



# New Spirituality and Chinese Traditional Thoughts: A Review of Related Literature

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First Draft December 16, 2022

Received: 06/11/2022

Accepted: 06/02/2023

Published: 04/06/2023

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## ABSTRACT

*This narrative is about 21<sup>st</sup>-century spirituality, anchored to James Ebner's ideas on Human Race Church, Karl Rahner's on Anonymous Christianity, O'Murchu on Quantum Theology, Gordon Lynch's on Progressive Spirituality, Neale Donald Walsch's on The Essential Path, and Joe Dispenza on Becoming Supernatural. These authors' ideas serve as a review of related literature of this narrative on Traditional Chinese Thoughts and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Spirituality and a theoretical framework for this study. Based on the review of related literature, the following are the findings: 1. China as a nation and its citizens qualify to be within the circle of Ebner's Human Race Church and Walsch's Spiritual Beings Manifesting Physically, and One Essence Manifesting Individuality. 2. The Yin and Yang principle, as the author of life in Chinese cosmology, is aligned with O'Murchu's declaration that divinity is a vibrant energy. 3. The Chinese Qi or Chi as life energy fuels the life of the cosmos and all of creation, and meta physicist James Ray equates God to Pure Energy. 4. Traditional Chinese Medicine is aligned with Dispenza's application of meditation for physical health and well-being. 5. Confucianism, which established the rules and rituals of the human relationship with other humans, is a manifestation of the quantum structure of the quark with a big center and many small elements around it. 6. Taoism which defined the relationship of humans with nature, is aligned with Lynch's New Spirituality which advocates pantheism and panentheism. 7. China embraced the Western dialectic materialism of Karl Marx; it is progressing from a material property and Ecological Civilization to a Socialist Spiritual Civilization.*

**Keywords:** Chinese Traditional Thoughts, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Spirituality, Quantum Theology, Confucianism, Taoism, Divinity, Socialist Spiritual Civilization, Pantheism.

## I. INTRODUCTION

My interest in quantum physics goes back to my doctoral dissertation on Quantum Healing in 2004 at De La Salle University. I have been teaching Chinese students at De La Salle Araneta University and Jose Rizal University over the last ten years. I have engaged them in business ethics, corporate social responsibility, and human resource management. In our discussions, religion and spirituality would sometimes crop up. Still, we would never go into an in-depth discussion, knowing that modern China has no official religion. Grace Park of De La Salle Araneta University reported on Quantum Theology, and Benjamin Jerusalem of Jose Rizal University provided me with a copy of O'Murchu's Quantum Theology. I co-authored with Dr Diane Dan Zhang on traditional medicine and healthcare, traditional Chinese thoughts and Management in modern China, and traditional Chinese Philosophers. I learned about the traditional thoughts of Lao Tzu on Yin Yang. From my DBA Chinese students, I also learned that Taoism is anchored on man's relationship with nature, articulated by Churng-tse, the Yellow Emperor, and Lao Tzu. From my students, I was exposed to the teachings of Confucius, whose philosophy of man's relationship with other men must be guided by social and political rules and hierarchies. The human values proposed by Lao Tzu and Confucius have raised a question about the importance of developing good human beings. I Canir traditional values be considered spiritual and divine from a Christian perspective.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

This course is a qualitative narrative (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) that integrated traditional Chinese thought with 21<sup>st</sup>-century spirituality. It is based on one's academic experience (Yin, 2018) with Chinese graduate school students; the narrative is based on key documents that explain the traditional Chinese thoughts of Confucius and Lao Tzu within the 21<sup>st</sup>-century new technology. It is heuristic (Moustakas, 1990) because it provides the non-Chinese audience and

readers the opportunity to discover that what is truly human is truly divine. It makes sense to a non-Christian culture's past experiences about current religious practices (Smith, 2015; Sela-Smith, 2002) towards an inclusive spiritual perspective in the 21st century (Hudtohan, 2005; Gonzalez, Luz, & Tirol, 1984). The methodology of this study is multi-valuate (Richardson, 2015) because it deals with various disciplines related to social, cultural, and metaphysical dimensions of spirituality. This is an exploratory discourse (Stebbins, 2011) that studies, examines, analyzes, and investigates the importance of understanding traditional culture to embrace it as part of a Human Race Church in the 21st century.

### III. DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Western Progressive Spirituality

##### 3.1.1 21st-Century Theology

###### 3.1.1.1 Introduction

Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Vatican II was convened, and *Gaudium et Spes* was issued as part of a Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. It addressed the importance of having a dialogue with unbelievers. That dialogue must be done with caution and aims to evangelize and convert the unbelievers into the fold of the Church.

James Ebner (1976), in his book *God Present as Mystery*, presented a Human Race Church where believers and unbelievers are within the circle of God's Kingdom. This model no longer promotes evangelization and conversion. It accepts the cultural heritage of a given entity. Bishop Maanicus of Africa at a Roman Synod said, "We wish to reclaim our cultural rituals, predating colonialism, as a way that allows us to find God again with the mediation of our ancestors." (Campion, 1974). In the Philippines, during the Spanish colonial period, the *babaylans* (priestesses) led the community rituals worshipping *Bathala* and seeking intercession from their ancestors. They were Christianized and became *beatas* and nuns of the Catholic religious orders (Cruz, 2001).

In hindsight, intercultural dialogue based on empathy could have yielded a different outcome. Medieval philosopher-theologian Thomas Aquinas (1270) defined empathy as mercy, "the heartfelt sympathy for another's distress, impelling us to succour him if we can." Adam Smith (1776) said that empathy is the compassion we feel for others in a very special manner. Trout (2009) argued, "Empathy has a goal to accurately understand another's inner state by placing ourselves in his situation or taking his perspective." (p.91). Ivey, Simek, and Downing (1980) had many variants of empathy; they said it might be considered "a foundation stone of effective intentional counselling. Primary empathy, or the accurate hearing of another, is manifested through attending skills" (p.175). Hall, Kalven, Rosen, and Taylor defined empathy as "Reflecting and experiencing another's feelings and state of being through the quality of presence that has the consequence of them seeing themselves with more clarity, without any words necessarily having been spoken." (p.78). The Development Dimension International interaction principle stated that in having a dialogue one must always listen and respond with empathy.

I wonder, had spiritual empathy been applied in a cross-cultural religious dialogue with the non-Christian world, there could have been a Human Race Church envisioned by James Ebner (1976) and an acceptance of non-Christians as anonymous Christians. Karl Rahner argued that a person who intellectually professes disbelief but is existentially committed to those values which for the Christian are concretized in God is an anonymous Christian. (Macquarrie, 1986). He said that a person, rejecting the God of organized religion, can still be "aware of his own transcendental knowledge of God through a kind of mystagogy." (Rahner, 1972, p.159)

###### 3.1.1.2 Newtonian Science

Before quantum theology, there was physical science which was given birth to by Isaac Newton in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Copernicus, Bruno, Kepler, Descartes, and Galileo laid the groundwork for all that Isaac Newton needed to explain motion in the universe. Newton's physical laws, supported by mathematical equations and variables, became the basis of the finite understanding of various physical phenomena unexplained in the past. This development led to more accurate information regarding the universe. He developed a worldview that was mechanical and mathematical. With this, God was no longer necessary. History, psychiatry, medicine, and theology were caught up in this extreme determinism where ethics was regarded as an illusion and genetics was the solution to human behaviour. (Brown, 1990).

