Applying Daoist Thoughts of Interconnectedness to Disaster Communities: Through the Lenses of Diaspora and Pluralism

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Abstract: The human community confronts a plethora of disasters, including man-made epidemics like COVID-19, environmental problems such as water and food resource depletion, biochemical warfare, and even threats from human-created artificial intelligence. Consequently, it is appropriate to term our current community a “disaster community”. This paper delves into the issue of diaspora, intrinsically linked to the fragmentation problem in the disaster community, where each subgroup tends to focus solely on its own community. This issue is scrutinized by categorizing the diaspora into larger and smaller categories, with cases from both the international and domestic levels examined respectively within each category. Among the many Daoist philosophical concepts, this paper focuses on the Daoist principle of interconnectedness. In examining Daoist thought on interconnectedness, it also confirms that the notion of interconnectedness is being increasingly emphasized in modern society and across various academic disciplines. This perspective affirms the pluralistic nature of existence, while also underscoring the fundamental interconnectedness that underpins the myriad forms and phenomena. It provides a framework for addressing the challenges faced by the disaster community, particularly in relation to issues of diaspora, by emphasizing the need for coexistence and collective responsibility within a web of mutual relations. The philosophy innovatively applied from Daoism emphasizes “recognizing diversity based on Dao, while acknowledging that each existence is interconnected”. Here, “recognition of diversity based on Dao” underpins pluralism, and “interconnectedness of all existence” forms the fundamental solution to the diaspora problem. This approach could be extended as a strategic response to various disasters that the human community encounters. Therefore, this paper assesses the current state of the disaster community, the severity of the diaspora issue, and some cases both between and within nations. It also discusses the core of Daoist philosophy and its creative application to overcome these challenges. The disaster community should transition towards a sustainable and open community, and on this journey, by acknowledging our interconnectedness, we can find solutions to not only the disasters we confront but also to the diaspora problem.

Keywords: Daoism; Dao; Qi; interconnectedness; disaster; diaspora; community; disaster community; pluralism

1. Introduction

The definition of community is diverse. There are even claims that “community does not exist” (Rosa et al. 2019, p. 10). However, every individual on Earth cannot help but belong to some community or group, even if it is in a negative sense of affiliation (Nakamura 2021, p. 85). Every human being belongs to and exists within some community. As a result, numerous communities have emerged. Among these many communities, we can consider the concept of a “disaster community” in light of the disasters that humanity faces today. Particularly through recent experiences with man-made epidemics like COVID-19, humanity has directly experienced being closely interconnected and having to confront
and overcome major disasters together. But is this the only type of disaster that humanity faces? Environmental problems such as water and food resource depletion, biochemical warfare, and even the threats of artificial intelligence created by humans are examples of the various disasters threatening the human community. In this respect, it is not unreasonable to refer to the current human community as a “disaster community”, and this term is timely and appropriate given the demands of the era. To summarize the reasons for naming it a “disaster community”, first, the impact of disasters has changed from the past, as the scale and diversity of disaster occurrences and damages have increased. Second, there is a growing need for the entire community to respond to these changed disasters. Third, for these reasons, a stronger sense of community to collectively respond to disasters has become more necessary (Kim 2023, p. 31).

Within this context of concern, this paper focuses on the issue of diaspora among the various problems faced by the disaster community. Diaspora refers to people who have left their place of origin and now reside in another location, with the term combining the meanings of “beyond” (dia) and “to scatter” (spero). A prominent example is the Jewish people who left Palestine. There are also other forms of diaspora, such as the “labor diaspora” of Indian contract workers, the “victim diaspora” of North Korean defectors, and the “trade diaspora” engaged in commerce, each referring to specific ethnic groups or regions. Various forms of diaspora share the common characteristics of, first, leaving their homeland, second, seeking a better place than their homeland, and third, migrating. Ultimately, the defining feature of diaspora, whether in the past or present and in its diverse forms, is “movement” or “migration” (Miller 2023, p. 8). Particularly in today’s world of advanced transportation and communication, and increased trade, it is difficult to restrict movement, and such mobility will continue to expand, making the characteristic of “movement” in diaspora even more pronounced.

However, it would be inaccurate to characterize the diaspora itself as a disaster. Nonetheless, in addressing this issue, two key considerations must be taken into account: first, the fact that the causes of many diasporas are related to disasters, and second, the conflicts between diaspora communities and other communities, and the threats to the entire community that arise from this, are problems that humanity must address and can be a source of further disaster. For example, diasporas can arise from disasters such as climate change and war. In this way, diasporas are deeply connected to disasters caused by environmental problems or war, mainly caused by human avarice. The problem of disasters expands. The issues that arise from the movement and settlement of people have the potential to escalate into disasters that threaten the entire community.

Today, with globalization and improved transportation, movement has become freer and more convenient, and borders have eroded within globalization. However, globalization has not affected everyone equally (Dollfus 1998, p. 263). Even without explicitly labeling them as diasporas, conflicts and frictions similar to those experienced by diasporas are occurring more frequently and universally. Consequently, conflicts and antagonism between communities are intensifying. Diasporas move as communities, not just as individuals. And there exist other communities that sometimes seek to block or persecute these diaspora communities. In a sense, the inherent “movement” drive of diasporas inevitably leads to clashes and conflicts between communities, which is a problem that the human community must recognize and prepare for.

Furthermore, the movement of diasporas can also be problematic from the perspective of the indigenous population, not just the immigrants. For example, it can threaten the livelihoods of the indigenous people. Xenophobia can also arise. Xenophobia, which combines the meaning of “strange” or “foreigner” (xeno) and “fear/hatred” (phobia), can become another seed of disaster for the human community. If xenophobia becomes entangled with other values unrelated to ethnicity or ideology, such as political calculations, its danger can increase. In this complicated situation, today’s humanity faces various disasters as a single community unlike the past, so there is a need to come together. In this respect, diasporas can not only arise from disasters, but the core of diasporas—movement—
can also bring disaster to the human community. Therefore, from the perspective of interconnectedness, it is essential to respond and prepare now.

Considering these points, this study will focus on the issue of diasporas in Section 2, which is closely related to the fragmentation where each community is concerned only with its own interests, among the challenges faced by disaster-stricken communities. The text will examine diasporas in both broader and narrower contexts. The rationale for this approach is as follows: references on “transnationalism” such as *Nations Unbound-Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States*, differentiate between domestic movement and international movement, viewing the former as natural and the latter as a special phenomenon (Basch et al. 1993, p. 356). In reality, there are many connections between the two, and they should be considered differently depending on the size and situation of the country.

Furthermore, diaspora cannot be simply defined as dispersion between countries. There are countries the size of cities on Earth, and there are also countries dozens or hundreds of times larger. The problem is particularly serious in the case of the dispersion between urban and rural areas within a large country like China. Paying attention to this point, Section 2 will discuss diasporas within a country and diasporas between countries (Xiang 2024, p. 810).

