

Lao-Zhuang Philosophy and Wei-Jin Scholars: Represented by Ji Kang and Ruan Ji

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Abstract: This paper explores the interaction between Lao-Zhuang philosophy and Wei-Jin scholars (220–420 CE), set against the backdrop of social upheaval and intellectual critique of Confucian rituals during the period. Adopting a historical and literary analysis, it examines how Taoist concepts of Tao, wuwei (non-action), and ziran (naturalness) resonated with scholars seeking spiritual freedom and individual liberation. Key findings reveal three dimensions of influence: 1) Scholars embraced wuwei-inspired lifestyles, rejecting materialism for nature and inner cultivation; 2) Lao-Zhuang ideas shaped literary expressions, such as Ruan Ji's *Yonghuai Shi* and Ji Kang's poetry, embodying the "Wei-Jin demeanor"; 3) Thinkers like Wang Bi and the group of Ji Kang and Ruan Ji reinterpreted Taoism through "mysterious learning" (xuanxue) and the mantra "transcend Confucian norms to follow nature," blending tradition with contemporary ideals. The study concludes that Lao-Zhuang philosophy served as both spiritual solace and intellectual catalyst for Wei-Jin scholars, who in turn popularized and evolved Taoist thought. This symbiosis not only defined an era's cultural ethos but also solidified their collective legacy in advancing Chinese philosophical and literary traditions.

Keywords: Lao-Zhuang Philosophy; Wei-Jin Scholars; Spiritual Freedom; Governance through Non-Action (Wuwei); Transcendence of Worldly Conventions

1. Introduction

Before exploring the influence of Lao-Zhuang philosophy on the lives and thoughts of Wei-Jin scholars, we need to first briefly introduce the main philosophical ideas of Laozi and Zhuangzi, as well as the socio-cultural background of the Wei-Jin period.

Overview of Lao-Zhuang Philosophy: Laozi, the founder of Taoist school, profoundly influenced Chinese philosophy through his main work, the *Daodejing* (Classic of the Way and Virtue). The core of Laozi's philosophy is "Tao", the fundamental principle governing the operation of all things in the universe. He emphasized "governance by non-action", advocating compliance with nature and refraining from forcibly interfering with the natural development of things. Additionally, Laozi advocated the concept of a "small country with few people", believing that simple politics and minimal desires among the people were characteristics of an ideal society.

Zhuangzi was an important developer of Taoist thought, with his main work being the *Zhuangzi*. Zhuangzi's philosophy placed greater emphasis on individual spiritual freedom and exploration of the inner world. He proposed the concept of "wandering freely", emphasizing that people should transcend worldly constraints and pursue spiritual freedom and tranquility. Zhuangzi was also an early representative of relativism and skepticism; his "On the Equality of Things" emphasized the equality of all things and opposed the absolutization of value judgments.

Background of the Wei-Jin Period: The Wei-Jin period (220–420 CE) was a turning point in Chinese history, with a complex and volatile socio-cultural background. The political situation during the Wei-Jin period was turbulent, and social stratification was severe. During this period, the scholar-official class (shi) gradually rose to prominence. They were passionate about discussions of literature, art, and philosophy, forming a unique cultural atmosphere. The literati group in the Wei-Jin period, especially the scholars, attached great importance to personal spiritual pursuit and self-actualization.

Influence of Lao-Zhuang Philosophy on Wei-Jin Scholars: In the Wei-Jin period, due to social

upheaval and political corruption, many scholars began to lose faith in Confucian political ideals and turned to philosophy for spiritual solace. Against this backdrop, the influence of Lao-Zhuang philosophy became increasingly prominent.

Spiritual Freedom and the Idea of Wandering Freely: Zhuangzi's thought of "wandering freely" had a profound impact on Wei-Jin scholars. Many literati began to pursue spiritual freedom and transcendence, expressing their aversion to worldly constraints and yearning for a free life in their poetry and essays.

Political Ideal of Governance by Non-Action: Laozi's thought of governance by non-action also influenced political concepts during the Wei-Jin period. In a turbulent era, governance by non-action provided a political philosophy different from Confucian active intervention. Some scholars began to advocate reducing political intervention and pursuing simplicity and naturalness in politics.

Transcendence of Secular Values: The relativism in Lao-Zhuang philosophy and the indifferent attitude toward material pursuits coincided with the Wei-Jin scholars' weariness of fame and wealth and their emphasis on spiritual life. Many scholars began to advocate a lifestyle beyond secular norms, pursuing spiritual and moral self-perfection.