The four basic assumptions of classical physics are: "1. objective realism, where observed phenomena are caused by a physical world that exists independent of human observation; 2. physical sufficiency, where the act of motion or change in the universe can be explained by an analysis of all the physical factors involved; and 3. inductive validity, where drawing inferences from consistent observations is a valid means of obtaining knowledge; and 4. upper limit- no influence on any kind can be made faster than the speed of light." (Brown, 1990, p.79) When Einstein published his theory of relativity, classical physics ended, and nuclear physics became focused, leading to quantum physics.

###### 3.1.1.3 Quantum Theology

Philosophical and religious authors wrote about the implications of quantum physics: Capra's (1975) *The Tao of Physics*, Zukav's (1979) *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*, Wolf's (1989) *Taking the Quantum Leap*, Wheatley's (2006) *Leadership and the New Science*, Kilmann's *Quantum Organizations*, Porter-O'Grady, Timothy, & Kathy Malloch's (2003) *Quantum Leadership: A Textbook of New Leadership*, Deepak Chopra's (2006) *Freedom and Grace*, James M. Mapes' (2003) *Quantum Leap Thinking*, Joe Dispenza's (2017) *Becoming Supernatural*, and O'Murchu's (2004) *Quantum Theology*. O'Murchu made the following assertions:

Principle 1. Life is sustained by creative energy, fundamentally benign, with a tendency to manifest and express itself in movement, rhythm, and pattern. Creation is sustained by a superhuman, pulsating restlessness, a type of resonance vibrating throughout time and eternity.

New elements

- a. God and the divine are described as creative energy, which is perceived to include but supersede everything traditional theology attributes to God.
- b. The divine energy is not stable or unchanging but works through movement, rhythm, pattern, and restlessness – within the evolving nature of life itself.
- c. The divine co-creativity operates within the evolutionary process rather than as an external agent based on a cause-and-effect relationship.
- d. Notions such as “God” and “divinity” are used sparingly because these are human constructs (descriptions) that may limit rather than enhance our understanding of life's ultimate source and meaning.”

Principle 2. Wholeness, which is largely unmanifest and dynamic (not static), is the wellspring of all possibility. In seeking to understand life, we begin with the whole, which is always greater than the sum of the parts: paradoxically, the whole is contained in each part, yet no whole is complete. New Elements

- a. No one source of knowledge, theological or otherwise, can provide a complete description of reality; the mystery of life is fundamentally open-ended.
- b. Theology is about opening up new horizons of possibility and ultimate meaning, not consigning truth to specific dogma, creeds, or religion.
- c. Since the whole is understood to be contained in, but not by, each part, the dilemma of pantheism is resolved [the new term is pan(en)theism (all-in-God: the divine interpenetrates every part of the universe and also extends beyond time and space)]. (O’Murchu, 2014, p. 197).

### 3.1.1.4 Progressive Theology

O’Murchu’s Principle 2. States that “Wholeness which is largely unmanifest and dynamic (not static), is the wellspring of all possibility...(and) the New Element says, “Since the whole is understood to be contained in, but not by, each part, the dilemma of pantheism is resolve.” (p.198). Gordon Lynch (2007) puts pantheism as the centrepiece of his discussion in his book, *The New Spirituality*, published after 42 years after Vatican II (1962-1965), which was created to help apply the truths of Christ to modern-day life. The phenomenon of progressive theology, which advocates pantheism and its variant pan(en)theism, is a contemporary revolutionary development because there was a time when pantheism was considered taboo as practised by an ancient civilization, worshipping nature. However, the scholarly approach of O’Murchu and Lynch revives pantheism in a new light that sees the universe as saturated with God's presence and, conversely, that there is no God but the combined substance, forces, and laws that are manifested in the existing universe. The cognate doctrine of panentheism asserts that God includes the universe as a part, not the whole, of His being. ( [britannica.com/topic/pantheism](http://britannica.com/topic/pantheism).)

There are four imperatives for the development of a new spirituality:

1. Progressive spirituality has arisen out of the desire to find new ways of religious thinking and new resources for spiritual growth and well-being that truly connect with the people's beliefs, values, and experiences in modern liberal societies.
2. Progressive spirituality has arisen out of various initiatives to develop a spirituality that is not bound up with patriarchal beliefs and structures and can be a relevant and liberating resource for women.
3. Progressive spirituality has arisen from attempts to reconcile religion with contemporary scientific knowledge and, in particular, to ground spirituality in contemporary scientific cosmology.
4. Progressive spirituality has arisen out of moves to develop a spirituality that reflects a healthy understanding of humanity's relationship to the wider natural order and motivates constructive action to prevent ecological catastrophe. (Lynch, 2007, pp. 22-35).

Lynch specifically mentions Neale Donald Walsch throughout his book. He says, " Progressive spirituality in its various forms of expression, thus rests on what Neale Donald Walsch refers to as a theology of oneness." (Lynch, 2007, p. 44). On quantum physics, he says, " Drawing on ideas from quantum physics of the cosmos as a field of energy, progressive spirituality identifies the divine as the energy that vitalizes the universe and that is the motivating force behind all that gives life and heal. Or simply stated in Neale Donald Walch's words, life is God, made manifest." (Lynch, 2007, p.7). In the fashion that the medium is the message (McLuhan, 2001), Lynch says, “Neale Donald Walsch declares that every human being is both the Messenger and the Message.” (Lynch, 2007, p. 7). Lynch believes that “Religious symbols are but incomplete renditions of ultimate truth. Religious symbols are therefore more likely to be treated as symbolic ways of conceiving the divine, than literal direct representations of truth. Neale Donald Walsch offers a clear summary of this view of religion when he writes that God and life are One – everything in life is part of a unified whole. Our different religions are merely wonderfully divergent paths to the same destinations – a destination that does not need to strain to reach because it is already there in the everlasting embrace of God." (Lynch, 2007, pp. 60-61). On Neale Donald Walsch, Lynch says, “The fruits of Neale Donald Walsch’s conversations with God bear a strong similarity to late nineteenth-century ideas in the New Thought movement.” (Lynch, 2007, p. 69). Finally, Lynch asserts, "Neale Donald Walsch’s observation that in the new spirituality for people where life itself will become the prime value.” (Walsch, 2005, p. 160).

### 3.1.1.5 The Essential Path

I have a copy of Neale Donald Walsch's book: *God's message: You have Got Me All Wrong* (2014), *Conversation with God* (2018), and *The Essential Path* (2019). Today, I see his quotes regularly posted on Facebook. His books, according to him, were inspired by God and can help a person relate to God from a modern perspective. Walsch's vision is an expansion and unification of all present theologies to render them more relevant to our present day and time. He created Humanity's Team as a spiritual movement whose purpose is to communicate and implement his New Spirituality beliefs, particularly that we are all one with God and one with life in a shared global state of being. This state can be achieved, Walsch argues, by the act of helping other people: "The fastest way to apply anything in your life is to help others to apply it. This Humanity's Team of Neale Donald Walsch fulfils Ebner's (1976) dream of a Human Race Church.

