If we look at the wise men who appeared during the Axial Age¹ (800 - 200 B.C.), we can clearly identify the concerns of each civilization. In Asia Minor and Greece, philosophers like Thales, Socrates, etc. appeared, while in the Middle East and India, it was religious thinkers like Zoroaster, Buddha, etc. and in China, political thinkers like Confucius, Lao-tzu, etc. For, philosophy is the main topic of discussion in Greece, religion in India, and politics in China. Of course, the ideal of each civilization was respectively established on the basis of the region specific topic. Plato’s rules of philosophers in Greece, the king’s Dharma in India, and the rule of right in China were suggested for an ideal in the respective civilizations. The image of hero as that of ideal man respectively reflects the ideal of each of these civilizations. For, the value judgement of an ideal man is established on a social and political basis. Therefore, we can easily approach the identity of each civilization through the study of its hero.

This thesis focuses on mythic heroes. A major aim of this study is to examine a mythic view of the world which influenced the early development of thoughts and was influenced by the thoughts in the Axial Age. The world view of that age, when the identity of each civilization was established, is reflected in heroic myths. While creative mythology shows the primitive world view, heroic mythology opens a window on human introspection.

In this thesis, comparing Indian and Chinese mythology, an attempt is made to discover whether there are common factors between Southwest (India) and Northeast (China) Asia, and also, to establish an independent identity for Oriental mythology. Johann Gottfried (von) Herder points out that mythology is the reflection of a world view. Thus, by examining the identity of Oriental mythology, we can understand the Oriental world view.

1. Chinese Literary Mythology

There are over 50 minor groups in China, and their myths are handed down by oral tradition. Various kinds of myths have been preserved by various groups. However, the myths of the Han people in central China, did not survive and their fragmentary myths are scattered
in some ancient documents. Though it would be interesting to study the various myths of
minor groups, we cannot help studying literary myths to unveil the identity of Oriental
mythology. For, central China in which Confucianism was rooted governed the Chinese
world of thought. In this study, we will see the common mythic basis of India and China by
comparing Indian myths with Chinese literary myths, excluding the myths of Chinese
minority groups.

2. Mythic materials to be examined

The heroes of an era clearly reflect the ideology of that time. For, the ideal image of a man
is defined by a defined ideal. It is possible to say that the framework that defines a hero itself
belongs to an ideology. If heroes who have ideological color are selected for this study, the
ideological difference between India and China will stand out. Therefore, the ideological
color of a myth should be considered, for a comparison of original heroic myths, but not for a
comparison of the ideologies of India and China. Therefore, materials which were written
after the establishment of Hinduism in India, and of Confucianism in China, as mainstream,
should be excluded from this study. With this limitation, all the Vedas and the two great epics,
the Mahābhārata, and the Rāmāyaṇa will be the primary sources for Indian myths. Of course,
these two great epics also have Hindu color. But, if these two epics were excluded, there is no
point in discussing Indian Heroes.

The selection of Chinese materials is limited, because of two problems. The first is that
few materials in Chinese literary mythology have survived. And in many cases, materials
were reconstructed according to Confucian values. The second problem is that even a single
myth is scattered in some texts fragmentarily. Thus, the use of secondary sources is essential
for this study. Moreover, the secondary sources also depend on the works of Yuǎnkēü who
compiled Chinese myths from various archived materials. Therefore, all Yuǎnkē’s works
should be selected and the works of Korean scholars (Jeong Jaesuh, Kim Suja, etc.) should
also be consulted for the study of Chinese literary mythology.