In Section 3, we will apply Daoist connectionist thought to address the problems of diasporas, emphasizing need for the disaster community to unite in tackling this issue. It is important to note that religion has not always played a positive role in preventing disasters; conflicts between religions or ideologies have often impeded rational responses (Ferguson 2021, pp. 49–54). However, this does not negate the potential for religions, especially Daoism, to play a positive role in the face of the crisis of the disaster community. In this respect, Section 3 will examine the problems of diasporas through the lens of the pluralistic tendencies of Daoist thought. It will further argue that by emphasizing the “connection” through the Daoist concepts of “Dao” and “Qi” (vital energy), the disaster community can overcome its challenges through “cooperation within connection”. Within this context, the paper limits its focus to China, as it is the origin of the Daoist thought proposed as a solution, and the region where diaspora issues related to Daoism are most prominent.

A review of prior research shows that there are no studies that have comprehensively discussed the issues of disaster, disaster community, diaspora—covering both broader and narrower categories—Daoist connectionist thought from a pluralistic perspective (Kim et al. 2024, pp. 1–18), and China together. Most of the research has been discussed in a very specialized and micro-level manner within its respective fields, focusing either on a specific religion or disaster (Kim 2023, pp. 29–57).

In contrast, this paper aims to discuss these issues from a macro perspective, centering on China and the community. Of course, the intention is not to judge the rightness or wrongness of any particular country or region, as these problems are not unique to China, but manifest in similar ways in other countries and communities. Therefore, this study hopes to provide an opportunity for readers to ponder solutions centered on their own local contexts regarding the issues raised.

2. The Disaster Community and Diaspora

2.1. Smaller Scope of Diaspora: Urban Migration (Within a Country)

Small-scale diasporas are now commonly encountered in our local communities. This phenomenon is evident in Beijing, the capital of China, and is not unique to Beijing but can be observed in major cities worldwide. Most metropolitan areas exhibit multilayered characteristics or heterogeneity due to various factors (Kim and Lee 2020, pp. 93–94). This diaspora evolves in connection with other social problems. It is particularly evident in the issues of people who have abandoned the poor countryside to migrate to the cities chasing urban development. The phenomenon is easily observed globally as rapid urbanization occurs and the gap between urban and rural areas widens. Whether in prosperous or impoverished countries, the concentration in cities creates various problems such as housing,
transportation, and waste disposal, and leads to the depopulation and decline of rural areas, potentially plunging the entire community into disaster.

In China, those who have migrated from rural areas to large cities and are lingering on the outskirts of the cities are called “nongmingong” (农民工, migrant workers). The existence of these migrant workers came to the forefront during the Spring Festival in 1989. At that time, as they gathered at the train stations to return to their hometowns for the holiday, their presence became widely known. Prior to this, the existence of these migrant workers was not even properly grasped, but their sudden concentration at the train stations brought them to the forefront as a social issue. The number of migrant workers was 191 million in 1987, 242.23 million in 2010, 273.95 million in 2014, and reached 295.62 million by the end of 2022. As of 2021, migrant workers accounted for 32% of China’s total urban population of 914.26 million.8

In Beijing, there are residential areas such as Anhui Village (安徽村), Henan Village (河南村), and Zhejiang Village (浙江村), where people from the provinces have come to the capital city of Beijing and formed communities with their fellow townspeople. Some of these have been demolished or disappeared for various reasons. A book entitled Investigation of Chinese Peasants (中國農民調查) was published in 2004 by People’s Literature Publishing House, shedding light on the issue of migrant workers by connecting it to social surveys. However, this book was banned from sale just a month after its publication, as the authorities anticipated the potential impact it could have. Despite this, it is said that around 10 million pirated copies of the book circulated in Chinese society (Cheng and Wu 2014, pp. 3–4). Another incident that drew attention to a different form of migration to the cities was the fire incident that occurred on 18 November 2017. The fire broke out in Xinjian Village (新建村) in the Daxing District (大興區) of Beijing, where a large concentration of the migrant population was living in group housing. The fire resulted in 19 deaths and 8 injuries. This incident garnered significant social attention, and as a result, 135 similar low-income migrant settlements in Beijing with unsafe living conditions were demolished.

Regarding the issue of the migrant population, those living in the capital city of Beijing were specifically referred to as “Beipiao” (北漂), meaning “drifters in Beijing”.9 Like the migrants of the diaspora, these migrant workers (nongmingong) were also pushed into being seen as a “problematic population”, becoming the targets of neglect and criticism. The ripple effects of the “connection” were clearly evident in the Xinjian Village (新建村) incident as well. Specifically, as the demolition work began, the migrant residents whose living conditions became unstable were unable to properly perform the jobs they had taken on in the city. This caused a domino effect of problems connected to delivery, construction, and other service industries. Detailed data show that among the migrant population, 54.5% are engaged in commercial and food services, 29% in construction, and 6.8% in manufacturing. Another survey found that in 2005, out of 3.55 million migrant workers in Beijing, 3.1 million (87%) were nongmingong, who accounted for 73% of Beijing’s construction workers and 10% of its manufacturing workforce (Yoon 2017, pp. 55–76).

According to the 2022 Migrant Workers Monitoring and Survey Report released by China’s National Bureau of Statistics on 28 April 2023, in 2021, migrant workers accounted for 39.2% of China’s total employed population. In the secondary industry, which includes manufacturing and construction, migrant workers accounted for 65.5%. In the tertiary industry, which includes transportation, accommodation, delivery, medical care, and wholesale and retail, migrant workers accounted for 41.5%.10 While the first-generation migrant workers were mainly employed in the secondary industry, such as manufacturing and construction, over time, as China’s economy has developed, the proportion of migrant workers employed in the tertiary industry has increased.11

The role of these migrant workers is not limited to within China. In 2009, a migrant worker appeared on the cover of Time magazine, suggesting that migrant workers played a significant role in overcoming the global economic crisis triggered by the 2008 financial crisis. These statistics and the social contributions of urban migrants continue to be relevant, not only within China but also in the presence of foreign workers employed in various
occupations in major cities of developed countries. The conflict between urban and rural areas, and the small-scale diaspora where people move from rural to urban areas and face not welcome, but disdain and hatred, have become social problems around the world. If left unattended, this can lead to even greater disasters. It is time to view a single nation as a single disaster community and demand an active and proactive response to it.

The diaspora communities have already settled and created new networks, including economic ones, within the existing society. That is why Xiang, who has long studied the Zhejiang Village in Beijing, stated the following: The communities of people from different regions who have settled in Beijing “have all been formed through sufficient interaction with the outside society. This formation is a process of population agglomeration, but at the same time, it is also a process of expanding the economic network” (Xiang 2024, p. 784).