Walsch is one of the authors featured in Rhonda Byrne's (2006) book and video, *The Secret*. He says, "There is no blackboard in the sky on which God has written your purpose, your mission in life...So your purpose is what you say it is. Your mission is the mission you give yourself. Your life will be what you create it as, and no one will stand in judgment of it, now or ever. You get to fill the blackboard of your life with whatever you want. If you have filled it in with baggage from the past, wipe it clean. Erase everything from the past that does not serve you, and be grateful it brought you to this place now, and to a new beginning. You have a clean slate, and you can start right here, right now. Find your joy and live it...Joy, love, freedom, happiness laughter. That's what it is. And if you just experience joy sitting there and meditating, for an hour, by golly, do that. If you experience joy eating a salmon sandwich, then do that" (Walsch, 2006, pp. 177-178).

He listed 17 statements about God that he considered false.

1. God is to be feared.
2. God may not even exist.
3. God exists and is a superhuman male being.
4. God demands obedience.
5. God sees us as imperfect, and we may not return to God in an imperfect state.
6. God requires us to believe in God and o worship God in a specific way.
7. God is vengeful, and God's love can turn to wrath.
8. God was with the Devil, and that is how this all began.
9. God determines what is right and wrong.
10. God's forgiveness is required for us to get into a haven.
11. God has a plan for us.
12. God is on our side.
13. God honours self-sacrifice, long-suffering (preferably in silence), and martyrdom.
14. God sometimes answers our prayers and sometimes not.
15. God will reward us or punish us on Judgment Day.
16. God wants us to return to heaven.
17. God is separate from us. (Walsch, 2014, pp.5-6).

He says none of the above statements is true. True or not, these statements epitomize what the largest number of people in our world believe there is a God belief about God...God invites you to question; God invites you to wonder. God invites you to come to your conclusion, to accept the conclusions of others blindly. It is bravery, not blasphemy. Moreover, the last I hear, God does not punish bravery...So here is the question for all of us to ponder: Is it possible that there is something we do not fully understand about God, the understanding of which could change everything? (Walsch, 2014, pp. 6-9).

He ends with a quote from Margaret Wheatley (2009): "There is no more powerful way to initiate social change than to start a conversation." Later He would write a series: *Conversation with God* 1, 2, 3, and 4. The Vatican II document on Dialogue with Unbelievers is pastorally centered, and the ordinary Christian needs clearance from the Church experts. It says, "...it is easier here to guard against the danger of ignorance and haste. It is to be hoped that when they engage in that sort of dialogue, all Christians involved would give their typescripts beforehand to experts. For the rest, all the faithful will observe the canonical regulations in the matter." (*Humanae Personae Dignitatem*, 1968). He said, "it is ideas that create beliefs, beliefs that create behaviours, behaviours, that create an experience, and experience that creates reality. So let us look back at some of the extraordinary ideas that could arise from a decision to declare ourselves to be 1: spiritual Beings Manifesting Physically, and 2. One Essence Manifesting Individuality...If human beings decided that we are both Spiritual Beings and One Being, our ideas about life could include the following:

1. Life is an experience with a purpose greater than mere survival
2. Everything occurring, both in our individual lives and in our collective experience, perfectly serves that larger purpose.
3. Our life experience is much more controllable than we might have imagined.
4. Every event brings us benefits in some form.
5. It is not required for life to include suffering.
6. There is more going on here than meets the eye. The process of life is a process of our soul's evolution. It has nothing to do with worldly happiness – although it is the inevitable product of the soul's evolutionary progress.



Our ideas about ourselves include these:

1. We are in no way separate from each other, and we are all Individuations of Divinity, unique singularization of the Essential essence that is called, by some people, "God" – each of us an expression of The Divine even as a wave arises from, and is an expression of, the Ocean.
2. We are all, because of this, wonderful in countless ways.
3. We can all be everything we choose to do or have. We are all capable of being Unconditionally Loving, Totally Conscious, Fully Aware, Truly Understanding, Profoundly Wise, Abundantly Clear, Endlessly Patient, Wonderfully Compassionate, Completely Accepting, Invariably Kind, Consistently Helpful, Remarkable Inspiring, and, in a word, Divine.
4. We are all capable of living within the limitations and definitions of normal human experience without encountering prolonged unhappiness, confusion, hopelessness, or despair, by simply treating ourselves and each other differently.

Our ideas about God could include these:

1. God exists.
2. God is the Essential Essence in all creation, which could be called (to use a human analogy) the Stem Cell of the Universe. That is, the undifferentiated Pure and Eternal energy that is the source of all creation, all wisdom, of all understanding, all intelligence, and of all love, and that may shape and form Itself into countless and limitless physical or metaphysical manifestations, including every sentient being in the cosmos.
3. There is no separation between The Creator and The Created. Divinity is found in each of Divinity's Creations, as God is the All-in-All, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last, and is, therefore, absent from no one and nothing.
4. In God, there is found love for each of us and everything in life, without condition, without limitation, and without a requirement to receive anything in return.
5. There is no need for anything in God, for there is a lack of nothing and a yearning for nothing since God is The Source and Creator of everything and anything of which desire could even conceive.
6. In God, there is no judgment, condemnation, or punishment for anything, given that we cannot hurt, damage, injure, or anger that which God is.
7. In God, we find the freedom and the power to create our internal reality of the external events, occurrences, situations, and circumstances of our life.
8. In God, we find the essence that we call love, the best single-word definition in every human language of divinity. In God, we can feel that essence embrace us and strengthen us wherever we seek that experience.
9. In God, we find the Perfect freedom to Create what it is our Will to Create. In God, we can experience a personal relationship of Oneness and Unity, Singularity of Purpose, Desire, and Intention.

Moreover, finally, ideas about what happens after death could include these:

1. We never stop existing but will continue living forever and ever, in whatever form we choose.
2. We will be reunited with everyone we have ever loved.
3. We will remain united with those who live after us in their present physical form. We will feel their love, and they will feel ours.
4. We will experience joy, freedom, total understanding, complete awareness, absolute serenity, and endless bliss, with the fullest knowledge of anything and everything we wish to explore available to us at the speed of our thought.
5. We will be given the choice to return to the physical life we just left, and we may choose to, offering ourselves the opportunity to experience even more fully any aspect of that specific expression, or of the soul's overall and eternal agenda.
6. We will be allowed to return to physical life at another place in what we call "time" and in another expression called an "incarnation." We will proceed with the joyful and eternal purpose of life Itself, lifetime after lifetime, as we endlessly expand our experience and expression of Who We Are.
7. We may move through succeeding lives in loving companionship with the one we have loved in our previous physical experience. As soul partners forever. (Walsch, 2019, pp. 76-81).

Let us see then what it would be like to experience our True nature at the highest level.

1. An awakened species see the Unity of All Life and live in it.
2. An awakened species tell the truth always.
3. An awakened species says one thing and will what they say.
4. Having seen and acknowledged what is so, an awakened species will always do what works.
5. An awakened species does not embrace a principle in its cavillation that correlates with the concepts humans refer to as "justice" and "punishment."
6. An awakened species does not embrace a principle in its civilization that correlates with the concept humans refer to as "insufficient."
7. An awakened species does not embrace a principle in its civilization that correlates with the concept that humans call "ownership."
8. An awakened species shares everything with everyone all the time.
9. An awakened species creates a balance between technology and cosmology, machines and nature. co
10. An awakened species would never under any circumstances terminate the current physical expression of another Sentient being unless asked directly by that other being to do so.