In summary, Lao-Zhuang philosophy provided literati in the Wei-Jin period with a new way of living and thinking. Against the backdrop of political turmoil and social change, the ideas of Lao-Zhuang helped scholars find spiritual sustenance and comfort, while also promoting the development and transformation of culture and art. By pursuing inner peace and spiritual freedom, Wei-Jin scholars found a unique life attitude and philosophical pursuit in a chaotic world.

2. Core Concepts of Lao-Zhuang Philosophy

As a pinnacle in the history of Chinese philosophy, Lao-Zhuang philosophy embodies profound wisdom and a unique worldview. Laozi and Zhuangzi, as representative figures of this philosophical school, continue to profoundly influence people's lives and thinking. This paper elaborates on the core concepts of Lao-Zhuang philosophy: the concept of Tao (the Way), the philosophy of non-action (wuwei), naturalness (ziran), and the pursuit of individual freedom and spiritual independence.

2.1 The Concept of Tao and the Philosophy of Non-Action (Wuwei)

The core of Laozi's philosophy is the "Tao", a concept frequently mentioned in the Daodejing [1]. Tao is the origin of all things in the universe, an intangible and formless existence that permeates all phenomena. Laozi regarded Tao as an ineffable ultimate truth, transcending specific forms and names, serving as the fundamental cause of all existence and change. Feng Youlan provided a brilliant explanation: "Tao is the general name for nature. Laozi said, 'Tao follows nature'. In fact, Tao is nature itself." He further stated, "Thus, the collective nature of heaven and earth is called Tao, while the nature attained by individual things is called virtue." [2] Closely related to Tao is the philosophy of "non-action" (wuwei). Wuwei does not mean doing nothing but rather aligning with the natural laws of Tao and refraining from artificial coercion or intervention. In politics, Laozi advocated "governance by non-action," arguing that the best governance is imperceptible, allowing all things to develop according to their natural laws without interference. This idea also applies to personal cultivation, where reducing selfish desires and artificial disturbances leads to harmony with Tao.

2.2 Naturalness (Ziran) and Compliance with Nature

"Naturalness" (ziran) is another core concept in Lao-Zhuang philosophy. In Laozi's thought, ziran refers not only to the natural world but also to a state of spontaneity, where things develop according to their inherent laws without external interference. Laozi emphasized that humans should emulate the characteristics of nature and live in accordance with its laws.

Zhuangzi further developed this idea, advocating "following nature" and stressing that humans should comply with the natural laws of both the inner and outer worlds to achieve harmony between the mind and the external environment. Zhuangzi believed that adapting to nature is the key to spiritual freedom and inner peace. By eliminating artificial striving and attachment, one can attain true freedom and happiness [3].

In traditional Chinese philosophy, ziran is a profoundly significant concept. The idea of "naturalness" in Lao-Zhuang thought integrates the ontological abstraction of Tao with the objective attributes of heavenly principles. During the Wei-Jin period, as the Confucian value system gradually disintegrated, scholars constructed a

new value system centered on the Lao-Zhuang concept of ziran. The Bamboo Grove Metaphysics school positioned classical interpretation as a pursuit of spiritual experience, integrating classical exegesis with life practice. Zhuangzi's ziran both continues Laozi's "Tao follows nature" and retains the ontological meaning of ziran, developing a universal pursuit of freedom with "liberty" as its core. The distinction between Zhuangzi's "naturalness" and Laozi's "natural non-action" extends to the "carefree wandering" (xiaoyao you) as a realm of pure spiritual freedom [4]. These developments reflect the deepening influence of Lao-Zhuang theory during this period. This unique aesthetic implication not only profoundly impacted the intellectual lives of Wei-Jin scholars but also significantly promoted their self-awareness [5].

2.3 Individual Freedom and Spiritual Independence

Individual freedom and spiritual independence are central to Lao-Zhuang philosophy, with Zhuangzi placing particular emphasis on personal spiritual freedom and the importance of the inner world. He argued that the external world is mutable and uncontrollable, while true freedom originates from within. Through deep self-awareness and transcendence, individuals can achieve a state of "carefree wandering" (xiaoyao you), a condition of spiritual freedom unconstrained by external forces [6].