In this paper, the sources are not strictly limited for an extensive study. For the study of
Chinese literary mythology, in particular, which has limited sources, it is better to investigate
some historical heroes who were mythified without setting a limit on time.
3. Mythic hero and historical hero

India changes everything into a myth, and China into history. It is difficult to say that Euhemerism is totally wrong in both countries. It is not certain that Indra and Kṛṣṇa had originally been human heroes, and rose to a god position later. However, Guan Yu who was a real person in history became a popular god in China, and Śivājī is considered an incarnation of Viṣṇu in Mahārāṣṭra. Lord Raglan points out that after a real person dies, his life as a man is erased, and his life is mythically dramatized at a point of 'not too recent nor too remote' time. It reminds us of Euhemerism insisting that human heroes become gods. Because, history seems to abound with mythic heroes. But, whether a real person in history or a mythical character, the hero is born through mythic creation and dramatization. These mythic creations and dramatizations follow the archetype of the group. The life of a real person is reconstructed according to the prescribed archetype. This process tailors historical heroes to the archetype of the mythic hero. That is why Western scholars like Lord Raglan, Otto Rank, etc. identify similar patterns from Western heroes. Therefore, it may not be so meaningful to distinguish historical heroes from mythic heroes. On the contrary, in China, the historicization of mythology is the main problem. According to the *Shījì*, the Yellow Emperor, the highest god in heaven, was born in the Xuanyan-shi tribe. This record is an example of historicization by Confucian historians like Sima Qian, that makes a mythic character into a real person in history.

As previously stated, it is impossible to remove mythic factors from historical heroes, and also to return historical heroes to mythical characters. Whether a hero existed in history or not, he acquires mythic proportions. It may not be meaningful to distinguish mythical characters from historical heroes. Therefore, in this study, mythic heroes will be examined mainly, but, if necessary, we will also refer to historical heroes.

4. Hero-god and human hero

There is not so clear a distinction between god and man in India and China; so there are
many human heroes who are more excellent than gods. In India, incarnations like Kṛṣṇa, and Rāma, and the human sons of gods like the Pāṇḍavas are regarded more highly than Indra, the kind of gods. In China also, the expert archer Yi who was a god but became a human, and Li Ping who was a human originally punished or killed gods. Therefore, it is reasonable to distinguish between a god-hero and a human hero only when their meaningful differences emerge.

5. Occidental mythology for comparison

Occidental mythology is needed for the comparative study to confirm the identity of Oriental mythology. Until now, Oriental mythology was regarded as the antipode of Occidental mythology, without clear definition. It is only in the West that myths have been studied practically. Thus, Oriental mythology is generally considered from the viewpoint of the West. If we can define the identity of Oriental mythology, it is possible to locate Oriental mythology as a center, and to redefine Occidental mythology.

Among various Western myths, Greek myths and the myths of the Holy Bible which influenced Western culture should be selected as objects of comparison for this study. For, these two mythologies support the two pillars of Western culture, Hellenism and Hebraism. As it is not possible to research the whole of European mythology, it is reasonable to select two important mythologies for this comparative study. Therefore, in this thesis, Indian myths and Chinese literary myths will be compared with Greek myths and the myths of the Holy Bible.

6. Confucianism and Taoism

There is a lot of controversy about whether Confucianism is a religion or not. In this thesis, the early Confucianism in the Spring and Autumn period will be dealt with, without considering the later part of Confucianism. For, early Confucianism only had an effect on the historicization of literary myths. Taoism is originally Lao-tzu’s thought which later developed into a religion. Therefore, in this thesis, both Confucianism and Taoism will be dealt with as
Apart from these premises, this thesis cannot but consider the academic achievement of Joseph Campbell. Despite criticism, he got credit for changing the viewpoint of mythology, and popularizing it. Especially, his study on heroic mythology influenced popular culture as well as mythology itself. Therefore, it is impossible not to mention him in the study of heroic mythology. In the present thesis, his theory on heroic and Oriental mythology in his main works: *The masks of God: Oriental Mythology* and *The hero with a thousand faces* will be examined and commented upon, as and when required. Also, the mythic theory of C. G. Jung which gives a theoretic basis to Campbell will be reviewed. Besides, in this thesis, female heroes will not be studied separately. A study on the female hero will be the task for a later study.

At present, the topics of this thesis are not sufficient to take into account all the aspects of heroic mythology. Actually, it is impossible to deal with all the aspects in this single thesis. Hence, it is proposed to focus on some new viewpoints in this regard, mainly the definition and classification of hero.