While conflicts and antagonism may arise from the movement, ultimately these people have found a direction of coexistence within another new connection. Although the result may not be ideal or satisfactory for everyone, it is clear that they have created an indispensable relationship in the space they live together, and are moving towards a direction of coexistence to prevent greater disasters. The coexistence of indigenous people and migrants that has arisen from the movement through diaspora is not only possible, but must be recognized as an indispensable element in constructing modern society, including major cities. If this direction is the best practical alternative, a suitable philosophical theory of coexistence is required.

Based on this understanding of the issues, the next section will focus on the Daoist concept of connection to address this need, as Daoist thought and practices related to connection can help alleviate some of the problems associated with diaspora.

2.2. Larger Scope of Diaspora: Movement between Countries

Beijing has long had frequent movements of outsiders similar to diaspora. While we can now clearly distinguish foreigners, in China’s past history, including during the Yuan and Qing dynasties, it was not simple to differentiate between foreigners and outsiders. The modern nation-state system was established after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, and it took a long time for the nation-state system to take root. The pre-modern history was a chronicle of a universal power such as God or the Emperor, so the concept of borders did not exist. Borders were a necessary concept to create the modern collective consciousness of the nation (Seo 2006, p. 22). Of course, the long history of China and the vast territory it occupied are also reasons why it was not simple to distinguish foreigners and outsiders.

Currently, there is the Niujie (牛街) area in Beijing where the Hui ethnic minority (回族) of China resides. While the Hui are now considered one of China’s ethnic minorities, in the past and even now, there have been countries established by people of similar ancestry in the Western Regions where they resided. The Hui ethnic minority who reside in Niujie had settled there at least 600 years ago, having left their original homeland in the Western Regions. The Qingjinsi (清真寺) temple, the spiritual place of Niujie, was built in the 14th year of the Tonghua (統和) era (996 AD) of the Liao dynasty (遼朝, 916~1125), over a thousand years ago. Qingjinsi is a mosque built in the traditional Chinese architectural style, showcasing not only the assimilative power of Islam, but also the Chinese religious culture that has embraced it. The settlement of the Hui ethnic group has been successful. This is why figures like Zheng He (鄭和, 1371~1434), a Hui Muslim, could emerge.

It is not only the Niujie area where the Hui ethnic minority resides, but there is also the Xinjiangcun (新疆村) area in Beijing where the Uyghur ethnic group used to live. Among them, the Weigongcun (魏公村) area has been demolished. There are also spaces where foreigners of different nationalities reside. The Korea Town in Wangjing (望京), located in the northwest of central Beijing, is a space where Koreans reside in Beijing. There are also spaces where Japanese and other foreigners gather and reside together.

Unlike the past, the rapid and comprehensive movement between countries, and the resulting residential spaces, are not only found in Beijing, China, but exist all over the world. China has about 60 million overseas compatriots living in 198 countries. Of course,
one can also compare this to the aspect where impoverished tenant farmers and workers in China in the mid-19th century migrated to the Western colonies in Southeast Asia due to disasters, and they have formed a powerful network in Southeast Asia (Yeoh 2012, pp. 285–335). The Chinatowns established by the Chinese around the world are no exception. Of course, these issues are different from the classical meaning of diaspora. But, in terms of migration and settlement, they are connected, and the history of diaspora exists intact behind each situation. Among them, there is a “labor diaspora” that migrated as railway workers or sugarcane plantation workers.

The history of migration has become the foundation for the Chinatowns established by Chinese people around the world today. The Chinatowns found in various places were built upon the foundation of the pain and sacrifices of migration. Of course, the intensity of labor and the degree of coercion are not the same as the diasporas of the past, but even now, most still migrate and settle for the purpose of labor. As a result, the diaspora has created a larger community by accommodating different religions and people. However, just as the decline and destruction of Hui traditional culture is observed in Niujie, the cultures of other diasporas will also change in the cultural exchange between tradition and modernity, between indigenous and migrant populations, as time passes.

Looking back at China’s history of migration from the perspective of the larger scope of diaspora, an important characteristic is discovered. During periods of development, China took an open-minded attitude. It is difficult to determine whether it developed because it was open, or it became open because it developed, but it is clear that greater development was achieved through the harmony of development and openness. The Tang Dynasty is a representative example of this. In the case of the Tang Dynasty, it is also more accurate to view the open-minded attitude and development as progressing together, rather than determining what came first and what was the absolute driving force. During the developmental period of the Tang Dynasty, in the world’s largest city of Chang’an (長安), with a population of 1 million, the presence of ethnic minorities was natural, and openness and inclusiveness were naturally established. This characteristic manifested in several aspects.

First, the Tang Dynasty was the first to implement the Binggongke (賓貢科), a civil service examination specifically for foreigners. Among the Silla people from the Korean peninsula who passed the examination were Choe Seung-wu (崔承祐), Choe Eon-wui (崔彥柘), and Choe Chi-won (崔致遠). The Binggongke continued as the Cike (制科) system in the Song and Yuan Dynasties, but was abolished in the Ming Dynasty. The Tang Dynasty was so open to foreign cultures that it even allocated positions for foreigners in the civil service examination.

Second, there were foreign-born military officers. Even foreigners could become military officers in the Tang Dynasty. Figures like Gao Xianzhi (高仙芝, ?~755) and An Lushan (安祿山, 703~757) are representative examples. During the Huang Chao (黃巢) Rebellion, the salt merchant organizations even hired Turkic and Uyghur soldiers.

Third, equal laws were applied to both foreigners and natives. The Tang Dynasty practiced the principles of territoriality and personality, applying laws equally to foreigners. They were even lenient towards illegal foreign residents and ethnic minorities.

Fourth, the Tang Dynasty comprehensively accepted and practiced the cultures of ethnic minorities, including those of the northern nomadic peoples. For example, the Zhiguan (直官), who made up one-fifth of the Tang court officials and were mainly responsible for science, technology, and the arts, originated from the bureaucratic organization of the Northern Wei Dynasty, influenced by the tradition of the nomadic dynasties of dividing official positions by function. Furthermore, the traditions of the nomadic peoples can also be seen in the Fubing system (府兵制) of the Sui and Tang Dynasties. The Tang Dynasty’s flexible attitude towards Empress Wu Zetian (則天武后, 624–705), China’s first female emperor, is also related to the respect for women’s rights in nomadic cultures.

Fifth, the layout of the Tang capital Chang’an’s imperial palaces had a separate area for foreign merchants, demonstrating the openness to the migration and residence of eth-
nic minorities. It was natural for people from various regions connected by the Silk Road to gather in Chang’an. Northern ethnic groups, as well as people from Silla and Japan, gathered in Chang’an, engaging in diverse disciplines, such as being students, warriors, merchants, monks, or artists. Of course, there were also many illegal foreign residents among them. The Tang Dynasty was able to well manage this situation of ethnic minorities and outsiders living together, and turned it into a driving force for the country’s development.

