Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Practical Theology

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/yprt20

Finding a new starting point for Taiwanese practical theology: rethinking the concept of *logos* (Dao) for Taiwanese theological education

Steven K. Chen

To cite this article: Steven K. Chen (2023) Finding a new starting point for Taiwanese practical theology: rethinking the concept of *logos* (Dao) for Taiwanese theological education, Practical Theology, 16:4, 451-461, DOI: 10.1080/1756073X.2023.2234162

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2023.2234162

Published online: 03 Aug 2023.

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY
2023, VOL. 16, NO. 4, 451–461
https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2023.2234162

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Finding a new starting point for Taiwanese practical theology: rethinking the concept of *logos* (Dao) for Taiwanese theological education*

Steven K. Chen

Wycliffe Hall, The University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to suggest a new Taiwanese perspective on truth which integrates content and practice to rethink the current theological education. I argue that an appropriate approach to do theological education requires a holistic viewpoint on truth; in this viewpoint, the content and practice of theology are interdependent. The article seeks to do three things. First, it claims that one problematic aspect of Taiwanese Christianity is a long-standing unmoved understanding of 道 (Dao, logos), which causes a disconnection between churches and theological schools. Next, the article argues that the concept of 道 (Dao, logos) in the Bible is not unmoved and irrelevant to surrounding context, but is instead an embodied truth. Finally, the article shows that the Taiwanese have already had Taiji (太極) and Taijiquan (太極拳) as an important part of their cultural heritage, both of which view opposite things as integrative, which provides great help to the discussion. In the light of these insights, I propose a new holistic approach towards 道 (Dao, logos) when Taiwanese Christians are imagining the future of theological education.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 4 February 2023
Accepted 4 July 2023

KEYWORDS
Taiwan; theological education; logos; Daoism and Taiji; content and form

One main challenge that Taiwanese Christianity is facing is the separation between the pastoral field and academic research. For some, the former is constituted by pragmatic methods while the latter by cognitive exercise in scholars' brains. Many Taiwanese churches do not consider that theological education is relevant to their concerns. They stop sending people to the seminaries and establish their own workers-training systems in churches instead. Many senior pastors feel that abstruse biblical studies and controversial systematic theology debates are not only remote but even harmful to the church since their church members return with more questions and combative opinions after they finish their studies.

CONTACT Steven K. Chen steven.chen@theology.ox.ac.uk Wycliffe Hall, The University of Oxford, Oxford, UK
*An earlier version of this essay was originally prepared for a PhD seminar at Princeton Theological Seminary (USA), May 2019. The author thanks the director of that seminar, Dr Gordon Mikoski for his encouragement in writing it.

The causes behind the status quo

The subordination of practical theology

What lies behind this is the subordination of practical theology to other disciplines within the theological curriculum. As a former Taiwanese minister, I heard from many pastors that they do not view the practical theology which is taught in Taiwanese seminaries as a helpful tool when it comes to integrating Christian practice and theological thinking. This may be due to the position of practical theology as a sub-discipline to the other departments. When practical theology is reduced to a subordinate position, other theological disciplines lose their practical dimensions, have their heads in the clouds, and have difficulty facing reality. Put another way, the current situation in Taiwan is far from the ideal that Browning (1995, 7–8) proposes, in which Christian theology is seen as practical since 'practical thinking is the centre of human thinking' and all theological disciplines are considered subspecialties of a larger discipline called 'fundamental practical theology'. In short, every theological discipline should have a practical dimension, but we often fail at this. The lack of a bridge between theory and practice causes the separation between the church and the academy.

The lack of a theoretical-practical theology

With regard to this division, in Taiwanese theological education there are few interactions between theory and practice, the most consensual feature of practical theology (Cahalan and Mikoski 2014, 2). For instance, though practical theology does have its theoretical dimension, I heard from a pastor who taught pastoral theology in one of the most prestigious Taiwanese seminaries the reason he forbade students from writing papers with authors who have a PhD degree was that 'these big heads are too theoretical, useless in the practical field'. Unfortunately, the differences between practical theology and other theological disciplines are not which has the theory and which has practice, but what they, respectively, centre on. Compared to biblical studies which centre on Scripture, and systematic theology which centres on doctrine and religious philosophy, practical theology centres on Christian practice and human experience (Forrester 1999, 23). It is 'practical' since it centres on practice; it is 'theology' since it requires us to reflect theologically[1] while giving theology an essential role in its agenda (Root 2009). For Browning, the application of theology, which he called 'strategic practical theology', still has inner ecclesial and public dimensions; but current Taiwanese practical theology mainly focuses on skills and techniques (e.g. how to conduct a funeral). Although a newly published book introduces a traditional pastoral cycle to reform practical theology, it received little attention (Doong 2019). The practical theology we see in some Taiwanese seminaries is only 'applied theology' and must be revised.