11. An awakened species would never do anything that could potentially harm or damage the physical environment that supports the member of the species which they physicalized.
12. An awakened species never poison itself.
13. An awakened species never compete.
14. An awakened species is clear that it needs nothing.
15. An awakened species experiences and expresses unconditional love for everyone.
16. An awakened species has harnessed the power of metaphysics. (Walsh, 2019, pp. 110-112).

### 3.1.1.6 Becoming Spiritual

The book by Joe Dispenza (2017) *Becoming Spiritual* is a multiple case study (Yin, 2006). He combines empirical scientific medical data with mystical workshops to bring about physical healing. Thus, Ebner's (1979) *Human Race Church*, Lynch's (2007) *New Spirituality of Progressive Belief*, and Walsch's (2019) *Essential Path* serve as a theoretical framework for linking traditional Chinese thoughts with 21<sup>st</sup>-century Western Spirituality.

*Becoming Supernatural* marries some of the most profound scientific information with ancient wisdom to show how people can experience a more mystical life. Dispenza argues that we are naturally supernatural, given the proper knowledge and instruction. When we apply that information through various meditations, we experience a greater expression of our creative abilities. In addition, we can tune in to frequencies beyond our material world and thereby receive an orderly coherent stream of consciousness and energy; we can intentionally change our brain chemistry to initiate a mystical, transcendental experience. He concludes that if we do this often enough, we can develop the skill of creating a more efficient, balanced, healthy body, a more unlimited mind, and greater access to the realms of spiritual truth. We become spiritual beings.

Joe Dispenza discusses 1. Demystifying the body's seven energy centres and how we can balance them to heal, 2; how to free oneself from the past by reconditioning your body to a new mind, 3. How we can create reality in the generous present moment by changing our energy, 4. The difference between third-dimension creation and fifth-dimension creation, 5. The secret science of the pineal gland and its role in accessing mystical realms of reality, 6. The distinction between Space-Time vs Time-Space realities. 7. He introduces tools and disciplines ranging from cutting-edge physics to practical exercises such as a walking meditation; he offers nothing less than a program for stepping outside our physical reality and into the quantum field of infinite possibilities. (<https://www.amazon.com/Becoming-Supernatural-Common-People-Uncommon/dp/1401953093>, Dec.14, 2022).

## 3.2 Traditional Chinese Thoughts

### 3.2.1 Introduction

Suppose we use Ebner's (1979) *Human Race Church*, Rahner's (1972) *Anonymous Christian*, Lynch's (2007) *New Spirituality of Progressive Belief*, Stephen Covey (n.d.), Wayne Dyer (n.d.) and Teilhard de Chardin's (n.d.) *Spiritual beings*, Dispenza's (2017) *Becoming Supernatural* and Walsch's (2019) *Essential path* as a theoretical framework. In that case, we can talk about the traditional Chinese thoughts of Confucius and Lao Tzu in the context of 21st-century Western Spirituality. There is a tendency to view spirituality as intimately linked with religiosity; therefore, we subsume it under an organized institutional religion. However, contemporary spirituality, like progressive spirituality (Lynch, 2007), is not church-based. Therefore, this perspective allows us to view Confucianism and Taoism as expressions of ancient spirituality. We are not human beings on a spiritual journey. We are spiritual beings on a human journey. (Chardin, Covey, & Dyer, n.d.).

### 3.2.2 What is spirituality?

Fahlberg and Fahlberg (1991) aver that "The difficulty in addressing the concept of spirituality is related to its association with denominational religion and our cultural emphasis on the material realm. However, some scholars are now associating spirituality with the development of human consciousness beyond the ego level. Thus, investigation in the realms of consciousness beyond the ego can be addressed within theories of knowledge grounded in experience."

In their management textbook, Dyck and Neubert (2011, p.490) define spirituality as "a state or quality of a heightened sensitivity to one's human or transcendental spirit." Western authors use the word 'meaning' to imply a transcendent value which directly or indirectly implies spirituality (Tolle, 2005; Ulrich, 2012; Kilmann, 2001; Hicks & Hicks, 2010; Pape, 2014; Craig & Snook, 2014). Warren (2002) is more direct in weaving purpose as the meaningful experience of God. Fifty-eight years ago, Van Kaam (1964, p.42) noted that "Ultimate meaning...is grounded in [man] himself, others, and the ultimate Other."

From a psycho-spiritual point of view, spirituality is considered wholeness, equating to holiness, because human and spiritual development are intertwined (Erickson, 1968; Caluag, 1980). Friel (n.d.) says spirituality can be defined as a "fully human phenomenon, and it is a phenomenon of the fully human." An open definition of spirituality is "people's multiform search for meaning interconnecting them with all living beings and to God or Ultimate Reality. Within this definition, there is room for differing views, for spiritualities with and without God and ethics of dialogue" (European SPES Institute, n.d.). AtonCenter (n.d.) avers that "The shamans, healers, sages, and wisdom keepers of all times, all continents, and all peoples, in their ageless wisdom, say that human spirituality is composed of three aspects: relationships, values, and life purpose. These three components are so tightly integrated that it may be hard to separate them from each other." (<https://www.atoncenter.com/the-three-pillars-of-human-spirituality/>)

### 3.2.3 Qi or Chi: Vital energy

Meaning "vapour", "air", or "breath", the word qi is often translated as "vital energy", "vital force", "material energy", or simply as "energy". Qi is the central underlying principle in Chinese traditional medicine and martial arts. Chi is the life force, the energy that flows within us and through everything. It is that which gives life. The concept of chi (also spelt Qi) has its roots in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Martial Arts. However, the idea of a vital life force energy and its role in our health can be found in many cultures. Chi is your life force, the energy that flows through you and everything. It is that which gives life. (Zhang & Hudtohan, 2022).

Chi energy moves through the body like breath and blood and is nourished by a healthy diet, enough sleep and movement practices. However, its qualities go beyond the physical or tangible. Chi can be described as the purest energy that arises out of consciousness, awareness, and stillness – through you into your body and all expressions of life. Chi, in short, can be described as the essence of your true self. Chi is the bridge between physical form and pure awareness. Chi energy is like a bridge between your form, body, thoughts, emotions, and sensations, and the formless, which is your essence, consciousness, and awareness. When we trace chi from form to formless, this is the person's journey on a spiritual path.

First, there is the body, thoughts, emotions, sensations etc., which could all be described as chi having come into form. Then as part of our spiritual practice, we learn to stop identifying with form and start feeling and identifying it more with the inner body, with chi, pure life energy. Eventually, this will lead us back to our essence, pure awareness, the formless.

### 3.2.4 Working with chi as a healing practice

Various practices, including Qigong, Tai Chi, yoga, pranayama (breathing exercises), acupuncture and working with marma points, all work to support the free flow of chi or prana. They work on strengthening chi and removing any blockages. Healing can only happen in a state of rest and when chi flows freely and is settled. When we do movement practices like yoga and Qigong that encourage vital energy or 'chi' to circulate through the body, this free flow of energy can eventually learn to settle or gather in the lower abdomen, in the lower dantian, which is the seat and reserve of your chi.