Sixth, the Tang Dynasty placed Daoism at the highest position among all religions, while respecting Confucianism and Buddhism, and also accepting the “Three Alien Teachings” of Manichaem, Nestorianism, and Zoroastrianism. In this way, the Tang Dynasty created an international culture by incorporating the customs of heterodox religions into its own culture. This allowed the Tang to become a global center of economy and learning, and it also spread the influence of the Tang, including Chinese characters, the legal system, religions, and thoughts, to neighboring countries.

The Tang Dynasty’s open attitude towards ethnic minorities was influenced not only by its cultural confidence and national strength, but also by the inherent openness of Daoism. The Tang Dynasty was a point where pluralistic elements were ignited, and it adopted an open attitude towards other religions, thoughts, and other ethnic groups and countries. In particular, the Daoist thought that developed in the Tang Dynasty was also based on pluralistic acceptance and inclusiveness, which also allowed it to take a positive stance on the issue of diaspora. This issue will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

3. Overcoming Diaspora and Applying Daoist Thoughts of Interconnectedness

3.1. Daoist Pluralistic Tendency and Diaspora

Daoism may appear to have made little contribution to resolving the issue of diaspora in Chinese history. However, the terminology and concept of “diaspora” are modern and rooted in Western academic discourse. Examining Chinese history reveals a landscape marked by the ebb and flow of diverse ethnic groups and nations. Within this context, the core diasporic phenomenon of migration was ubiquitous.

This prompts the question—what posture and perspective did Daoism adopt towards diaspora? And what were its philosophical underpinnings in this regard? The historical record suggests that not only internal peace within a community, but also the peace between the community and the external world stemming from its internal cohesion, were both important considerations. Consequently, looser, more open-ended communities tended to be prioritized over tightly knit ones. This necessitated a recognition and accommodation of the “other”. Viewed through this lens, Daoism’s open-minded inclination inherently contained an attitude of openness, inclusiveness, and hospitality towards overcoming diasporic challenges. Specifically, the mindset required to address diaspora appears to have been one of “open-minded acceptance and harmony” as well as “compassion for the unfortunate”. These two spiritual orientations are deeply embedded within Daoism.¹⁹

First, Daoism’s culture manifested an open-minded spirit and practice of acceptance and harmony. This is evident in Daoist scriptures, deities, and philosophies, which widely incorporated the cultural elements of other religions, including Confucianism, Buddhism, yin–yang cosmology, spirit veneration, and folk beliefs. Daoism demonstrated a remarkable capacity to absorb diverse religious cultures.

Second, Daoism upheld the spirit of aiding those in need. This aligns with the Daoist values that emphasize the “value of life” and stress “practical implementation” (實踐力行). This spirit is not only evident in the aforementioned work of Mou Zhongjian (牟鍾鑒), but can also be readily identified in the writings of numerous other Daoist scholars. For instance, Xie Lujun (謝路軍) also summarized the ideological characteristics of Daoism as emphasizing life, practical implementation, construction of an ideal society, and dialectical thinking (Xie 2008, pp. 55–58). This perspective is also reflected in the work of Gong Pengcheng (龔鵬程). He highlighted Daoism’s emphasis on life by citing texts such as the “Taiping Jing” (太平經), which states, “The Way of Heaven abhors killing and favors life” (天道惡殺好生), and the “Taishang Laojun Neiguan Jing” (太上老君內觀經), which asserts,
“The Dao cannot be seen, so life is used to illuminate it. Life is not eternal, so the Dao is used to preserve it. If life perishes, the Dao is abandoned; if the Dao is abandoned, life perishes” (道不可見, 因生以明之. 生不可常, 用道以守之. 若生亡則道廢, 道廢則生亡) (Gong, p. 25).

Thus, the Daoist emphasis on life transcends the desire for individual longevity (不老長壽) and immortality, extending beyond personal life to encompass other beings and life forms. This reflects a broader valuation of life that extends to others and diverse living entities. The values and precepts of Daoism seek to help those in difficult circumstances and promote coexistence. The precepts found in Daoism contain universal principles that humanity should observe. Among these, particularly relevant to diaspora are the admonitions against greed and the exhortation to assist those in challenging situations. For instance, the eighth of the “Ten Precepts of the Initial Truth” (初眞十戒) states, “Do not be endlessly greedy (不得貪求無厭)” The seventh of the “Ten Precepts of the Primordial Heavenly Worthy” (元始天尊十戒) advises, “Do not deceive the lonely and poor, nor seize others’ possessions (不得欺凌孤貧, 奪人財物) (Yu 1991, pp. 171–72). The Twenty-Seven Precepts of Lord Lao (老君二十七戒) also advocate practicing non-desire (无欲), knowing contentment (知足), and avoiding the glorification of war (Yu 1991, pp. 172–73). Furthermore, the ethical texts of Daoism, known as Quanshanshu (勸善書, books encouraging virtue), contain passages that aid in overcoming diaspora and benefiting the community. The “Taishang Ganying Pian” (太上感應篇, Treatise on the Response of the Dao) teaches that good is repaid with good and evil with evil. It also states that performing good deeds and accumulating virtue will result in heavenly protection, and it urges people to aid those in urgent need and rescue those in danger. The “Wenchang Dijun Yinzhwen” (文昌帝君陰鸞文, Essay on the Hidden Virtue of the Imperial Lord Wenchang) advises showing compassion to the poor. The “Taiwei Xianjun Gongguo Ge” (太微仙君功過格, Scale of Merits and Demerits of the Immortal Lord of Great Subtlety) mentions both virtuous and evil actions, stating that merit is gained by actions such as a physician saving someone with a severe illness or saving the lives of domestic and wild animals (Yu 1991, pp. 175–78).

In this way, Daoism’s two key aspects—its open-minded spirit of acceptance and harmony, and its compassion for the distressed and willingness to assist them—were crucial for community development and the healing of diasporic wounds. Interestingly, this aligns with the open-minded social atmosphere and progress of that era, which can be seen as being intertwined with the flourishing of Daoism at the time. In this respect, the ruling powers of the Tang Dynasty maintained exceptionally close ties with Daoism, indicating the significant influence Daoism exerted on the politics of that era. The Tang Dynasty fabricated the myth that the Daoist patriarch Laozi was the founding emperor of the Li dynasty, a narrative that was perpetuated by successive Tang emperors. In the Tang Dynasty, the close relationship between the ruling powers and Daoism allowed the latter’s ideas and practices to profoundly shape the social, political, and intellectual landscape of the Tang Dynasty.