7. The Romanization of Sanskrit original texts

In this thesis, Sanskrit original texts are quoted from various texts and each text follows its own way of Romanization of Sanskrit. If it is not followed, then intention of each translator would be ignored. For, the way of Romanization of Sandhi, proper nouns (capitalization), Avagraha, etc. reflects each translator’s intention. Therefore, in this thesis, the Romanization of Sanskrit follows the original texts in the quotation.

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i “Axial Age (also Axis Age, from the German: *Achsenzeit*) is a term coined by German philosopher Karl Jaspers in the sense of a "pivotal age" characterizing the period of ancient history during about the 8th to 3rd centuries BC. During this time, according to Jaspers' concept, new ways of thinking appeared in Persia, India, China and the Greco-Roman world in religion and philosophy, in a striking parallel development without any obvious direct cultural contact between all of the participating cultures of the Old World.”
Yuan Ke (袁珂) (1916–2001) was a Chinese scholar, one of the most important specialists on Chinese mythology. His first important work was Zhongguo Gudai Shenhua, a ground-breaking volume on the topic first published in 1950. A second edition, revised and substantially expanded, appeared in 1957. The book was translated to several languages, including Japanese (in 1959) and Russian (1965). Some of Yuan Ke's work was translated into English, i.e. in Dragons and Dynasties: An Introduction to Chinese Mythology by Kim Echlin and Nie Zhixiong.

Euhemerism is an approach to the interpretation of mythology in which mythological accounts are presumed to have originated from real historical events or personages. Euhemerism supposes that historical accounts become myths as they are exaggerated in the retelling, accumulating elaborations and alterations that reflect cultural mores. It was named for the Greek mythographer Euhemerus. In more recent literature of myth, such as Bulfinch's Mythology, euhemerism is termed the "historical theory" of mythology. Euhemerus was not the first to attempt to rationalize mythology in historical terms, as euhemeristic views are found in earlier writings including those of Xenophanes, Herodotus, Hecataeus of Abdera and Ephorus.

The Records of the Grand Historian (太史公書), now known as the Shǐjì (史記: Scribe's records), is a monumental history of ancient China and the world finished around 109 B.C. by the Han dynasty official Sima Qian after having been started by his father, Sima Tan, Grand Astrologer to the imperial court. The work covers the world as it was then known to the Chinese and a 2500-year period from the age of the legendary Yellow Emperor to the reign of Emperor Wu of Han in the author's own time.


Chapter One

The Principle of Nature

Introduction

Independently, India and China have developed entirely different civilizations on either side of the Himalayas, though they had similar multi-race and multi-culture circumstances. Indian and Chinese culture, both of which started at the early dawn of civilization show many differences between them. Indian culture has been established with religion as basis, whereas for the Chinese it is politics. The differences between these two cultures are reflected in their myths and thoughts. Even Buddhism, which went from India, was transformed into Zen in China. It is difficult to find enough in common so that one can speak of an oriental point of view. H. Nakamura affirms that “there are no features of the ways of thinking exclusively shared by the East Asian as a whole”.¹ Is there, then, really no common factor between these two cultures?

A group of scholars who insist that all world myths originated from Babylonian Celestial myths, claim that systems of religions, rituals, and morals in Mesopotamia, India, China, Central America, and Peru are all wonderfully similar. And they find the reason for this in the Celestial mythology which is the core of those systems. This Panbabylonism has been criticized, but critics admit the similarity which has its roots in the Celestial mythology.

Furthermore, many scholars regard Tao and Dharma as having very similar concepts. J. Campbell hints that Tao and Dharma are one and the same principle, though he does not define the principle. If his opinion is acceptable, we can have a starting point for comparative studies on India and China. In the present paper, the concepts of Tao and Dharma will be examined. After that, it will be discussed whether there is any common principle in these two cultures.