Zhuangzi's ideas hold significant enlightenment for contemporary society, where people often face various external pressures and constraints, making spiritual freedom and independence particularly vital. He encourages introspection and self-transcendence to seek inner peace and freedom.

In summary, Lao-Zhuang philosophy, as a treasure of ancient Chinese philosophy, with its profound ideas and unique worldview, has not only deeply influenced ancient China but also offers invaluable wisdom to modern people. In this fast-paced and high-pressure era, studying and practicing the concepts of Tao, compliance with nature, and the pursuit of individual freedom and spiritual independence can help us find inner peace and achieve self-transcendence. By deeply understanding and applying these ancient wisdoms, we may better navigate life's challenges and attain a more harmonious and balanced state of being.

3. Cultural Characteristics of the Wei-Jin Period

The Wei-Jin period, a uniquely distinctive era in Chinese history, saw its cultural traits profoundly shaped by the complex social and political backdrop of the time. During this period, scholars underwent significant shifts in their ideological perspectives and lifestyles: they engaged in profound reflection and criticism of traditional rituals, while passionately pursuing individual liberation and the spirit of freedom. This section explores these aspects in detail.

3.1 The Influence of Socio-Political Context on Scholars' Thought

The Wei-Jin period was a time of turmoil, marked by political instability and social upheaval, which drastically altered the status and role of the scholar class. The political landscape shifted repeatedly—from the tripartite division of the Three Kingdoms (Wei, Shu, Wu) to the reunification under the Western Jin, and later to the prolonged confrontation between the Eastern Jin and the Sixteen Kingdoms. Scholars endured displacement amid wars and, during relatively stable intervals, participated in political affairs. Indeed, the Wei-Jin period ranks among the most chaotic and painful eras in Chinese history.

First, there was a crisis of physical survival. From the first year of Emperor An's Yuanshuo reign (107 CE) to Emperor Xian's Jian'an period, over a century marked by frequent disasters—annual earthquakes, famines, floods, plagues, and locust infestations. Second, court struggles inflicted severe physical and mental harm on literati. As political corruption and darkness deepened, these "man-made calamities" exerted a more profound impact on society than the fear induced by natural disasters.

Against this backdrop, scholars' ideological consciousness evolved. Amid social unrest, they increasingly questioned Confucian ideals of loyalty to the monarch and dedication to the state [7]. They adopted a more rational and cautious stance toward issues of power and status. Simultaneously, scholars sought spiritual sustenance and self-worth, fostering a powerful drive for "individual liberation." Confronted with universal chaos, some literati inherited and promoted the critical spirit of Laozi and Zhuangzi. From reconstructing ideals to reflecting on practices, their thought mirrored the growing influence of Daoist philosophy during this period [8]. This unique aesthetic significance not only

profoundly shaped scholars' intellectual lives but also greatly accelerated the awakening of their self-awareness.

3.2 Scholars' Reflection and Criticism of Traditional Rituals

During the Wei-Jin period, scholars' reflection and criticism of Confucian traditional rituals were particularly prominent. In the early phase, societal upheaval and the precarious status of scholars led many to question certain dogmas and norms within Confucian ritualism. They argued that excessive ritual constraints stifled personal freedom and individual development, failing to align with the needs of the era.

This critical reflection found full expression in Wei-Jin literary works [9]. Many scholars used poetry, prose, and other literary forms to voice dissatisfaction with traditional rituals and yearning for new ideas and lifestyles. This criticism extended beyond discontent with social systems; it was a passionate call for individual spiritual freedom and the development of individuality.

3.3 Pursuit of Individual Liberation and the Spirit of Freedom

One of the most striking cultural traits of the Wei-Jin period was its emphasis on individual liberation and the spirit of freedom. Scholars of this era, especially those from elite circles, began to emphasize the importance of personal emotional experiences and inner worlds. They pursued a lifestyle free from the constraints of traditional rituals, attaching unprecedented value to individual emotions and uniqueness.

This pursuit manifested not only in scholars' lifestyles but also in their ideological perspectives and artistic creations. Many advocated a "carefree wandering" (xiaoyao you) attitude—seeking spiritual freedom and physical ease [10]. Their poetry and essays abounded with rebellion against traditional constraints, longing for self-expression, and praise for a free life.