The Daoist principles of open-minded acceptance and harmony, as well as compassion for the unfortunate, are also reflected in Confucius’ concept of “harmony without uniformity” (和而不同). However, these ideas find even deeper and broader expression in the Daoist philosophical core of Laozi and Zhuangzi’s emphasis on the Dao as the basis for understanding diversity. This Daoist orientation provides an important philosophi-
cal foundation that transcends the closed, tightly knit community model, offering a more loose, open, and interconnected perspective that can help mitigate the challenges of diaspora. This contribution to pluralism is also significant. Pluralism generally holds that different beliefs and cultures can coexist, and it contemplates the values of collective action.

In this context, diaspora and pluralism need to be considered together. Pluralistic thinking can provide the basis for an open attitude towards diaspora. Diaspora involves dispersal, with people leaving their places of residence to wander elsewhere. If the host communities do not welcome them, the diaspora cannot be resolved. Conversely, if the host communities embrace a pluralistic orientation, it becomes easier for the diasporic communities to find a new refuge within those societies, halting their displacement. This is rooted in an open-minded approach. Daoism, based on such open-mindedness, absorbed Buddhist and other ideological and religious elements, adopting their strengths. Daoism, particularly the thought of Laozi and Zhuangzi, is sometimes characterized as relativistic. However, it would be more accurate to describe it as pluralistic rather than relativistic, as the concept of the Dao underlies the relative perspectives within their philosophical framework.

Furthermore, in Daoism, relativity cannot be conceived without the foundation of the Dao. All things in the world are relative within the Dao. Therefore, the Dao in Daoism is not narrow or closed-off, but possesses a universal tendency while maintaining an open structure. This philosophical orientation is manifested in Daoism’s aforementioned spirit of openness and compassion for the unfortunate.

3.2. Applying Daoist Thought: Interconnectedness through the Dao and Qi

Inseparable from Chinese history, Daoism has made significant social contributions. However, the situation has changed in recent times. The current disaster community has weakened geographical boundaries, increased mobility, and is dominated by xenophobia rather than hospitality. Therefore, Daoist thought needs to be creatively applied to meet the demands of modern society.

The Daoist-based thought to be creatively applied can be summarized as: “Recognize diversity based on the Dao, but be aware that all existents are interconnected”. Here, “recognizing diversity based on the Dao” forms the foundation of pluralism, while “awareness of the interconnectedness of all existents” becomes a practical philosophy for resolving diaspora issues. This can be expanded as a way to wisely overcome the various disasters facing the human community. In this regard, Nicholas A. Christakis stated in the epilogue of *Apollo’s Arrow* the following: “Many of the challenges related to pandemics—such as the need for international cooperation, the issue of cost-sharing among neighboring countries, the respect for science-based expert opinions, and complex political factors—are also relevant to the challenges posed by climate change” (Christakis 2021, p. 483). Although numerous scholars are issuing warnings about climate change and pandemics, the fundamental core lies in recognizing that the majority of disasters are anthropogenic, primarily driven by self-interested human behavior. Hence, the essential focus should be on fostering collaboration within disaster communities, as well as among neighboring countries, to prevent and overcome these calamities. Inducing such cooperation requires an awareness that the entire community is interconnected. Within this awareness of interconnectedness, we can cooperate to prevent and mitigate risks.

Grounded in Daoist thought, Daoism questions the discrimination and exclusion created by humans, and strives to practice the ideal of embracing differences from the perspective of the Dao. This applies directly to the issue of diaspora. Theoretically, there is no reason or basis to exclude differences. The theoretical foundation for this is systematically developed in Daoist thought, based on the philosophy of the Dao and the interconnectedness expanded from the concept of qi. In this context, let us examine the theoretical characteristics developed in Daoism and Daoist philosophy.

First, it is a philosophy based on the Dao. As evidenced by the inclusion of the term “Dao” (道) in both “Daoism” (道家, Daojia) and “Daoist religion” (道教, Daojiao), the Dao lies at the core of these philosophies (Kim 2004, pp. 68–72). Daoism views the world and
makes judgments based on the Dao. Therefore, it is natural that all Daoist scriptures discuss and expound upon the Dao. Among them, the representative work, the Laozi (Daodejing), particularly emphasizes the Dao. While there are diverse explanations of the Dao, the concepts of “The Way follows its own Course or naturalness” (道法自然) from Chapter 25 of the Laozi (Laozi 2003), and “the Dao gives birth to the myriad things” (道化生萬物), emphasized in Chapter 42 (Zhuangzi 1990, p. 235), capture the essential nature of the Dao.

In this regard, the characteristics of Daoism can also be directly applied to the issue of diaspora. Earlier, we mentioned xenophobia in the context of diaspora. From a pragmatic perspective, diaspora presents a dilemma: if the host society accepts immigrants, it risks being overwhelmed and becoming chaotic; however, if it rejects immigrants, they are condemned to endless wandering. In this dilemmatic situation, Daoism addresses the issue using the essential principles of the Dao. It encourages individuals to reflect on their own desires and gradually let them go. By moving beyond the pursuit of immediate self-interest, Daoism offers the insight of a more fundamental and all-encompassing coexistence within the teachings of the Dao.

The Dao questions what is truly desirable and what should be the ultimate pursuit, rather than focusing solely on individual self-interest. The Dao is the universal law, the principle governing the workings of the cosmos, and the driving force behind the world. From the more proactive and fundamental perspective of the Dao, one can gain the insight to transcend the boundaries of division and discrimination imposed by world.

This perspective is exemplified in the Zhuangzi, which explicitly posits:

> Viewed through the lens of the Dao, things have no distinction of nobility or lowliness (Zhuangzi 1990, p. 420).  

As this famous expression suggests, the claims and desires that each side has been vociferously advocating, when examined from the essential perspective of the Dao, can be contextualized within the broader framework of a community that encompasses all parties involved. Within this framework, we can discern potential avenues for resolution. Certainly, thought and practice grounded in the Dao do not offer a panacea for all issues. The natural cycle of birth and death is also a part of this paradigm. Even the process of diaspora will eventually witness the dilution of the few by the many, and the supplanting of the old by the new—a natural and inevitable progression. The focus should be on how to practically implement the essential principles of the Dao, maintain a harmonious life, and collectively prevent impending disasters through coexistence. Reflecting on and understanding the essence of the Dao can provide the basis for a more concrete and practical application of the idea that the world is interconnected through qi.

Second, the philosophy that the world is interconnected is based on the Dao. As mentioned earlier, the Laozi and Zhuangzi, as well as other texts derived from them, expound on this idea of interconnectedness rooted in the Dao. For example, the Zhuangzi states:

> There is nothing that is not that, there is nothing that is not this. From the perspective of that, it cannot be known, but from the perspective of this, it can be known. Therefore, it can be said that this comes from that, and that also arises from this (Zhuangzi 1990, p. 54).