1. Dharma

The concept of Dharma developed from Ṛta of Veda. Ṛta is a law of nature which rules the regularity of natural phenomena as well as the universe itself. B. Emile points out that among the Indo-European languages, ‘ṛta’ in Sanskrit, ‘arta’ in Iranian, and ‘ars’, ‘artus’, and ‘ritus’ in Latin show the common words ‘ṛ’, ‘ar’, and ‘ri’. According to him, all these common roots mean ‘order’, that is a harmonious adaptation of elements constituting a whole. The Sanskrit root ‘ṛ’, in particular, does not mean ‘to go’(‘gam’) but ‘to go straight’. That is to say ‘order’ which means ‘to follow a definite orbit’. In Indo-European languages, ‘order’ is one of the most important concepts not only in law but also in religions and ethics.

There are hymns in the Ṛgveda which describe “the dawn born in Heavens has flushed as Ṛta ordaineth (Vyulṣā āvo divijā ṛtenāviṣkṛnvānā mahimānamāgāt.)”\(^2\), “on Ṛta’s firm base the speeder of the mornings, the Bull(sun), has entered mighty earth and heaven (Ṛtasya budhna uṣasāmiṣaṇyanṛṣā mahī rodasī ā viveśa.)”\(^3\), and “the flowing of the flood is Ṛta (Ṛtamarṣanti sindhavaḥ satyāṃ tātāna sūryo vittaṃ me asya rodasī.)”\(^4\).

“The conception of cosmic and ritual order, of natural and moral law had already been formed when Indo-Europeans formed a single people.”\(^5\) “The cosmic law is called aśa in the Zend-Avesta, which is of the same etymological origin as Ṛta.”\(^6\) The concept of Ṛta shows the principle which tried to match cosmic orders and social orders. It seems to be quite natural that Ṛta implies the moral law of human society. Actually, Indians “sought truth in the ethics”.\(^7\)

“The aspect of dharma is usually termed Ṛta, signifying the cosmic order or the regularity of the cosmic processes: the rising and setting of the sun, the cycle

\(^3\) Ibid., (3. 61. 7.)
\(^4\) Ibid., (1. 105. 12.)
\(^5\) Nakamura, op. cit., 43.
\(^6\) Nakamura, op. cit., 45.
\(^7\) Nakamura, op. cit., 147.
of the seasons; springtime and harvest; even concepts like the intrinsic juice and
rightness underlying all things. Ṛta thus also came to mean the moral law, and
the value of the moral order.”

When Ṛta means moral law, it is often used with the word ‘satya’ which means ‘true’ or
‘truthful’; when it is compounded with the negative particle ‘an’, ‘anṛta’ conveys a sense of
‘not true’ or ‘false’. The Ṛgveda says that the “thought of eternal Ṛta removes
transgressions”.

The moral concept Ṛta had developed before the primitive society was divided into the
hierarchical society. In the Vedic period, the caste system was not established firmly, and Ṛta
did not suggest an order in the form of ‘class’. Names of castes are shown only in the Puruṣa
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“Brāhmaṇo’ sya mukhamāśīd bāhū rājanya kṛtaḥ
Ūrū tadasya yadvaiśyaḥ padbhyaṃ śūdro ajāyata.”

“The Brāhman was his mouth, of both his arms was the Rājanya made.
His thighs became the Vaiśya, from his feet the Śūdra was produced.”

Therefore, it does not contain an undertone of class distinction. However, Dharma which
developed from Ṛta, implies a moral law as well as a rhythm of the universal order. When
agricultural economy developed, Dharma seems to acquire the meaning of duties of class, as
observed by B. Walker.

“The term dharma also signifies the code of conduct of the individual or group.
…Again, dharma implies justice, virtue, morality, religious merit and
righteousness, law, duty, the Good, the Truth, the Norm, the Ideal, the Way.
Basic to dharma in practical life is the notion of karma or willed activity, which
determines a man’s future incarnation. Closely connected with this concept of

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9 Griffith, op. cit., (4. 23. 8.)
10 Griffith, op. cit., (10. 90.12.)
dharma is the observation of caste rules for it is only within the caste framework that the obligations of dharma may be best observed.”