It is urgent to build a bridge between theory and practice if Taiwanese practical theology is to mature. Hopefully, a new way of thinking which connects content and practice can bring back the integration of theological education, and eventually bring back the connection between churches and seminaries.

The influence of the unmoved concept of 道 *(Dao, logos)*

I have pointed out that the separation between Taiwanese churches and the academy rooted in the dualism of theory and practice. Where does this dualism come from? Allow me to start from discussing a Taiwanese understanding of truth. When it comes to theological education, the first concept that appears in Taiwanese minds may be the Chinese concept of 道 (Dao). This may be the reason the Taiwanese translate 'Master of Divinity' into '道學碩士 (dao xue shuo shi)', which means 'Masters of the study of 道'. 道 (Dao) refers to 'truth', 'word', or 'way'. It is also the word which was used in Chinese to translate the Greek word *logos* in the New Testament. For Taiwanese, 道 (Dao) is *logos*. The way we understand 道 (Dao) influences the way we view truth and also the way we conduct theological education. So, how do Taiwanese Christians view truth?

As a post-colonial country, Taiwan has transplanted theology from the West. For instance, many first-generation scholars in theological education were Western missionaries from the United States. Moreover, since many Taiwanese seminaries did not have their own PhD programmes, those who wanted to pursue higher theological education studied abroad and returned as teachers. Arguably, one inheritance Western theology gives us is the dichotomy between theory and practice (Cahalan and Mikoski 2014, 62–63). The problem with Taiwanese theological education is that we tend to view 道 (Dao) as an abstract and remote truth which has no direct relation with contemporary life. People believe that truth should be the general principle of the universe; thus, it must be unmovable and will not change according to our contexts. This perspective separates the content of truth (i.e. the unchangeable Dao) and the practice of truth (i.e. our pastoral ministry). This misunderstanding of *logos* as an unchangeable principle makes the pursuit of truth detached from the church's context and circumstances, making seminaries weaker when responding to the needs of local churches.

The concept of *logos* in the Bible

Many Taiwanese Christians value the Bible as the primary, and sometimes the only, resource for doing theology. This section argues that the concept of 道 (Dao, *logos*) in the Bible is not irrelevant to the context.

The concept of *logos* plays a normative role in the Old Testament Bible. When the Hebrew Bible was translated into the Septuagint, the Greek word *λόγος* often was the substitute for the laws of God. For example, when Moses gathered the Israelites and declared the law to them, saying, 'These are the things that the Lord has commanded you to do (Exod. 35:1)', Septuagint uses *λόγοι* to translate 'the things'. At the beginning of Deuteronomy, the book of the law says, 'These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel' (Deut. 1:1). The Hebrew term for 'words' is also here translated as *λόγοι*. In Psalm 119:105, 'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path', many translators use *λόγος* to translate 'word' while some choose to use *νόμος* (law) to do so. This indicates that *λόγος* and *νόμος* are synonyms for some Jewish scholars. From the concept of law in the Old Testament, we can see that *logos* is the directive force of life. Even though it is the normative principle, *logos* in the Old Testament is not something that stays completely unmoved. Isaiah 55:9-11 depicts how the word (*logos*) is sent by God from heaven to earth to accomplish its mission; after it succeeds, it returns to God's place. *Logos* in the Old Testament is the

guide of God's people; it moves from heaven to us and fulfils its duty. It is not impersonal and steady.

Besides the law, another concept which helps us understand *logos* better is wisdom. In the Jewish wisdom literature, wisdom has many similarities to *logos*. In Proverbs 8, wisdom calls out the truth to people (8:4, 7), it exists before the world is created (8:22-23), and those who find it find life (8:35). The picture of wisdom during the intertestamental period is even closer to *logos*. In the Wisdom of Solomon, wisdom is 'a breath of the power of God and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty (7:25)'. Wisdom is also used with *logos* by God to create the world (9:1-2). In the book of Sirach, wisdom praises itself (24:1), telling us it 'came forth from the mouth of the Most High (24:3)'. The picture of coming from God's mouth recalls to us the word (*logos*). Wisdom is personified as coming from God, yet distinct from him. Both the law (*logos*) and wisdom come from God's mouth; they are both normative guides for God's people and both claim to have ultimate authority due to their strong connections with the Most High. Moreover, they are both active and even personalised.[2]

The evidence of an active *logos* shines in the New Testament Bible. In the Fourth Gospel, we see a fulfilment of what the law and wisdom in the Old Testament refer to, that is the personalised *logos*. In John, *logos* was with God (1:1b), and it was God (1:1c). It came from God to earth and revealed God to humans (1:5, 14, 18). The beginning of John reminds us of the beginning of Genesis, where God created the universe with his word (John 1:1; Gen. 1:1-3). This is coherent with the concept that *logos* created the world with God and thus it is the ultimate principle of the universe. When people follow this principle to live, they become the children of God (John 1:12) and receive grace and life from *logos* (1:4a, 16).