It activates the parasympathetic nervous system – where all of repairing, healing and growing takes place. It is important for the health of the physical and mental body. When you bring your chi down from your head into your lower dantian, you will feel much calmer, less anxious and overwhelmed.

We are expressing and manifesting chi. This inner body energy is pure awareness; it flows within and out in the world; it is the one life that connects us all—the ground of all our beings. When we start feeling our inner body, that feeling of aliveness within, we feel chi. Our energy begins to flow more freely in our bodies. Chi is also manifested in what we put out into the world. For example, in our interactions with others, being present with partners and children. Or through expressing ourselves through

Three ways to connect with chi in our body:

1. Shake it out or dance it out

You were shaking your hands, arms, upper body, feet, legs, butt and waist. It moves the old energy out of your body so you can begin to feel the inner body, that inner aliveness. Try this for 10 minutes or as part of my Reset with asana, a shake out and Yoga Nidra class.

2. Feeling your hands

Set yourself as in meditation, with your eyes closed, lift your hands, and let them float a little in front of you with the palms facing up. Now tune into your hands and ask yourself how you know you have hands. You feel them. Next, let go of the label 'hands' and feel sensations; you can continue going through different body parts like that.

3. Notice the 'rebound' effects of pranayama

Pranayama techniques are breathing exercises that clear the physical and emotional obstacles in our body to free the breath and the flow of prana – or chi. Practice a few rounds of pranayama, such as Kapalabhati or Bhastrika and take extra time after your practice to notice the sensations in your body.

### 3.2.5 Chi and Divine Energy

The chi is key to understanding Dispenza's meditation as a medical intervention for healing the body. As a form of energy, it confirms the metaphysical statement of Dispenza that we are 99.999 per cent energy and .001 per cent matter (body). It proves that we are spiritual beings with human activities (Chardin, Dyer, and Covey). In quantum physics Ray (2006) explained God as Pure Energy; he said God and energy are the same, "Always was and always has been, never can be created or destroyed, all that ever was always will be, always moving into form and out of form... You are a spiritual being. You are an energy field operating in a larger energy field" (p. 159). Teilhard the Chardin declared that we are spiritual beings with human activities. Dispenza (2017) also said that we have 99.999 per cent energy and only .001 per cent matter. He said that we must step outside our physical reality and into the quantum field of infinite possibilities (Dispenza, 2017). Gonzales said, "Indeed, the 21st century is an exciting period for theologians and scientists to go from the God of quantum Mechanics to the God of Informatics and to enrich the quest for divinity in the future." (Gonzalez, 2002). In Western metaphysics, new spirituality, and pantheism, energy is equated to God. Moreover, chi is key to one's spiritual existence, intimately connected with divinity.

### 3.2.6 Yin Yang Principle

The history of Yin Yang is explained by Lao Tzu (B.C.510). He said, "道生一，一生二，二生三，三生万物，万物负阴而抱阳，冲气以为和"，"人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然"，"天人合一" The first statement of Lao

Tzu means that the Tao existed in the universe before our earth came to be and Tao gave birth to Chaos, and gradually Chaos was divided into Yin and Yang. Yang went up to become the sky, and Yin went down to become the earth, and then Yin and Yang gave birth to primitive organisms and all beings on the earth. All beings contain Yin and Yang which never stop moving, following their own principles to have a new balance continually, and then all creations get the chance to evolve. The second statement reveals that human beings learn the principles of Yin and Yang from the earth and sky, then learn the principles of Tao from Yin Yang, and finally learn the principle governing nature and the universe from Tao. (Zhang & Hudtohan, 2021).

The Book of The Inner Canon of Huangdi (B.C.300) described the Yin as everything tangible and material in form. At the same time, Yang represents everything intangible that allows things to function, "阴成形, 阳化气". The theory of Yin and Yang in ancient Chinese philosophy is considered the universe's origin. The interplay of Yin and Yang gave birth to the "myriad of beings". Thus, the interaction between Yin and Yang also means the production and reproduction of the endless variety of life in the universe.

Moreover, the concept is also used to describe how polarity or seemingly contradictory forces are intertwined and interdependent in the natural world. They give rise to each other in return. Although Yin and Yang are opposite, they depend on each other to exist. A complete system of opposites was dialectically elaborated based on these basic concepts. Everything in the universe, from six types of quarks with their corresponding types of antiquarks that have equal magnitude but the opposite sign (Carithers & Grannis, 1995), can be identified with either Yin or Yang aspect and function as the theory Yin and Yang.

The Yin and Yang aspects are not identified in isolation but are a mixture of the two. In the Book of Change, there is a classical principle that neither Yin nor Yang alone could nurture itself, but it is done with mutual generation and promotion. That is, both oppose each other and mutually include each other. Both do not follow the "either-or" but the "both-and" principle. Yin and Yang are interconnected as different, but inseparable sides of the cosmos (Solas & Ayhan, 2007). These two opposing forces may transform each other over time when one polarity goes to the extreme. Yin will eventually become Yang, and Yang will eventually become Yin. Whenever Yin and Yang change from each other, keeping a balance between them is the critical principle or benchmark. Otherwise, problems will appear.

The theme of harmony, balance, and equilibrium between Yin and Yang is fully enthused, constituting a dynamic neutral system for understanding events, which has influenced Chinese people's mindset both consciously and subconsciously for over 3000 years. Western people may polarize their views when two contradictory propositions are presented, while Chinese people would be more likely to accept both (Peng & Nisbett, 1999). The course of Chinese communication helped to shape the Chinese collective and holistic thinking method. That is, how to find a compromising method to establish the balance between Yin and Yang is the core notion in problem-solving and decision-making. In health care, the principle of Yin Yang promotes balance and harmony of all bodily functions.

### 3.2.7 Confucius

Confucius expounded a social and political philosophy system, which he conveyed to a group of disciples. The disciples of Confucius later collected his teachings and sayings in a book known in the West as the Analects. Confucius was also traditionally believed to have been the author or at least the editor of the classic Confucian texts called the Five Classics.

Confucius said that he was not an innovator and that all of his teachings were merely rediscoveries of what had been true in the past. Society was said to have deviated from an earlier Golden Age, and his task was to guide it back to its proper condition. Appeals to ancient authority were customary at the time, and it is not true that Confucius merely related ideas that had existed before. There is reason to believe that much of what Confucius taught was revolutionary at the time. After his death, Chinese emperors attempted to suppress the spread of Confucianism by burning his books and executing Confucian scholars. However, Confucianism and the teachings of Confucius eventually prevailed, and Confucianism eventually received Imperial sanction and came to be adopted as the state "religion" (the word religion is in quotes because there is debate whether Confucianism is actually a religion or is simply a system of philosophy.) The privileged position of Confucianism within Chinese society lasted for many centuries until the Communist takeover and profoundly influenced China's development.

The teachings of Confucius are focused on two interrelated areas: Social Teachings, which deal with the proper behaviour of the individual in society and to his fellow men, and Political Teachings, which deal with the art of governance and the proper relationship of the ruler to the ruled. He viewed education as central to proper conduct within society and in government.

