophical schools, since at that time newly patricians and wealthy businessmen had desired to abolish the communal regime, setting up private land regime and using force to unify China. Lao Tzu was recognized by the UNESCO Council as the greatest thinker in the East, ranked No.1 in the New York Times of the United States among the top 10 ancient philosophers in the world. The New York Times also ranked the book *Tao Te Ching* at the top of the ten most famous works in the world from past to present. Lao Tzu and *Tao Te Ching* showed people a way to live in harmony with nature.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Born and developed in the historical period of Spring and Autumn - Warring States in which the society was dramatically turbulent, at that time, most ancient Chinese philosophical thought aimed at transforming society from being chaotic to being flourishing through the improvement of human perception. Therefore, Lao Tzu's non-action thought was not an exception when it launched the doctrine of *Tao* with a systematic view and dialectical thought with the laws of equilibrium, repetition, non-action theory. Also, the theory of non-action aimed to transform the current society into a peaceful and prosperous one. Lao Tzu's philosophy used the cosmology as the basis for the views on human life and morality. Hence, it can be seen that his philosophy is natural philosophy,



which is a completely different type of thinking from contemporary theories. *Tao* in Lao Tzu's philosophy is both the concept of the world nature and the law of development of creatures. The non-action thought of Lao Tzu includes dialectic theory, which is expressed in the work of *Tao Te Ching*. Lao Tzu supposed that everything has two sides, which means that there is a unity between these opposites. Lao Tzu also expressed a relatively outstanding political thought in the non-action theory, through which he presented his very unique views on human ethics and socio-political issues. It is an ancient Chinese moral philosophical doctrine raised by Lao Tzu, which becomes the doctrine of the human art of living in harmony with nature.

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