Here some may find an echo of the Stoic *logos*, which is unmoved as an ultimate principle of the universe (Nussbaum 1994, 366) that people should live accordingly (Barrett 1961, 67). Since the Stoic *logos* is unmoved, it is also anti-passion. The Stoics tend to see passions (e.g. joy, fear, anger) as things which need to be extirpated, for they are obstructions to the human achieving of virtue and flourishing (Nussbaum 1994, 388–389). However, the *logos* in John has a characteristic that makes it distinct – that is, the incarnation (John 1:14). The Stoics could not have imagined that one day *logos* would become flesh and live among humans. John tells us that *logos* is not only a metaphysical truth which is remote from us but is in fact the incarnation of God who takes on human flesh and enters into human history. Far from being completely 'unmoved', *logos* responds to our circumstances; it moves and changes in order to do its work. Consequently, Jesus Christ, the *logos* incarnate, is full of passions. He can cry (John 11:35) or be agitated (Mark 14:33); he can be joyful (Luke 10:21) or angry (Mark 3:5). These emotions are what the Stoics want to extirpate. In a word, biblical *logos* (Dao) is not a cold or far-away truth from us. Neither is it unchangeable. The incarnation urges Taiwanese theological educators to revise our understanding of *logos* (Dao).

The twofold-unending relationship in Chinese Daoist culture

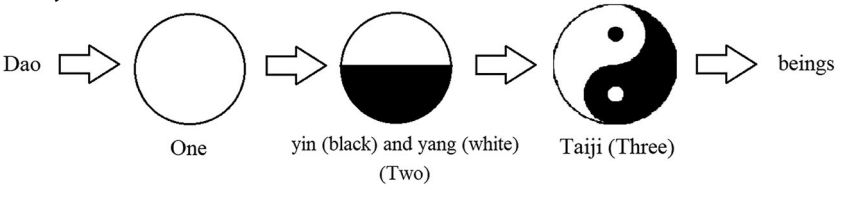
Our argumentation above leads us here towards a particular need in Taiwan for a new way to think about the relationship between theory and practice, or content and practice. In teasing out this point, I begin by thinking about what resources Taiwanese Christians already have at their disposal which can be seen as helpful to the discussion. I propose that, besides the Bible, our cultural material either supports us to view Dao as

unmoved or steady. This section argues that the embodied and content-practice-united view of 道 (Dao, *logos*) can already be found in certain elements of Chinese culture.[3] After all, when Taiwanese, people who are embedded in Chinese culture, hear the word 道 (Dao, *logos*), the first thing that comes into their minds is Daoism (道家).[4] Daoism is a mixed ancient Chinese ideological system which combines ordinary Daoism with elements of Confucianism, Buddhism, and folk religion (Fowler 2005, 4). In Chinese culture, 道 (Dao) represents something fundamental; it means reality at its ultimate. It is the source of all existence and also the place that all existence returns to (4). Besides Daoism, Taiwanese would also think about the popular martial art: *Taijiquan* (太極拳). Along such lines, in the following section, I will begin by briefly explicating the Daoist philosophy of *yin* (陰) and *yang* (陽), before explaining how *Taijiquan* integrates the concepts of content and practice.[5]

The Daoist philosophy of yin (陰) and yang (陽) provides a way to image a mutually dependent relationship between theory and practice

Just as 'theory and practice' describe the two interactive elements of *praxis*, '*yin* and *yang*' are the two interactive parts of *Taiji* (太極). Ancient Daoism believed that 道 (Dao) is inclusive of two parts; one part is *yin* (陰), and the other is *yang* (陽). When they interacted with each other in harmony, they became *Taiji*. *Taiji* is also referred back to *Dao*,[6] and it gave birth to heaven and earth, and then emanated all existence.[7] Even though everything is from the differentiation of *Taiji*, everything is One for *Taiji* since *Taiji* is the 'unifying principle' and represents 'oneness' (268). The word *Taiji* means 'supreme' and 'high'. This refers to the greatest level of achievement in Daoism, which is to be 'in complete balance with *Dao*' (Fowler and Ewers 2005, 23).