The cultural characteristics of the Wei-Jin period reflected an era's spiritual outlook. Amid a volatile socio-political climate, scholars' reflection on traditional rituals and pursuit of individual liberation were more than personal lifestyle choices—they mirrored the spirit of the times. Through these cultural traits, we glimpse the diversity and depth of ancient Chinese culture, as well as scholars'

unwavering exploration of personal life and spiritual fulfillment. The cultural legacy of the Wei-Jin period continues to profoundly influence our thoughts and lives today.

4. The Manifestation of Lao-Zhuang Philosophy among Literati of the Wei-Jin Period

In the history of ancient Chinese philosophy, Lao-Zhuang philosophy, with its profound ideas and unique worldview, exerted a far-reaching influence on the literati of the Wei-Jin period. This section explores how Lao-Zhuang thought manifested among these literati, particularly its impact on their lifestyles, its reflection in literary creation, and their unique interpretations of Lao-Zhuang philosophy.

4.1 The Influence of Lao-Zhuang Thought on Literati Lifestyles

During the Wei-Jin period, societal turmoil led the scholar class to doubt traditional Confucian values and seek new spiritual sustenance. The core concepts of Lao-Zhuang philosophy—such as "governing by non-action" (wuwei), "adapting to nature", and individual spiritual freedom—provided literati with new lifestyles and ways of thinking.

Non-action and simplicity in life: Laozi's idea of wuwei (non-action) encouraged people to reduce selfish desires and external interference. Among Wei-Jin literati, this manifested as a disdain for material pursuits and a quest for simplicity. Many embraced a life of frugality, believing it preserved spiritual independence and intellectual freedom.

Harmony with nature and carefree wandering: Zhuangzi's ideas of aligning with nature and "carefree wandering" (xiaoyao you) inspired people to transcend worldly constraints and pursue spiritual freedom and tranquility. Wei-Jin literati emphasized living in harmony with nature, as reflected in their yearning for rural life and their praise of natural landscapes.

4.2 The Reflection of Lao-Zhuang Philosophy in Literary Creation

Lao-Zhuang thought profoundly influenced Wei-Jin literary creation, especially poetry and prose.

Views on nature and life in poetry: Wei-Jin poets often expressed admiration for natural beauty and a pursuit of transcendence in their works. Their poems, reflecting a desire to rise above mundane life and seek inner peace, bore

the clear imprint of Lao-Zhuang thought [11]. Intellectual depth and individual expression in prose: Wei-Jin prose, particularly supernatural tales and landscape essays, demonstrated literati's profound understanding and unique interpretations of Lao-Zhuang philosophy. These works abounded with reflections on personal spiritual pursuits and celebrations of natural beauty [12].

Ruan Ji's concept of *da* (transcendence) in *On Understanding Zhuangzi* (*Da Zhuang Lun*) encompasses both "penetration" and "breadth," revealing the special place Zhuangzi held in his heart. In another work, *Biography of Master Great Man*, Ruan Ji adopted Zhuangzi's tone, artistic conception, and spirit to depict the ideal figure and life realm of "Master Great Man" [13].

Ji Kang, another devotee of Zhuangzi, faced a perilous political situation with unyielding integrity, declaring, "Laozi and Zhuangzi are my teachers" [14]. His adherence to Lao-Zhuang thought was, in essence, a spiritual conversion and faith—a fusion of ideological construction and lived reality.

In theoretical works like *On Dispelling Selfishness* (*Shi Si Lun*) and *Admonition to the Grand Tutor* (*Tai Shi Zhen*), Ji Kang openly opposed Confucian orthodoxy, criticizing how ritualism distorted human nature. He defiantly rejected false etiquette, advocating a return to genuine morality and innate nature [15].

4.3 Wei-Jin Literati's Unique Interpretations of Lao-Zhuang Thought

Wei-Jin literati not only embraced the basic tenets of Lao-Zhuang philosophy but also reinterpreted them through their personal experiences and reflections.

Individualized philosophical understanding: Building on traditional Lao-Zhuang ideas, Wei-Jin literati developed more personalized interpretations by integrating their life experiences and the era's context. For example, they merged Zhuangzi's "carefree wandering" with their pursuit of beauty and art, forming a unique cultural trend.

Syncretism with other schools: While embracing Lao-Zhuang philosophy, Wei-Jin literati also absorbed ideas from Confucianism, Buddhism, and other schools. This syncretism enriched their thought and expanded the influence of Lao-Zhuang philosophy during

the period.