### 3.2.8 The Social Teachings of Confucius

Confucius taught that people should have compassion for one another and avoid treating others in ways they would not wish to be treated: What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others. (Analects 12.2)

To be compassionate, people should avoid self-aggrandizement and be simple in manner and slow in speech. They should practice altruism and self-restraint. Confucius taught that adherence to correct rituals was the key to achieving proper self-mastery. In Confucius' teachings, ritual encompassed both quasi-religious practices, such as the veneration of dead ancestors and the broader concept of etiquette and correct social interaction. Confucius taught that mutual obligations arose between members of social relationships, for example, between Husband and Wife, Parents and Children, Older Brother and Younger Brother, and so on. Adherence to the proper conduct expected between members of these groupings would guarantee a harmonious relationship and serve as the foundation of a stable society.

Although the subordinate members of a relationship (children to their parents, wives to their husbands) were required to be obedient, their obedience was not absolute. It depended upon the superior member of the relationship



(parent, husband, for example) acting by his obligations. Confucius's teachings strongly emphasized the importance of the following ritual. He said: "Look at nothing in defiance of ritual, listen to nothing in defiance of ritual, speak of nothing in defiance of ritual, never stir hand or foot in defiance of ritual." (Analects 12.1). Within society, Confucius prescribed the following main ceremonies or rituals: Capping (a joyous occasion when a son achieved manhood on his twentieth birthday - analogous to a Bar Mitzvah), marriage, mourning rites, sacrifices, feasts, and interviews. These ceremonies were quite complex and highly ritualized.

While to Westerners, the emphasis on ritual may seem stultifying and oppressive; it must be remembered that the guiding principle in Confucius's social teachings is that people should follow the Five Virtues and love one another and treat each other with kindness, which is a concept shared by all great religions and humanistic philosophies. These make a Confucianist a spiritual person.

### 3.2.9 Political Teachings of Confucius

Much of Confucius's teachings focused on the art of governance and how a ruler should act. Unlike Machiavelli, who expounded a concept of amoral statecraft in which he counselled the ruler on how to appear to gain the trust of the people while at the same time engaging in oppression and stratagems, Confucius advocated for true justice and compassion on the part of the ruler and the ruled. Only by being a just ruler would the ruler enjoy the Mandate of Heaven and continue to have the right to rule.

As with his social teachings, Confucius believed that the key to good governance lay in each man carrying out his duties as prescribed by his position within the hierarchy. He stated: Good government consists of the ruler being a ruler, the minister being a minister, the father being a father, and the son being a son. (Analects 12.11)

The ruler needed to possess virtue. Virtue would enable the ruler to retain the supreme position. He who governs using his virtue is, to use an analogy, like the pole star: it remains in its place while all the lesser stars do homage to it. (Analects 2.1) Remarkably, given the violent nature of his times, Confucius believed that rulers should not have to resort to force or the threat of punishment to maintain power. He stated: "Your job is to govern, not to kill" (Analects XII:19)

As in the case of social relationships such as those between parents and children, husbands and wives, Confucius believed that rulers should observe proper rituals to maintain their position and right to rule. These rituals included giving proper sacrifices to the ancestors at the ancestral temples, exchanging gifts between members of the nobility, which bound them together in a web of obligation and indebtedness, and acts of etiquette and decorum, such as bowing.

### 3.2.10 Lao Tzu

Tao Te Ching also called "five thousand Chinese characters of Laozi", represents the apex of human intelligence – 无为, "Wu Wei", non-doing. The mind is free of its content – the distorted human consciousness with a centre called "me", where all kinds of mental controls occur, with numerous conflicts, divisions and issues. To understand Tao Te Ching is to understand oneself totally; one observes oneself objectively in absolute humility. In that observation, the mind can sense what is said in Tao Te Ching. This whole process of understanding demands deep self-inquiry and awareness, and the actual understanding empties consciousness's content. Doing so embodies true meditation. True meditation ends the ego, not satisfies the ego. The three important Taoist principles are inaction, simplicity and living in harmony with nature.

### 3.2.11 Five Life Lessons from Lao Tzu by Einzelganger (2020):

1) Don't force anything.

The Master does not force virtue on others; thus, she can accomplish her task. The ordinary person who uses force will find that they accomplish nothing. Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, chapter 38

In several chapters of the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu writes about the principle of not forcing. When we force, we go against the natural flow of things, which most likely gets us in trouble. Often, a fallacy we make is thinking that we can force the unenforceable, believing that when we push hard enough, we will eventually get where we want to go. For some things, pushing hard consistently indeed leads to results. However, no matter what we do, there are always natural laws that we must consider.

Lao Tzu observed that nature has its way of doing things. Living in this world, we see that nature manifests itself in a certain order. Some things are big and heavy; other things are small and light. Some things take ages to grow; others are born and die on the same day. Humans are also bound to the flow of nature; how we grow from infants to adults, how we learn, and how our bodies function; are all bound to natural laws that we cannot control. If we force things, we put ourselves in a position where the universe starts to work against us.

It happens when we swim against the stream. We can swim against the stream for a while, but we will not last long as it is highly exhausting. Moreover, when we finally give in and accept that forcing our way up cannot be done, we let go and start to flow along.

When we find a way to work with nature instead of against it, things will get much easier, and we will not exhaust ourselves so much. It means 'working smart' instead of 'working hard' by setting our sails correctly and navigating diligently so that the wind of the universe keeps pushing us forward.

2) Do not overburden yourself.

Those who stand on tiptoes do not stand firmly. Those who rush ahead get very little. Those who try to outshine others dim their light. Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, chapter 24

A typical phenomenon that we see in current civilization is that people are willing to push themselves too far. Pushing boundaries is right, as it is a way to grow. If we look at strength training, it is necessary to overstimulate the

muscles. By breaking down the muscles during a lifting session using progressive overload, they will come back stronger and bigger over time. But there's one necessary ingredient when it comes to this process that many beginning lifters tend to overlook: rest.

When we repeatedly overburden the muscles, we will eventually be unable to continue our training, as they don't get enough time to heal. Even though we intend to make ourselves stronger, we have become weaker; chronic exhaustion leads to a lower immune system and makes us more prone to depression, according to countless studies. So, why do people do this? In most cases, they want to become very muscular quickly. However, they have put themselves in a fragile position by pushing themselves too hard.

Lao Tzu would describe this as standing on tiptoes, as he argues that when we stand on our tiptoes, we do not stand firmly. There always needs to be a balance between action and inaction, between the effort we put into things and the time we let the body and mind recover. Stretching ourselves beyond our means may get more work done in the short term, sure, but, as Lao Tzu observed, it will make us weak and vulnerable.

"The more wealth you possess, the harder it is to protect," Lao Tzu stated. Moreover, when one fills a cup to the brim, it becomes quite difficult to carry it around. So, if we take Lao Tzu's wisdom to heart, we want to stand firmly with two feet on the ground with everything we do.

### 3) Stop controlling the world.

Do you want to rule the world and control it? It cannot be done. The world is a sacred vessel, and it cannot be controlled. You will only make it worse if you try. It may slip through your fingers and disappear. Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, chapter 29 Have you ever observed that many of our problems solve themselves? Intervening is only sometimes necessary. Moreover, in many cases, intervention only creates more problems. Everything is in motion, which means that circumstances change all the time and that today's problems can become tomorrow's blessings.

We can see this in the workplace often, as there is always a manager who excessively tries to control all processes and only causes stress and division within the team. Deadlines are not being met, coworkers hate each other, and there is always drama. However, everything goes smoothly when this manager is away for a few weeks.