For the Daoists, the cosmos was generated by opposite things (e.g. darkness and light, hot and cold)(Fowler 2005, 65). This bipolarity was caused by two opposing forces: *yin and yang*. At the beginning, there was *Dao*, an incomprehensible force. Through an unintentional process of 'unfolding' and 'differentiation', the 'One' appeared.[8] Then, the next step of differentiation occurred and the One became *yin* and *yang* (this is referred to as 'Two') (Komjathy 2014, 88). When *yin* and *yang* had dynamic interaction with each other (which is referred to as 'Three'), *Taiji* appeared, and then the cosmos and its beings came out from *Taiji's* inner dynamic (88).[9]



Yin is a feminine essence. It is gentle, beautiful, negative, cold, and dark (Fowler 2005, 69). It is the 'chaos of darkness', and from it the light was born (69). It is feminine and soft, but this does not mean it is weak. On the contrary, it can be more enduring than *yang* (69). The normal symbols of it are the moon and women. *Yang* emerges from *yin* just as 'the light that arises from darkness' (69). It is male, active, hard, and aggressive. The normal symbols of it are the sun and men.

The interaction between *yin* and *yang* is unending. The Daoists use it to construct their cosmogony and to explain all the natural phenomena they experience. For example, the sunny side of a mountain belongs to *yang,* and the shady side of it belongs to *yin* (66). The interaction between *yin* and *yang* can also change according to time. At noon, the sunny part is larger than the shady part, *yang* is stronger than *yin*; however, when it comes to the evening, *yin* is getting stronger and then becomes more powerful than *yang*.[10] When it comes to the seasons, winter is the time when *yin* dominates; summer is the time for *yang's* turn (67). The forces of *yin* and *yang* are always competing with each other while being in dynamic equilibrium according to the rhythm of the time (e.g. day and night, summer and winter). There is always an ebb and flow for everything. *Yin* and *yang* are also be used to interpret the organs of the human body. For example, the liver belongs to *yin*; a person's liver can gain the greatest benefit from rest if he is sleeping during 1:00-3:00 am, *yin's* strong time. Regardless of whether the interplay of *yin* and *yang* happens through external natural phenomena or internal bodily organs, the core of this principle is holism. No matter which belongs to *yin* and which belongs to *yang*, different parts of a mountain or different organs of the human body are distinct but united. There is *one* mountain or *one* body.

It is based on the certainty of this wholeness that the Daoists believe that *yin* and *yang* will not eliminate each other. They are 'mutually dependent' and 'complementary' (70). Lao-Tzu, the founding father of Daoism, says in his second chapter of the *Tao-Te-Ching* that:

> Everyone recognizes beauty as beautiful.
> This is because there is ugliness.
> Everyone recognizes goodness as good.
> This is because there is badness. (Laozi and Sit 2010, 6)

> Being and non-being create each other;
> Difficult and easy support each other;
> Long and short define each other;
> High and low depend on each other;
> Before and after follow each other. (Mitchell and Tzu 1988, 2)

Moreover, this complementarity also 'represents the interplay between physical and spiritual, emotion and intellect, passivity and activity;' it is a 'harmonised unity of opposites' (Fowler 2005, 70). The Daoists holistically view things which look opposite to each other as interdependent. The concept of humanity is thus a holism. This resonates with the viewpoint of John Dewey (2005, 13), who refutes the dualism of spirit and material, and considers that life is always having dynamic interaction with its environment.[11] Below is the image of *Taiji*:

The image of *Taiji* has several implications. First, it is surrounded by a circle, symbolising perfection and enclosing all the possibilities. This means the entire cosmos (or human body) is a One. Next, through *yin* (the black part) and *yang* (the white part), these two opposites are in dialectical relation and cannot exist without each other. This means that those things which we are used to dichotomising are actually a complementarity. Third, there is a white dot in *yin* and a black dot in *yang*. This means that the two parts both contain each other (Fowler 2005, 76).

These insights are helpful to our discussion, for when Taiwanese Christians see the relationship between theory and practice through the lens of *Taiji*, we see a mutually dependent relationship. Every theory has its practical foundation since no theory is invented in a vacuum. Every practice has its theoretical assumption since it is always conducted from certain beliefs. The theory and practice of the Christian faith are always in a dialectical relationship. In short, *Taiji* is a new and helpful image for us to understand praxis.

The martial art *Taijiquan* (太極拳) expresses both content and practice at the same time.