In summary, Lao-Zhuang philosophy played a pivotal role among Wei-Jin literati. It transformed their lifestyles and modes of thinking, deeply influenced their literary creation, and underwent unique reinterpretation and development. The cultural achievements of this era not only inherited but also innovated upon Lao-Zhuang philosophy, demonstrating the profound heritage and vitality of ancient Chinese culture. Through their understanding and practice of Lao-Zhuang thought, Wei-Jin literati left a precious cultural legacy for posterity.

5. Case Studies: Representative Literati of the Wei-Jin Period

In the history of ancient Chinese culture, the Wei-Jin period was an era of remarkable cultural innovation and philosophical advancement. In particular, certain representative literati—such as the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, Wang Bi, and Ji Kang—conducted in-depth research and offered unique interpretations of Lao-Zhuang philosophy while making significant innovations in art and literature. This section explores these Wei-Jin literati through individual case studies.

5.1 The Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove and Their Practice of Lao-Zhuang Thought

The Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, a group of renowned literati in the Wei-Jin period, advocated a free-spirited lifestyle, opposed feudal rituals of the time, and pursued spiritual freedom and liberation. The group included Ji Kang, Ruan Ji, Shan Tao, Xiang Xiu, Liu Ling, Ruan Xian, and Wang Rong.

Lifestyle practices: The Seven Sages actively lived out Lao-Zhuang ideas in their daily lives. They promoted detachment from fame and fortune, kept distance from worldly affairs, and often gathered in bamboo groves to drink, compose poetry, and freely discuss philosophy and literature. Their way of life was seen as a challenge to traditional Confucian rituals, embodying the practice of Lao-Zhuang concepts like "governing by non-action" (*wuwei*) and "aligning with nature."

Philosophical ideas: Deeply influenced by Lao-Zhuang thought, the Seven Sages emphasized the importance of individual spiritual freedom and inner peace. They believed true happiness and freedom stemmed from transcending the mundane and letting go of

worldly attachments.

5.2 Interpretations of Lao-Zhuang Philosophy by Wang Bi, Ji Kang, and Others

Wang Bi and Ji Kang were key disseminators and interpreters of Lao-Zhuang thought during the Wei-Jin period.

Wang Bi's philosophical interpretations: Wang Bi was not only an outstanding litterateur but also a profound philosopher. He reinterprets Tao Te Ching, emphasizing the concept of "Nothingness" (wu), arguing that all things originate from Nothingness and stressing the importance of aligning with nature. His interpretations deepened the understanding of "Dao" in Laozi's philosophy, exerting a far-reaching influence on later generations.

Ji Kang's philosophical practice and interpretations: As both a member of the Seven Sages and an important philosopher-litterateur, Ji Kang lived out Lao-Zhuang thought in his life and creations [16], with a particular focus on individual spiritual independence and freedom. His philosophy permeated his music, poetry, and prose, using art to express his understanding and praise of Lao-Zhuang thought [17].

5.3 Innovations in Art and Literature by Wei-Jin Literati

Wei-Jin literati made notable innovations in art and literature.

Literary innovations: They boldly experimented with poetry and prose [18], creating works that prioritized personal emotion, adopted free-spirited styles, and explored profound themes. These works not only reflected their understanding of Lao-Zhuang philosophy but also mirrored their pursuit of individual liberation and spiritual freedom.

Artistic innovations: In calligraphy, painting, and other art forms, Wei-Jin literati emphasized personal style and creative freedom. Their artworks showcased individual talent while embodying their grasp of Lao-Zhuang ideas about nature and freedom.

In summary, through their practice, interpretation, and innovation of Lao-Zhuang philosophy, Wei-Jin literati enriched ancient Chinese philosophy and culture, leaving a precious heritage for posterity. Their lifestyles, philosophical ideas, and artistic creations exemplified a spirit of transcending tradition

and pursuing freedom and individuality, exerting a profound influence on later generations. Undoubtedly, these literati of the Wei-Jin period remain among the brightest stars in the history of ancient Chinese culture.

6. The Interactive Relationship Between Lao-Zhuang Philosophy and Wei-Jin Literati

The Wei-Jin period was an era of flourishing culture and philosophical thought in ancient Chinese history, with the interactive relationship between Lao-Zhuang philosophy and Wei-Jin literati being particularly noteworthy. This section explores how Lao-Zhuang philosophy met the spiritual needs of Wei-Jin literati, the role of these literati in developing and spreading Lao-Zhuang philosophy, and the resonance between Lao-Zhuang thought and the spiritual traits of Wei-Jin literati.