If each person only thinks from their own perspective, they will only see differences and distinctions. However, from the standpoint of the Dao, each individual is interconnected. This naturally calls for a sense of community.

This philosophy is further expanded upon in the Commentary on the Jade Scripture of the Inner Landscape (黃庭內景玉經註 Huangting Neijing Yujing Zhu). It discusses the interconnectedness of all things based on the cyclical flow of the Five Elements:

> The Five Elements are water, fire, metal, wood, and earth. They support each other in succession: water gives birth to wood, wood gives birth to fire, fire gives birth to earth, earth gives birth to metal, and metal gives birth to water, and the cycle repeats. They also constrain each other in succession: water restrains fire, fire restrains metal, metal restrains wood, wood restrains earth, and earth restrains
water, and the cycle repeats. This is the way they support each other. Returning to the One, this is the Number of water, the way of the Five Elements, and the progenitor of all things (Liang 1988, p. 533).  

Due to this interconnectedness, the small cycles of the Five Elements may appear to be mutually antagonistic, but when viewed in the context of the larger cycle, these antagonisms ultimately lead to mutual generation. From the standpoint of the Dao, the differences are not truly differences, but rather each entity playing its unique role harmoniously to create something, as described in Laozi’s concept of “mutual opposition, mutual generation” (相反相成). This thinking is underpinned by the philosophy that the world is interconnected based on the Dao. Just as life and death are determined by the coming together and dispersal of qi, the key lies not only in qi itself, but in how qi is “connected”. This principle also applies directly to modern science. While the atoms that make up matter are important, it is the organization, patterns, and structures formed by these atoms that determine whether a substance is a gas, liquid, or solid. As stated, “the lesson of modern physics is that the important thing is not the stuff that a thing is made of, but the pattern and organization and form of it” (Buchanan 2014, p. 25). Connections are thus crucial.

While some communitarians today advocate for looser communities, the Daoist philosophy that all things in the world are interconnected provides an important philosophical foundation for pursuing a path of mutual flourishing that transcends the boundaries of any particular community. This supports the call for an open relational approach that embraces the diversity of Daoism. In the face of the disasters confronting humanity, reflection on the essential principles of the Dao and action grounded in them, with consideration for the entire community, are called for. However, even if such lofty thinking is difficult to attain, one can at least act on the minimum duty towards the diasporic other by recognizing the interconnectedness of all things based on qi, acknowledging the existence of realms beyond one’s own, and extending compassion to those adrift. While meticulous examination may be required at the local and micro level, from a holistic and contextual perspective, Daoism, grounded in the principles of the Dao and qi, practices not only the alleviation of selfish desires (少私寡欲) and harmonious integration with all things (融通萬有). These principles are relevant beyond the issue of diaspora. This philosophy, embodied in Daoist precepts, also functions as an important virtue to be upheld in communities where individuals coexist. It enables the acceptance and recognition of others in daily life and serves as a foundation for sharing and collective enjoyment. Within this framework, the issues of diaspora and pluralistic practice become possible.

In this context, the philosophy of interconnectedness provides the theoretical foundation for practices to prevent and heal the disasters threatening the disaster community. The unrelenting epidemics since the 20th century, from the Spanish Flu to the recent outbreaks, have mostly been men-made disasters resulting from the inevitable consequences of interconnectedness, rather than natural calamities. The awareness and practice of interconnectedness in a collaborative manner can not only prevent and heal made-made epidemics and environmental problems, but also prevent the occurrence of diaspora and embrace the wounds of the diasporic. Of course, the philosophy of interconnectedness is not unique to Daoism, as it is also emphasized in Buddhism and by modern Western intellectuals, who recognize the ecological interconnectedness of species through predator–prey, herbivore–plant, and host–parasite relationships (Oliver 2022, p. 128). This can be explained in more scientific terms, allowing us to articulate how we are interconnected with all things in the world, as follows:

From an atomic perspective, a human being is a marvelous and complex agglomeration of condensed air. Therefore, it is only natural that the composition of our bodies would change if the components of the atmosphere were to change (Stager 2014, p. 134).

Reframing the modern scientific concept of the atom as qi can lead to a contemporary understanding of Daoist philosophy. Daoism’s notion of the generation and dissolution of life through the aggregation and dissipation of qi bears resemblance to the principles of
modern science. Therefore, applying this principle to humanity and community, “we must break free of the illusion of the independent self and find ways to take responsibility for our impact on the world” (Oliver 2022, p. 284). This allows for an argument that considers not just the individual, but the entire community. On this premise, the Daoist perspective is more sophisticated and universal. The interconnectedness through the Dao and qi is not confined solely within one’s own world and community. This is because it is premised on the universal principle of the Dao. Grounded in the Dao, all things in the world are interconnected, and my community is connected to your community. This allows Daoism to address the following concern:

In reality, the scope of justice that people consider is limited by boundaries. Those within the boundaries of the “moral community” are deemed deserving of respect and fair distribution. However, those outside the boundaries are often seen as enemies, dehumanized, and treated cruelly. As Deutsch explains, the scope of justice tends to be defined by the boundaries of one’s “moral community” (Kim 2019, p. 147).

We are well aware of where and how this concern has manifested. It has been discovered in the long history of humanity. Each community, trapped in “collective illusions,” fights and quarrels with others based on their delusional beliefs. These collective illusions of the past make it difficult to end diaspora (Rose 2023, pp. 1–419). As Deutsch pointed out, the scope of justice tends to be defined by the boundaries of one’s “moral community” (Kim 2019, p. 147). More fundamentally, it is because humans possess inherent limitations as a species. Each individual is deeply engrossed in their own particular sphere or domain, and evidently exhibits the constraint of being unable to transcend the confines of their own field or realm (Kim 2022a, pp. 1–438). While thought processes have inherent limitations, we must strive to overcome these constraints by grounding our thinking in the fundamental principles of the Dao as taught in Daoism. Failure to do so risks trapping us in the logic of imperialism, akin to how imperial powers plundered their colonies, or ensnaring us in anthropocentric thinking that has led humanity to ravage nature. Without this effort, we will continue to make endless missteps, inflict wounds, and ultimately plunge the community of all beings into calamity.

Daoism expands the idea of interconnectedness to higher and broader realms. While Daoism emphasizes the connection between humans within the human community, it also extends this to the connection between humans and nature, and humans and the cosmos. This allows Daoism to protect the ecological environment and prevent the threat of disasters. However, we must be aware that while interconnectedness can help defend against the problems faced by disaster-stricken communities, it may also give rise to unforeseen disasters within those connections. We must approach this cautiously, recognizing that new problems and threats to humanity may emerge from experiences we have not yet encountered, such as brain–computer interfaces (BCIs), connections with AI, and genetic modifications like CRISPR gene editing. The risks that may arise from these developments could potentially lead humanity to disaster or servitude. Despite this, we cannot halt or even pause this progress. Therefore, it is crucial to actively guide these advancements through the autonomous interconnection between communities. We can look to ancient Daoism, where the Danzheng school (丹鼎派) developed elixirs (丹藥) as an extension of external alchemy (外丹). While there were problems and side effects, this also led to the advancement of science and the invention of gunpowder (Yu 1991, pp. 245–46).