Lao Tzu states that a good leader doesn't control but operates from the background; she lets people do things themselves and intervenes only sparingly. There is a difference between delegating and controlling, between leading and imposing. Leading and delegating can be done softly and without much interference, letting things flow smoothly. Controlling and imposing often go together with force.

In practice, we should take a step back more often before intervening. In many cases, the natural course will make things work out just fine. It comes down to trusting the universe so that we can let go of control.

### 4) Enough is enough.

Those who know they have enough are truly wealthy. Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, chapter 33. As we tend to overburden ourselves, we also have this nasty feature of gathering much more than we need. We see that the wealthy try to get wealthier. For them, increasing their possessions is life. However, when we always aim to get more, remember to live.

Our needs come with natural limits. We only need enough food to stay energized during the day, and we only need enough water to stay hydrated. Too much is harmful. Taoist sage Zhuangzi invigorates this argument by telling us about the mouse that only takes a bellyful of water when drinking at the pond. A mouse naturally refrains from over-encumbering itself, as drinking too much will take its toll on the body.

Humans often accumulate more than they need. The main reason for this is fear: the fear that 'not having all this stuff' diminishes who they are. It is an ego thing: having more means "I am more". We also fear that we will need more in the future. However, as we know; the future is uncertain. We can die tomorrow, and everything we own can instantly be taken away from us.

"Whoever knows contentment will be at peace forever," Lao Tzu states. However, we can only know when we have enough if we realize that the value we attribute to external things is based on delusion. We aren't what we have, as none of these possessions is within our control. It includes even our bodies. Having an excess of external things eventually becomes a burden. "The things you own end up owning you."

As with the mouse, there is only so much we can take. Of course, it is not a bad idea to have, for example, a nice house and money in the bank, as long as we do not become slaves to what we own. Moderation is the key.

### 5) Don't cling to life.

I have heard that those who celebrate life walk safely among wild animals. When they go into battle, they remain unharmed. Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, chapter 50

There's a difference between celebrating life and clinging to life. If you cling to life, there's nothing to celebrate. Life has become immensely serious and even painful. We're anxious because we see death, the mother of all fears, in every corner. The fear of death makes us cling to life, and as Lao Tzu puts it: "Those who are stiff and rigid are the disciples of death. Those who are soft and yielding are the disciples of life." Therefore, those who do not cling to life are not a threat because they are not fearful, and wild animals do not see the need to attack them.

Now, the fear of death manifests within us in very subtle ways. Many people claim that they don't fear death because they don't fear this imagined idea of death. But this mere idea rarely resembles the truth, as we cannot possibly imagine what it is 'not to be'.

There's something, however, that lies quite close to the experience of destruction, which is 'losing what we cling to'. We may cling to our beauty, so we are afraid of aging. We may cling to our reputation, so we are always

hypervigilant regarding what other people say or think about us. We may cling to our wealth, so we're always busy defending it.

An aging body, a bad reputation, or poverty do not equal death, as we can still live and live well while enduring these things. However, it may equal the death of our self-image, the story we tell about ourselves. For most people, this is where the fear of death lies, which is what they cling to. Thus, the true fear of death lies in 'losing who we think we are'. In war, soldiers fear the idea of 'not dying in honour' more than dying itself. However, by clinging to the idea of ourselves and the world around us, we deny the nature of the universe, which is that change is the only constant. The story we tell ourselves about ourselves today will lose its accuracy tomorrow. The same goes for the story we tell ourselves about the world.

When we cling to one thing, we resist another. Moreover, what we resist will stick, but what we accept we move beyond. The ability to let go and go with the flow and be a flexible operators in a chaotic universe makes us disciples of life. (Einzelganger <https://einzelganger.co/5-life-lessons-from-lao-tzu/>)

### 3.2.12 Ten more lessons based on the writings of Taoist sage Lao Tzu.

1. You hold the answers to all of life's most pressing questions. When you look within, you will find everything you need.

"At the center of your being you have the answer; you know who you are and you know what you want."

"Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom. Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power."

"When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be."

2. By letting go, you become free. You conquer yourself and the world when you allow their existence, not fight.

"By letting it go it all gets done. The world is won by those who let it go. But when you try and try. The world is beyond the winning."

"Therefore, the Master acts without doing anything and teaches without saying anything. Things arise and she lets them come; things disappear and she lets them go. She has but doesn't possess acts but doesn't expect. When her work is done, she forgets it. That is why it lasts forever."

"If you want to become whole, let yourself be partial. If you want to become straight, let yourself be crooked. If you want to become full, let yourself be empty. If you want to be reborn, let yourself die. If you want to be given everything, give everything up."

"Do you have the patience to wait till your mud settles and the water is clear? Can you remain unmoving till the right action arises by itself?"

3. Labels and egotistical desires will never grant you the pleasure of truly knowing yourself.

"He who defines himself can't know who he really is."

"He who has power over others can't empower himself."

"He who tries to shine dims his own light."

4. Evil naturally crumbles away when you pay no attention to it.

"Give evil nothing to oppose and it will disappear by itself."

5. Kindness and compassion for others will always win, no matter how long evil reigns.

"Treat those who are good with goodness, and also treat those who are not good with goodness. Thus goodness is attained. Be honest to those who are honest, and be also honest to those who are not honest. Thus honesty is attained."

"Kindness in words creates confidence. Kindness in thinking creates profoundness. Kindness in giving creates love."

"Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage."

6. Have the confidence to be yourself without caring what others think.

"Care about people's approval and you will be their prisoner."

"When you are content to be simply yourself and don't compare or compete, everybody will respect you."

7. Wisdom and strength come from remaining humble.

"The wise man is one who, knows, what he does not know."

"All streams flow to the sea because it is lower than they are. Humility gives it its power."

8. Change is inevitable, so embrace it, even if it seems uncomfortable.

"If you realize that all things change, there is nothing you will try to hold on to. If you are not afraid of dying, there is nothing you cannot achieve."

"New beginnings are often disguised as painful endings."

9. A great leader realizes he is not above his followers; he is merely one of them.

"The wicked leader is he who the people despise. The good leader is he who the people revere. The great leader is he who the people say, 'We did it ourselves.'"

"If you want to govern the people, you must place yourself below them. If you want to lead the people, you must learn how to follow them."

10. Strive to do nothing and be nothing; here, you will find true happiness.

"When nothing is done, nothing is left undone." (<https://www.powerofpositivity.com/10-life-changing-lessons-to-learn-from-lao-tzu/> December 15, 2022).

**Confucianism and Taoism.** Taoism is a way of living in harmony with Tao, the Way of the Universe, the character of which is revealed in the workings of the natural world. According to Hoff (1993), "Taoism primarily deals

with the individual's relationship to the world. Its contribution has been mostly scientific, artistic, and spiritual." (p. 19). In this sense, Taoism is aligned with the New Spirituality of Progressive beliefs of Lynch (2007), where a pantheistic view accepts the presence of the divine in all creation. It means that the universe and the cosmos are identical with divinity and a supreme supernatural being or entity, pointing to the universe as an immanent creator deity. It is also aligned with the Quantum Theology of O'Murchu (2014), which espouses the idea that God is a divine energy that works through movement, rhythm, pattern, and restlessness within the evolving nature of life itself. He says, "Life is sustained by a creative energy, fundamentally benign in nature, with a tendency to manifest and express itself in movement, rhythm and pattern." (O'Murchu, 2004, p. 197). The Tao, the Way, is divinity.