2. Tao

The nomadic peoples of Asia had their own faith that regards Heaven as a god. It is presumed that this faith in Heaven was introduced by the Zhou tribe. The Zhou who established the Zhou dynasty\textsuperscript{12} in Northwest China, were nomads before their settlement. In ancient China, the faith was developed into a theory of ‘mandate of Heaven(天命)’. The Zhou insisted that the mandate of Heaven had been handed over to the Zhou by Heaven.

“It is from such beginnings that the theory of the ‘Mandate of Heaven’ was to be developed in the Zhou period. Xia had been defeated, because the period of that dynasty had come to an end, but Cheng Tang had been responsible for the fall of a ruler who mediated between the people and Shang Di. Such an act, against the order of things, led to drought which could only be ended by the offering of the one responsible. Some credence is lent to this interpretation by the story that after the defeat of Shang by Zhou, Wu the victor and founder of the new dynasty fell ill and the regent Zhou Gong ‘prayed in his stead, asking that the sins of the dynasty be visited on himself.’”\textsuperscript{13}

And the Zhou used to hold magnificent rituals with beautiful music to praise heavenly order. Those rituals were regarded as bringing the ideal order of the universe to human society.

However, after the Spring and Autumn period\textsuperscript{14}, Heaven lost the transcendental and

\textsuperscript{11} Walker, op.cit., 275.
\textsuperscript{12} The Zhou dynasty (周朝: 1046 - 256 B.C.) is a Chinese dynasty that followed the Shang dynasty. The actual political and military control by the dynasty lasted only until 771 B.C. (the Western Zhou).
\textsuperscript{14} The Spring and Autumn period (春秋時代) is a period in Chinese history from approximately 771
personal characteristics of a god. And Heaven stood as a symbol for natural law. For Confucius\(^\text{15}\), Heaven was a giver of the order, whereas for Xunzi\(^\text{16}\), it was just a natural object. Xunzi separates man from Heaven, because he regards man as an independent being. And in the text, the *Tao Te Ching*\(^\text{17}\), Heaven gives its status as the absolute law to Tao.

The ancient character of Tao(道) is not a pictograph, but a pure abstract symbol.

This letter was modeled on the figure of a man walking with the skull of a heroic ancestor in his hand. It was believed that the skull of a heroic ancestor, who had pioneered a new route, had special power. So bringing such a skull was a kind of magical action to bring the past miracle back. As time goes by, this magical meaning had been lost, and only the meaning of ‘a road’ remained.

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**The Warring States period** (戰國時代) is a period following the Spring and Autumn period and concluding with the victory of the state of Qin in 221 B.C., creating a unified China under the Qin dynasty.

\(^{15}\) **Confucius** (551–479 B.C.) is the founder of Confucianism. He was a great teacher, philosopher, and politician of the Spring and Autumn period.

\(^{16}\) **Xunzi** (313–238 B.C.) is a Confucian philosopher who believed man's inborn tendencies need to be curbed through education and ritual.

\(^{17}\) *The Tao Te Ching* (道德經) is a Taoist text. According to tradition, it was written around 6th century B.C. by Lao-tzu.
Although the meanings of Tao differ according to various Chinese theorists, it originally meant ‘a road’. From the Shang to the Zhou dynasty, Tao was used in this meaning as in the text, the *I Ching* and epigraphs. In the time of the Zhou dynasty, the meanings ‘a saying’ and ‘a way (of help)’ were added to it. But still the meanings of Tao did not escape from concrete concepts. However, in the text, the *Shih Ching*, Tao begins to display abstract concepts; ‘the way of Heaven’, ‘the rule of right’, ‘a rule’, and ‘a way or means’.

The development of the Tao concept is as follows:

i) The original meaning of Tao was ‘a road’ with a fixed direction, which people should pass through for moving. From this sense, Tao came to mean ‘an inevitable tendency of movement’, that is ‘a law’.

ii) Tao came to mean a principle or direction which people should follow, because they should follow a road to reach a destination.

iii) From a starting point to a destination, there is a fixed distance to pass through. From this sense, Tao also means ‘a process’ of movements.

iv) A road gathers people into itself, so Tao came to convey a sense of ‘leading’ or ‘reason’.