6.1 How Lao-Zhuang Philosophy Met the Spiritual Needs of Wei-Jin Literati

Spiritual solace and self-fulfillment: Amid societal turmoil and political corruption in the Wei-Jin period, the scholar class began to waver in their faith in traditional Confucian values. In this context, Lao-Zhuang philosophy, with its emphasis on the inner world and spiritual freedom, provided scholars with spiritual solace and a path to self-fulfillment. In particular, Zhuangzi's idea of "carefree wandering" (xiaoyao you) offered them a spiritual pursuit transcending worldly constraints.

Anti-traditionalism and individual liberation: The anti-traditional elements in Lao-Zhuang philosophy—such as "governing by non-action" (wuwei) and "aligning with nature"—aligned with the Wei-Jin literati's pursuit of individual liberation and self-expression. These philosophical perspectives provided a theoretical basis for resisting traditional constraints and pursuing a personalized lifestyle.

6.2 The Role of Wei-Jin Literati in Developing and Spreading Lao-Zhuang Philosophy

Deepening and innovating philosophical thought: Wei-Jin literati not only inherited Lao-Zhuang philosophy but also deepened and innovated it. For example, Wang Bi reinterpreted Laozi's Tao Te Ching, emphasizing the concept of "Nothingness" (wu), which enriched Lao-Zhuang philosophy theoretically.

Expression and dissemination through literary

works: Wei-Jin literati widely spread Lao-Zhuang thought through poetry, prose, and other literary forms. These works not only reflected their understanding and practice of Lao-Zhuang philosophy but also enabled its ideas to be disseminated and accepted by a broader social group.

6.3 Resonance Between Lao-Zhuang Thought and the Spiritual Traits of Wei-Jin Literati

Pursuit of the spirit of freedom: The Wei-Jin literati's spiritual pursuit of freedom and transcendence coincided with Lao-Zhuang philosophy's emphasis on spiritual freedom and detachment from the mundane. This pursuit was fully embodied in their lifestyles and literary creations.

Detachment from fame and fortune, and inner peace: The Wei-Jin literati advocated detachment from fame and fortune, pursuing inner peace and self-cultivation, which echoed Lao-Zhuang concepts of simple living and inner refinement [19]. Many scholars practiced Lao-Zhuang ideas through self-cultivation.

In summary, a profound interactive relationship existed between Lao-Zhuang philosophy and Wei-Jin literati. Lao-Zhuang philosophy not only met the spiritual needs of Wei-Jin literati in a turbulent era but also was deeply studied, innovated, and spread by them, thereby influencing a wider social group. Through their life practices and literary creations, Wei-Jin literati demonstrated the core ideas of Lao-Zhuang philosophy while elevating these ideas to new heights. It can be said that the interaction between Lao-Zhuang philosophy and Wei-Jin literati constitutes an important chapter in the history of ancient Chinese culture, exerting a far-reaching impact on later generations.

The practical implementation of Lao-Zhuang thought in the Wei-Jin period reminds us that philosophical issues in real life deserve everyone's attention and reflection. They relate to the direction of each person's life and the destination of their values. In the Wei-Jin era, the legacy of Lao-Zhuang's philosophical spirit created a rich and colorful atmosphere. Amid chaos, they broke free from rituals and traditional concepts, showing a bold attitude toward innovation in cosmology, human nature, and literature. Some precious and humanistic cultural legacies have been passed down to this day.

Key chapters of Lao-Zhuang thought from the Wei-Jin period, tested by time and history, invite us to contemplate how to evaluate such ideas. Our task is to inherit the excellent traditional culture and the essence of ancient sages from history, and on this basis, establish an inner motivation that adapts to life.

7. Conclusion

In the history of ancient Chinese culture, the Wei-Jin period was an era of ideological pluralism and cultural prosperity, among which Lao-Zhuang philosophy had a particularly significant influence on the literati of the Wei-Jin period. At the same time, the understanding, practice and dissemination of Lao-Zhuang philosophy by the literati of the Wei-Jin period greatly enriched the connotation of this philosophical school, making it occupy an important position in the history of Chinese philosophy. This paper will summarize the interactive relationship between Lao-Zhuang philosophy and the literati of the Wei-Jin period, and discuss its historical significance and cultural value.