No philosophy or ideology can be considered perfect and flawless. Reflecting on human history, we have already experienced enough instances where ideals of religion, political slogans, and ideologies have incited the masses, deceived the people, and resulted in empty despair and false hope. The opposite is also true—unbridled hope is problematic, but so is a hopelessly bleak reality that refuses to improve. Therefore, we must face reality squarely, reflect coolly on past experiences, and strive to create and practice philosophies that are closer to our hopes and goals. In this regard, Daoist thought, while not perfect, can provide sufficient insight for the disaster community. In the past, it has been stated that
“Philosophical research, including Daoist studies, has been conducted without its inherent vitality, under the shadow of, or influenced by, the contemporary political and temporal context” (Kim 2004, p. 103). Now, through ongoing efforts to engage with reality, including this current research, philosophy and religion must independently seek ways to contribute to society and humanity.

In our recent experience with infectious diseases, many initially believed that these pathogens should be eradicated. However, due to indiscriminate human modification and exploitation of nature for profit, there is a potential for the continuous emergence of novel pathogens, posing ongoing threats to humanity. Therefore, the assertion that “we need symbiosis with microorganisms rather than a war against infectious diseases” (Park and Koo 2021, p. 292) is pragmatic, as everything is interconnected. Similarly, viewing those marginalized by diaspora as subjects to be eliminated rather than partners for coexistence is not progressive. Consequently, solutions for the diaspora should be sought from the standpoint of a disaster community, emphasizing coexistence and compassion. For disaster communities, disasters do not exist in isolation.

4. Conclusions

Through the experience of COVID-19, humanity has realized that we are all together in the face of disasters. Disasters are no longer an individual problem, but a challenge for the entire human community, necessitating a unified response. Thus, it is fitting to refer to humanity today as a “disaster community”. While the types of disasters are diverse, this paper focuses on those arising from human mobility. Mobility is driven not only by economic and political factors, but has also increased due to advancements in transportation and trade, occurring both within and between nations.

The environment of diaspora and mobility has evolved significantly from the past. Humanity is now more closely connected through advancements in science, technology, transportation, and communication. The changes in spatial mobility have been truly remarkable.

The modern human community faces the collective responsibility of responding to disasters. Through experiencing disasters, we have realized that they are not just individual problems but challenges for all. Threats to humanity, ranging from traffic issues and air pollution to infectious diseases, extreme weather, nuclear energy, microplastics, household waste, chemicals, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, asteroid collisions, and the dangers of artificial intelligence, are numerous, immense, and ever-present in our daily lives. The entire community must come together to address them (Kim 2023, p. 31).

The mobility of diaspora emerges within the context of disasters, and the xenophobia and exclusion that manifest in this mobility ultimately portend another disaster. Diaspora is yet another disaster that the disaster community must consider. Both the disaster community and other communities exist in a state of interconnectedness, and disasters can be prevented within the ethos and practices of communal connection (Choi 2021, p. 7). The disaster community must strive to become a sustainable and open community, where we mutually acknowledge and practice the reality of our interconnectedness. In this paper, Daoist philosophy’s concept of interconnectedness has been discussed as the ideological foundation for such action. This can help the disaster community collectively ponder and find solutions to the problems faced by the diaspora.

The term “disaster community” emphasizes that our current era is one in which we collectively face disasters. In the age of the disaster community, existing in isolation is no longer possible. As discussed in the main text, we must consider the survival of the community within the context of interconnectedness and move beyond the notion of preserving only our own community to thinking and acting for the collective community. Humanity’s uniqueness lies not in the individual human, but in the community formed through cooperation within interconnectedness. In this context, Toby Ord asserts the following:

Even with unique mental abilities, a single human in the wild is never special. Intelligence may compensate for physical weaknesses to enable survival, but it
cannot make one superior to other species. In ecological terms, it is humanity, not the individual human, that is special (Ord 2021, p. 23).

This argument is realistic because everything is interconnected. Humanity has progressed through interconnected cooperation (Ord 2021, pp. 23–24). In this context, François Fénelon (1651–1715), the author of The Adventures of Telemachus and a French clergyman, stated “Since all men are brothers, all wars are civil wars”. Ultimately, not only the Daoist philosophy primarily examined in this text, but also various perspectives from both East and West, across different times, unanimously recognize the importance of interconnectedness and emphasize coexistence within this interconnectedness.

In conclusion, this study suggests that, in addressing the issue of diaspora, Daoist thought should be expanded to recognize that communities exist within a network of interconnectedness. By offering a constructive framework for collaboration based on shared communal values, disaster communities can more effectively address the challenges they face.

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**Notes**

1. The causes and forms of diaspora are diverse. For example, the first-generation Korean diaspora in Cuba immigrated in the early 1900s for political and economic reasons, during a period when Korea went through Japanese colonial rule and the Korean War, leading to division into North and South. The Koreans in Cuba found it difficult to return to either North or South Korea.

2. For example, there is a quote that highlights this focus on migration and immigration: “I believe that migration or immigration has become a representative topic that encompasses all the issues that permeate our lives and thoughts (identity, ethnicity, religion, patriotism, nostalgia, integration, multiculturalism, security, terrorism, racism, etc. This is because migration or immigration has been a historically and culturally very important element. Whether we are immigrants or not, we are all descendants of migrants”.

3. Tracing the root causes of the Syrian civil war and the resulting refugee crisis, we find it is linked to a spike in the price of the wheat flour they consume, which in turn is related to a drought in Russia that reduced wheat production.

4. This can be seen in the attitudes toward closing borders in the lead-up to the US presidential election, which is associated with the “Great Replacement Theory”, based on the fear of immigrants becoming the mainstream. The Biden administration and the Democratic Party have shifted in a more conservative direction from their previously more accommodating stance on immigration. By the end of 2023, the number of illegal border crossings into the US had exceeded 10,000 per day (Jungang Il-bo [Central Daily], 14 February 2024, p. 23).

5. Diaspora is about movement. Although the term has been used broadly and diversely, at its core is the concept of movement. People seek to move to places more suitable for themselves, where they will not be persecuted, and where they can benefit. Movement presupposes space—moving from one space to another. Space differs from place, as place is perceived as space imbued with experience and emotion. Therefore, in the movement of diasporas, an inherent conflict and opposition exist between the values of the different places within each space.