As time passed, the meaning of Tao was widened according to changes in society and developments of language. In the text, the *Zuo Zhuan* and the *Guoyu* which belong to the

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18 The **Shang dynasty** (商朝) or **Yin dynasty** (殷代), according to traditional historiography, ruled in the Yellow River valley in the second millennium B.C., succeeding the Xia dynasty and followed by the Zhou dynasty.

19 *The I Ching* (易經, The **Classic of Changes** or **Book of Changes**) is an ancient divination text and the oldest of the Chinese classics. The I Ching was originally a divination manual in the Western Zhou period. But it was transformed into a cosmological.

20 *The Classic of Poetry*, also **Shijing** or **Shih-ching**, translated variously as *the Book of Songs*, *Book of Odes*, or simply known as *the Odes* or *Poetry* is the oldest existing collection of Chinese poetry, comprising 305 works dating from the 11th to 7th centuries B.C..

21 *The Zuo Zhuan* (the **Tso Chuan**; 左傳), or *the Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan*, sometimes translated as *the Chronicle of Zuo* or *the Commentary of Zuo*, is among the earliest Chinese works of narrative history, covering the period from 722 to 468 B.C.. It is one of the most important sources for understanding the history of the Spring and Autumn period.

22 *The Discourses of the States* or **Guoyu** (國語) is a classical Chinese history book that collected the historical records of numerous states from the Western Zhou to 453 B.C.. Its author is unknown, but it
later Spring and Autumn period, Tao was distinguished into two, ‘the way of Heaven (the law of nature)’ and ‘the way of man (duties of man)’. Lao-tzu\textsuperscript{23}, the founder of Taoism, was concerned with ‘the way of Heaven’ and Confucius, the founder of Confucianism, was concerned with ‘the way of man’. And the school of law in China, suggested that governing a country (the way of man) should follow the law of nature (the way of Heaven). The belief that Heaven and man are inseparable is called ‘the oneness of heaven and man (天人合一)’, which was first hinted at by Mencius\textsuperscript{24}. And a Confucian scholar\textsuperscript{25} developed this belief into the theory of ‘the Reciprocal relationship between Heaven and man (天人感應說)’\textsuperscript{26} which “means that natural phenomena and man-made institutions are mutually interrelated.”\textsuperscript{27}

Apart from the theory of ‘the Reciprocal relationship between Heaven and man’, the theory of ‘the Rectification of Names (正名)’ is the most important doctrine in Confucianism. In Confucius’ sayings\textsuperscript{28}, it is quite clearly seen. This ideology means that each person has a social standing and a social name and with their social names come responsibilities and duties. A king should be worthy of the name. And also a vassal, a father and a son should be worthy of the name according to their social positions.

\textsuperscript{23} Lao-tzu (also Laozi, Lao-tsu, or Lao-tze) is a philosopher and poet of ancient China. He is best known as the reputed author of \textit{the Tao Te Ching} and the founder of philosophical Taoism.

\textsuperscript{24} Mencius (most accepted dates: 372 – 289 B.C.) is a Confucius philosopher. He asserted that man is innately good. In \textit{the Mencius} (孟子), he says that "one who exerts his mind to the utmost knows his nature(性), and he who knows his nature knows Heaven.” It suggests that the mind and nature of man and Heaven are essentially one, and that means ‘the oneness of heaven and man’.

\textsuperscript{25} Dong Zhongshu (董仲舒; 179–104 B.C.) is a Han Dynasty scholar. He is traditionally associated with the promotion of Confucianism as the official ideology of the Chinese imperial state.

\textsuperscript{26} This relationship is shown not only in India and China, but also in Greece. A belief that a drought or a natural disaster is caused by sins of a king is universal. We can find it in the story of king Oedipus as well as king Lomapada and Jie of Xia.

\textsuperscript{27} Nakamura, op.cit., 282.