The influence of Lao-Zhuang philosophy on the literati of the Wei-Jin period. With its characteristics of being detached from the world and having a free spirit, Lao-Zhuang philosophy met the spiritual needs of the literati in the turbulent era of the Wei-Jin period. During this period, due to political unrest and social changes, traditional Confucian values were challenged, and the scholar-official stratum began to seek new ideological sustenance. The core ideas of Lao-Zhuang philosophy, such as governing by non-action, conforming to nature, and individual spiritual freedom, provided the literati of the Wei-Jin period with new ways of life and thinking. In their life practice, they pursued simplicity and indifference, emphasized the importance of the inner world, and advocated the liberation of nature and individuality. In literary creation, the influence of Lao-Zhuang philosophy is reflected in the praise of natural beauty, the profound expression of personal emotions and the in-depth discussion of life philosophy in their works.

The contribution of the literati of the Wei-Jin period to Lao-Zhuang philosophy. The literati of the Wei-Jin period were not only practitioners of Lao-Zhuang philosophy, but

also important contributors to its development and dissemination. On the basis of inheriting Lao-Zhuang philosophy, they carried out in-depth thinking and innovation, injecting new vitality into Lao-Zhuang philosophy. For example, Wang Bi's new interpretation of Tao Te Ching deepened the understanding of "Tao" and "Nothingness"; Ji Kang and others widely spread the ideas of Lao-Zhuang philosophy through life practice and literary creation. The efforts of these literati made Lao-Zhuang philosophy not only confined to the theoretical level, but also become an important force affecting the social culture at that time.

The historical significance and cultural value of the relationship between Lao-Zhuang philosophy and the literati of the Wei-Jin period. The interactive relationship between Lao-Zhuang philosophy and the literati of the Wei-Jin period has important historical significance and cultural value in the history of ancient Chinese culture. First of all, this relationship reflects the diversity and inclusiveness of ancient Chinese ideology and culture, showing the profound interaction between philosophical ideas, the historical background and the literati group. Secondly, the practice and development of Lao-Zhuang philosophy by the literati of the Wei-Jin period not only enriched Lao-Zhuang philosophy itself, but also promoted the cultural prosperity of the entire Wei-Jin period. Finally, the relationship between Lao-Zhuang philosophy and the literati of the Wei-Jin period has provided valuable ideological resources for later generations, exerting a far-reaching influence on Chinese and even world culture. In a word, the interaction between Lao-Zhuang philosophy and the literati of the Wei-Jin period is an important chapter in the development of ancient Chinese culture, showing the profound historical heritage and unique philosophical wisdom of Chinese culture.

In the Wei-Jin period, the main figures who advocated Lao-Zhuang philosophy were Ruan Ji and Ji Kang. During the struggle between the Sima clan and the Cao clan, they witnessed the dark and cruel political rule of the Sima clan by means of "Confucian ethical code", so they strongly advocated Lao-Zhuang thought and opposed "Confucian ethical code" with "nature". Their works are also quite different from Jian'an literature. Generally speaking, in

the Wei-Jin period, the exposure of social darkness and fear and the "lament for the anxiety of life" replaced the appeal for people's sufferings and the goal of "achieving great achievements". This kind of proactive enterprising spirit was replaced by the passive resistance consciousness of negating reality and being hidden.

In the Wei-Jin period, the scholar-official aristocracy was respected, and the scholar-official aristocracy was an extremely corrupt class. They only indulged in pleasure, were unwilling to face the reality full of fierce conflicts, and held high positions only by virtue of their family status, "not taking affairs as the foundation". In this context, the discussion of current affairs and metaphysical talks became more popular. The scholar-official aristocracy used Lao-Zhuang's "theory of unrestrained behavior" to provide themselves with an unrestrained and sensual living space, and at the same time, sought a "tranquil" realm of life in Lao-Zhuang's "otherworldly Tao"; they also used profound philosophy to decorate themselves, show their talents and cover up their hearts. In the Wei-Jin period, due to the contradictions between social strata, the metaphysical scholars of various strata had differences on the political propositions of the two Jin dynasties. Guo Xiang inherited He Yan and Wang Bi's theory of "reconciling Confucianism and Taoism", advocated the unity of nature and Confucian ethical code, aiming to prove that all systems under the current rule of the scholar-official aristocracy were reasonable, so as to safeguard the interests of the scholar-official aristocracy group.

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