6. Examples of such research include the following works: (Balboni and Balboni 2019; Oman 2018; Balboni and Peteet 2017; Cobb et al. 2012; Koenig 2008). Research has also focused on specific religions and specific disasters (Kim 2023, pp. 29–57).

7. Beijing was once the capital of the Jurchen Jin Dynasty (金朝, 1115–1234) and the Mongol Yuan Dynasty (元朝, 1271–1368), and after the Ming dynasty (明朝, 1368–1644) was founded, the Yongle Emperor (永樂帝, 1360–1424) moved the capital from Nanjing to Beijing. While Beijing was officially designated as the capital in 1441, the return to the Central Plains was continuously
discussed. As the capital of an ethnic minority became the capital of the Han Chinese, connecting the north and south, and integrating the Chinese and the “barbarians”, various differences between immigrants and local residents were established in Beijing. The Manchu ethnic group, who were also an immigrant group, inherited this sense of place in Beijing and established the Qing dynasty (清朝, 1636–1912). At least until recently, this multilayered character, hybridity, and diversity remained in the place of Beijing, creating experiences and a sense of place in Beijing.


As of the end of 2021, the total population of Beijing was 21.886 million, of which 8.348 million, or 38.1%, were non-resident migrant population. (Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics, “Beijing National Economic and Social Development Statistical Bulletin 2021”, released on 1 March 2022, http://www.beijing.gov.cn; accessed on 23 June 2023). For example, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Vietnam for 1 night and 2 days on 12 December 2023, discussing the improvement in transportation connections between the railway connecting China’s Guangxi and Vietnam’s Hanoi, the improvement in transportation connections between Yunnan’s Kunming and Haiphong, and the expansion of fruit imports from Vietnam. China aims to build a community of common destiny through improving relations with Asian countries including Vietnam (Joongang Ilbo, December 2023, p. 20).

For example, in Korea’s 1296 nursing hospitals, there are 34,949 caregivers, of which 46.4%, or 16,192, are foreigners, and most of them are Chinese-Korean women. The article states that if it weren’t for these Chinese caregivers, the current system would not have lasted even 5 years (Joongang Ilbo [Central Daily], 5 December 2023, p. 23).

In this respect, the clear distinction between foreigners and outsiders is not the central issue to be discussed in this paper, which will be left for later. Overseas Chinese are referred to as Huaqiao (華僑) if they hold Chinese nationality, Huaren (華人) if they hold the nationality of the country of residence or were born and raised there, and Tongbao (同胞) for those from Hong Kong, Macau, or Taiwan. The term Qiaomin (僑民) is used to include both overseas Chinese and Chinese descendants.

There are also claims that the Ming dynasty’s Zhu Yuanzhang and his empress were of Hui ethnic origin. The Hui people’s argument is that Zhu Yuanzhang’s appearance was different from that of the Han Chinese, and the empress’s surname was Ma, indicating she was of Hui ethnicity.

There is also a Korean ethnic urban community in this area. Related research includes the following: (Kwon 2005, pp. 1–294; Ye 2010, pp. 199–84; Kim 2012, pp. 25–44).

Especially based on this foundation built in Southeast Asia, China is envisioning an “Asian Community of Common Destiny”. For example, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Vietnam for 1 night and 2 days on 12 December 2023, discussing the improvement in the railway connecting China’s Guangxi and Vietnam’s Hanoi, the improvement in transportation connections between Yunnan’s Kunming and Haiphong, and the expansion of fruit imports from Vietnam. China aims to build a community of common destiny through improving relations with Asian countries including Vietnam (Joongang Ilbo, December 2023, p. 20). It can be referenced from the following research: Kim (2022b, pp. 171–84).

There were also Goryeo (高麗) people such as Kim Seong-jeok (金成績), Wang Lim (王琳), and Choe Han (崔罕) in the Song Dynasty, and An Bo (安朴), An Jin (安震), An Chuk (安軸), Yun An-ji (尹安之), Yi Gok (李稷), Yi Saek (李穡), Yi In-bok (李仁復), Jo Ryeom (趙廉), and Choe Hae (崔瀚) in the Yuan Dynasty. Kim Do (金炤) also passed the examination in the Ming Dynasty, but the Ming Dynasty soon abolished the Binggongke.

Of course, the spirit of Daoism can be discussed from various other aspects. Mou Zhongjian (牟鍾鑒) viewed the spirit of Daoism as follows: the spirit of accommodation and integration (和容讓合), the spirit of challenging the natural order (抗命逆修), the spirit of dedicated practice (實踐力行), the spirit of saving people and benefiting the world (救人濟世), and the spirit of being free from desire and unattached to trivial matters (恬淡通脫) (Mou, pp. 138–48).


“五行謂水, 火, 木, 土. 相推者, 水生木, 木生火, 火生土, 土生金, 金生水, 水又生木, 水而復始; 又相剝法; 水剝火, 火剝金, 金剝木, 木剝土, 土剝水, 水剝火, 火而復始; 相推之道也. 反歸一者, 水數也. 五行之道, 乃物之宗”. In relation to this matter, reference can be made to the work of Kim et al. (2024, pp. 4–10).

As human civilization advances through science and technology, there will be limits to simply existing as we are. At this point, we can attempt more proactive forms of interconnection, based on the development of humans and machines, or humans and
technology. This can ensure a sustainable future, going beyond the claims of posthumanism and transhumanism to encompass the integration of humans with machines and artificial constructs. In other words, we can even consider the evolution of humanity through interconnectedness in the face of technological progress.

The first CRISPR-based gene therapy treatment, Casgenvi for sickle cell disease and beta-thalassemia, was approved by the UK’s Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) on 16 November 2023.

For example, in Ge Hong’s Baopuzi (抱朴子), “Treatise on the Golden Elixir” [Baopuzi · Jindianpian (金丹篇)], it states, “When cinnabar is burned, it becomes mercury, and if this transformation continues, it becomes cinnabar again”. (丹砂烧之成水銀, 水銀變又成丹砂) Also, in the “Treatise on Yellow and White” (Baopuzi · Huangbaipian), it says, “The nature of lead is white. When it is reddened, it becomes the elixir. The nature of the elixir is red. But when it is whitened, it becomes lead”. (鉛性白也 而赤之以爲丹, 丹性赤也 而白之而爲鉛) When cinnabar, which is mainly composed of mercuric sulfide (HgS), is heated in a laboratory, the sulfur inside it combines with oxygen to form sulfur dioxide, and the mercury is separated. When the mercury and sulfur recombine, black mercuric sulfide is formed. If this is placed in a sealed test tube and heated, it will sublime and form a bright red crystalline mercuric sulfide. In this way, Ge Hong’s research on the chemical properties of cinnabar and lead also has scientific value.

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