\textsuperscript{28} \textit{The Lun-yu} (論語, \textit{The Analects[Discourses] of Confucius}), Chapter 13.
Although the theory of ‘the Reciprocal relationship between Heaven and man’ and the theory of ‘the Rectification of Names’ do not have a clear relationship, it seems that the way of man finally reaches the hierarchical system of feudalism. For, Confucius’ way of man implies social roles and duties according to one’s own position. Actually, “Chinese society was based on an order constructed upon the discrimination of classes.”

3. The principle of nature

After the transfer of mankind from hunting to agriculture and animal domestication, laws of stellar and planetary motions were formed by astronomical observation as celestial laws in the early Bronze Age. And “a mathematically correct calendar was invented to regulate human lives according to celestial laws. This development of astronomy and mathematics caused a whole new mythology which identifies the social order of man with the celestial order of the universe. This new mythology was built on the belief which is thus: “an order of fixed forms that appear and reappear through all the time.” This order is universal and independent, and it has no connection with a creator or a god. And the order is beginningless and endless. As the order does not have any premise of a creator in India and China, so it is different from Western deism which admits a creator as a giver of universal laws.

This order is seen in the repetition of the cycle of night and day, seasons, and the waxing and waning of the moon. And also, this order was applied to man as well as to the universe, because it was believed that all beings in this world consist of identical elements (or energies). These are the three guṇas and five basic elements (pancamahābhūta) in India, and Yin-Yang and five elements (木火土金水: elements of tree, fire, earth, mental and water) in China. Man and the universe are not different organically, so one single natural order rules both.

30 Nakamura, op.cit., 265.
32 Ibid., 3.
Astrology which predicts the future of an individual according to the movement of heavenly bodies, reflects the belief that man’s destiny is connected with the universe; and the relation between man and man as well as man and the universe, are regulated by one single order. For, it was regarded that man is a microcosm and human society is a “mesocosm”33 while the universe is a macrocosm. Human society is the mimesis of the universe (‘idea’). Every being in this world is regulated by one single order. This belief which identifies man and social orders with the universe and celestial orders, can be defined as ‘the principle of nature’. The principle of nature is a belief that man has his own role and rank just as the sun and the moon, the five planets and stars follow fixed orbits according to fixed laws. And just like heavenly bodies, man can take part in the cosmic order through the performance of his own duty. It can be understood as the hierarchical system. This principle of nature was glorified not only in India and China but also in Egypt, Greece, etc. The identical principle was called Dharma in India, Tao in China, Themis in Greece, Maat in Egypt, and Me in Sumer respectively. Themis of Greece, for example, has three daughters who govern the seasons called Dike, Eirene, and Eunomia. They also mean justice, peace, and good law, because the law of Heaven is considered the law of morals.

And also the principle of nature resembles a Western view of the world, namely deism which was established by Newton. His mechanistic view of the universe considers that the structure of human society, as well as of the universe, is decided by natural laws. Newton’s view of the universe was also taken advantage of to regulate the social order by using the concept of the cosmic order.34 It means that the lower classes should be governed by the upper classes just as planets follow the sun. However, the principle of nature does not necessarily back up a hierarchical system. For, when Indo-European nomads came to India with the concept of natural law, they did not have a hierarchical system. Maybe the principle of nature was one of ideologies which could support the hierarchical system. As referred to earlier, in China also, the theory of ‘the Reciprocal relationship between Heaven and man’ and the theory of ‘the Rectification of Names’ do not seem to have a clear relationship. In conclusion, in India and China, the principle of nature cannot be connected with the hierarchical system directly.

4. Tao and Dharma; The identical principle

The concept of Tao corresponds with Dharma, because generally both concepts signify the same: ‘order’, ‘law’ and ‘truth’. Though some detailed meanings of Dharma and Tao are somewhat different from each other, these two concepts are almost identical.

“The idea underlying this system of Tao is exactly what the Hindus are familiar with in the conception of Sanātana Dharma, which, by the bye, is the term by which the people of India designate their own religion, the term Hinduism being an expression given by outsiders.”

It is possible to say that there are three main characteristics in the principle of nature. If Tao and Dharma have the following characteristics of the principle of nature which are discussed above, they can be regarded as the principle of nature.