### 3.2.13 Summary

The contributions of Confucianism have been in the areas of government, business, clan and family, relations, and ancestor reverence. In this sense, it is a precursor of Wheatley's (2009) leadership, the new science, and Kilmann's (2001) quantum organization. The government at the centre is surrounded by its citizens, the business leader is surrounded by its employees, many families surround the class, and the children surround the parents in a family. This pattern is confirmed by forming a quark, which has a centre and is surrounded by small particles. The harmonious relationship of these social entities is governed by the Ying Yang principle that resolves whatever conflict. The energy that binds members of these entities is chi (qi). This energy is aligned with the findings of Ray (2006). The very energy in each person is an expression of God Himself, and Dispenza (2017) states that each person is 99.999 per cent energy and only .001 per cent matter. The two traditional Chinese gurus were precursors of what we now call New Spirituality which Lynch (2007) calls Progressive Spirituality. Lao Tzu's focus on man's relationship with nature affirms Lynch's assertion of the pantheist doctrine, where God is present in the universe and nature. Our ecological crisis today needs a Taoist perspective to create an ecological civilization seriously. The Analects of Confucius and the I Ching of Lao Tzu are aligned with Walsch's (2019) Essential Path.

## 3.3 Contemporary Spirituality In China

### 3.3.1 Social Spiritual Civilization

#### 3.3.1.1 Introduction

Ecological civilization is both a creative and innovative concept of China, which ultimately points towards a spiritual civilization. It is a creative product of human imagination because it presents a new idea of how humans and nature should relate. Humans need harmonious relationships to treat nature respectfully and judiciously and use its abundant life-giving gifts to humanity. The need for new awareness to see the Earth as Mother Nature. She is a person whose lungs are the atmosphere and biosphere; her skin is the plants and trees; her blood system is the rivers and the oceans, and her bones are the rock and minerals. (Edwards, 2004, p.206).

It is innovative because it has an enhanced continuity for the 1987 Triple Bottom-line: People, Profit and Planet as critical sectors in sustainable development, where people (society), profit (economy) and planet (ecology) must relate harmoniously. Ecological civilization in 2018 created a pyramid, where a new key player, Politics (governance), sat on top to manage society (people), Economy (profit) and introduced a new element, culture (belief). Culture is driven by one's belief and attitude toward ecology (environment), economy (profit), a society (people). Culture hints at a higher level of human existence, which Laszlo and other metaphysical gurus call consciousness. A new consciousness vis-à-vis ecological civilization calls for human behaviour based on spiritual values that guide and promote harmony with nature. Ecological civilization is leading humanity towards a Spiritual Civilization.

The term social spiritual civilization is way ahead of my pioneering concept of spiritual civilization. China is a leader in presenting new concepts to the Western world. Ecological civilization was coined by President Xi Jinping, a concept that updated the 1987 Triple Bottom-line (People, Planet, Profit) paradigm for sustainable development.

#### 3.3.1.2 Narratives of Chinese Scholars

The following is a narrative from Qi Zhenhai (2014). He said that the problem of building a socialist spiritual civilization is drawing the attention of the whole party and people across the country. In his "Speech Delivered at the Rally in Celebration of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China," Comrade Ye Jianying stated: "Simultaneous with our effort to build a high level of material civilization, we must raise the educational, scientific, and cultural levels as well as the health level of the whole nation, foster the lofty ideal of revolution, cultivate revolutionary ethics and customs, and develop a noble and colourful cultural life to build a high level of spiritual civilization." Deng Xiaoping also pointed out that the endeavour to build a socialist spiritual civilization "refers not only to education, science, and culture, but also to communist ideology, ideals, faith, ethics, discipline, revolutionary stand and principles, and the comradeship between man and man, etc." Their expositions expound in depth the content and major significance of building a high level of socialist spiritual civilization. As architects of socialist spiritual civilization, teachers should be more enthusiastic than others in responding to the party Central Committee's call to give wide publicity and build a high level of socialist spiritual civilization conscientiously.

The Central Commission for Guiding Cultural and Ethical Progress is a commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) tasked with educational efforts to build a "spiritual civilization" (Jingshen Wenming) based on socialism and the goal of building a socialist harmonious society, according to the official CPC policy. (Shambaugh, 2007). The Commission was established on April 21, 1997. As one of the CPC's most important ideological steering bodies and the People's Republic of China, it controls nationwide propaganda and ideological dissemination, overlapping another similar body, the Leading Group for Propaganda and Ideological Work. The



Commission and the Leading Group are chaired by the Politburo Standing Committee responsible for propaganda and overruling the CPC Propaganda Department.

Wu Yuanhilang (2014) says that at the Party Twelfth National Congress, Comrade Hu Yaobang pointed out that simultaneously constructing a high level of material civilization, efforts must also be made to build a high level of spiritual civilization. It is an issue related to the strategic policy of building socialism. The historical experience of socialism and realities in China today tell us that whether or not this policy can be adhered to will have a bearing on the rise or fall, success or failure, of socialism.

Wu Yuanhilang reflects: Why should we raise the question to such a high plane? How can a high level of spiritual civilization be built simultaneously with a high level of material civilization? In advancing a coordinated development of the two questions, a balanced approach to socio-economic-cultural emphasis in China's development has entered a new phase of Spiritual civilization.

### 3.3.1.3 The future of a Socialist Spiritual Civilization

From Karl Marx's dialectic materialism propelling Mao Zedong to a Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution, China became progressive and prosperous when Deng Xiao Peng embraced the Western economic concept of the market economy. This progress was paid with a great price of massive pollution of nature in China. In response, Xi Jinping pioneered and promoted China's Ecological Civilization, calling for "Green mountains, blue skies, and clear waters." Today, modern China is moving towards what I call a Spiritual Civilization.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

1. The writings of James Ebners on Human Race Church, Karl Rahner on Anonymous Christian, O' Murchu on Quantum Theology, Gordon Lynch on The New Spirituality, Neale Donald Walsch on The Essential Path, and Joe Dispenza on Becoming Supernatural serve as a review of related literature of this narrative on Traditional Chinese Thoughts and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Spirituality. The ideas of these authors likewise form a theoretical framework for this study.
2. China as a nation and its citizens qualify to be within the circle of Ebner's Human Race Church, Walsch's Spiritual Beings Manifesting Physically, and One Essence Manifesting Individuality.
3. As the author of life in Chinese cosmology, the Yin and Yang principle aligns with O'Murchu's declaration that divinity is a vibrant energy.
4. The Chinese Qi or Chi, as life energy fuels the life of the cosmos and all of creation; it is considered by mata physicist James Ray God when he equates God with Pure Energy.
5. Traditional Chinese medicine is aligned with Dispenza's application of meditation to physical health and well-being.
6. Confucianism which established the rules and rituals of the human relationship with other humans is a manifestation of the quantum structure of the quark which has a big centre and many small elements around it.
7. Taoism, which defines the relationship of humans with nature, is aligned with Lynch's New Spirituality which is anchored on pantheism and panentheism.
8. China which embraced the Western dialectic materialism of Karl Marx, is progressing from material prosperity to a Socialist Spiritual Civilization.

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