4.1. The principle of nature was not originated by a creator.

The principle of nature has higher authority than gods and controls all beings, including gods. Therefore, Ṛta and Dharma can be considered the principle of nature, because no being can go against that. In the Veda, gods appear only as supporters or protectors of Ṛta. In later times, even though the trinity of Brahma, Viṣṇu and Śiva was established, Dharma remains predominant. Even these great gods followed the way of Dharma. “Indian people generally are inclined to base their ethics on a domain free from God’s authority.” After being personified, Dharma became one of the gods, but separately Dharma, as the principle of nature, was regarded as an eternal law.

On the contrary, in China, Heaven which had been personified as a god, changed into a cosmic law. In later times, some Confucian scholars tried to reconvert Heaven into a god, but

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37 In later times, Dharma was personified and became a god. In the *Mahabharata*, Dharma is a father of Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest of Pāṇḍavas.
separately, the concept of the way of Heaven maintained its position constantly. The Chinese believed that one and the same principle is observed and followed all over the world. This belief is shown in the theory of Confucius; ‘one principle covers all’. Therefore, Heaven and Tao can also be regarded as the principle of nature.

4.2. The principle of nature harmonizes social order with cosmic order.

The principle of nature identifies man and social order with the universe and celestial order. Rta and Dharma mean moral laws as well as celestial laws. It reflects a belief that an individual being (Ātman) and the universal being (Brahman) are identical. Therefore, it can be regarded as the principle of nature. This is also the case with Tao, because it is said that the way of man should follow the way of Heaven. The Dharma and Tao both apply the cosmic law to man and society.

4.3. The principle of nature provides an ideological basis for the hierarchical system.

In both cultures, the order of rank was justified by Tao or Dharma; the caste system in Hinduism and the feudalism of the Rectification of Names in Confucianism. It is quite natural to impose duty according to one’s own gender and rank. This is an ideological function of Tao and Dharma whether it goes into effect by religion (Dharma) or politics (Tao). Campbell identifies Tao and Dharma, and also concludes as follows:

“The performance of one’s duty without desire for the fruits (Sanskrit karma-yoga); the notion that the order of society provides guidance infallibly to the realization of one’s inborn nature (Sanskrit dharma); and the belief that the virtue of such realization participates in the virtue of the reality of the cosmic order (Sanskrit satya)…And the chief difference between Manu and Confucius, India and China, in this view, lies simply in the local identifications of the duties to which the virtuous give heed: in India the regulations of caste; for

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38 Nakamura, op. cit., 256.

It is practical explanation of "吾道一以貫之" (The Analects of Confucius, Chapter 4).

39 The Chāndogya Upaniṣad says that ‘Tattvamasi (That thou art, i.e. that Brahman is you, the individual soul.’ The Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad also confirms that with saying ‘Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahman.)’, and ‘Ayam Ātmā Brahma (This Self is Brahma.)'.
Confucius, the proprieties of the five relationships. The metaphysics of the two systems are the same.

As mentioned earlier, though the principle of nature is not connected with the hierarchical system directly in India and China, it seems to be used for justifying the hierarchical system as in the modern West.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the principle of nature has been called Dharma in India and Tao in China. In India, the principle of nature is shown in the idea of ‘Tat tam asi’ which means the identity of Brahman and Ātman. And in China, it is shown in the idea of ‘the oneness of Heaven and man’ which identifies man (the social order) with Heaven (the cosmic order). And Tao and Dharma ideologically support the hierarchical system.

From the basis of Tao and Dharma, the natural law that had been suggested by Campbell, was named ‘the principle of nature’ and defined as identification of social orders with celestial orders. Also the main characteristics of the principle of nature were drawn; atheistic universality. Although the cultural background of each country should not be ignored, it is possible to say that India and China have a common basis for comparative studies.

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40 The five relationships between ruler to subject, father to son, husband to wife, elder to younger and friend to friend.

41 Campbell, Oriental Mythology, 418.

42 As a law, Dharma can be only distinguished with Tao, because it attaches more importance to permanence while Tao does to changeability. This difference seems to come from cultural backgrounds.