When most Taiwanese think about *Taiji*, what follows is *Taijiquan* (太極拳). The word *quan* (拳) means a fist. Its connection with *Taiji* (太極) implies that it is a Chinese martial art which reflects the spirit of Daoism. Since art is not the object of itself, but is instead what a product does 'with and in experience' (Dewey 2005, 3), practising *Taijiquan* is the expression of one's experience of *Dao*. Put somewhat differently, the practice of *Taijiquan* is itself an experience and is also based on a person's experience of interacting with his or her surroundings. The ultimate goal of Daoism is achieving the status of living in harmony with *Dao*. *Taijiquan* is this goal's demonstration (Fowler and Ewers 2005, 63). Through its actions, *Taijiquan* 'unifies all its elements into a wholeness that mirrors the unified fabric and rhythms of the universe' (Fowler 2005, 267). The Body is like a little universe for the Chinese (269). *Taijiquan* is a medium connecting this little universe to the larger universe and expresses this connection. This medium is not only an instrumental channel but also a part of the outcome. It demonstrates what the practitioner wants to express.[12]

In *Taijiquan*, things which look opposite are categorised into either *yin* or *yang* and come together. Concepts such as right, upper, and attack belong to *yang*; left, lower, and defense belong to *yin*.[13] When a person who is practicing *Taijiquan* uses his right hand to attack from the height of the shoulder, his left hand would simultaneously stay lower and defend his groin. This is not only a useful way to protect oneself from being struck back when he attacks but is also an expression of Daoist philosophy. Furthermore, when he attacks, his right hand would not stretch to its limit in order to indicate that even the attacking side (*yang*) has a defense (*yin*) in it.[14] *Taijiquan* demonstrates that things are not in conflict but are complementary. Unfortunately, just as Dewey's critique (2005, 6–7) of the remoteness of art-in-museum, the contemporary culture of sports competition makes *Taijiquan* more a highly competitive event between elite athletes than an expression of life attitude. However, in its original meaning, *Taijiquan* is a way of daily life.

Taijiquan does not only require the Chinese to see the world external to us in a holistic way but also asks them to view the internal self with this insight. In *Taijiquan*, our body and mind are integrated (Fowler 2005, 267). The 'esthetic in perception' happens

during the 'process of art in production' (Dewey 2005, 49). The artist expresses his work with his body at the same time reflecting what he has done. The forms of *Taijiquan* are designed according to the rhythm of *yin* and *yang* (Fowler 2005, 270); thus, the practitioner has to keep perceiving the flow of the universe while his body is moving. The bodily form without the mind is dead, while the mind without the body is useless. In brief, practising *Taijiquan* can make people healthier (this is usually what people know about it) and promotes a unified personality with a harmonious balance between one's mind, emotions, and body (270). Moreover, it also promotes harmony between people and their environment. Dewey (2005, 252) makes an observation which corresponds well with Daoism: The relation between a living creature and his environment reflects his inner relations. When a person's connection to the environment is broken, his 'various factors and phases' (e.g. thought, emotion, etc.) are apart (252). The circle surrounding *Taiji* indicates that, ultimately, the reality is not a plurality but a unity. This is true for both the universe and human beings (little universes) (21).

This leads us to the next step, which is a rejection of the dualism between mind and body, which also implies a rejection of the dualism between content and practice. The mind has the content of Daoist philosophy while it cannot be separated from the bodily form (practice). For *Taijiquan*, a martial art, its content is its form (practice). As Dewey says, 'the act itself is exactly what it is because of how it is done. In the act there is no distinction, but perfect integration of manner and content, form and substance' (109). If one wants to know the spirit of *Taijiquan*, the best way is not listening to a lecture but practising it. The content of *Taijiquan* is the practice of *Taijiquan*. Here we have a cultural example of how form and context, or practice and theory, integrate.

The traditional Taiwanese understanding of *Dao* (*logos*) is not merely a remote and unmoved principle but the truth filling up the universe and humans. Every natural phenomenon and the human condition is located in the rhythm of *yin* and *yang*. In it, the different parts of the human are a whole; the mind, passion, and action are a living harmony. Being aware of this cultural heritage may help Taiwanese theological educators to reconsider the way in which we do theology. Even though we may not fully accept the worldview of Daoism, we can be encouraged to do theology with and through our experience. Put another way, the expression of our reflection on faith should be a beautiful integration of intellectual thinking and passion, content and form, theory and practice.

Conclusion: suggesting a new starting point for Taiwanese practical theology

Many years ago, David Tracy pointed out that the separation between form and content and the separation between theory and practice in modern Western culture are damaging theological education (Tracy 1998, 235). Obviously, these are not problems that belong only to the West. When earlier Taiwanese theologians finished their academic training in the West and returned to serve in their home country, they also brought these distinctions back with them. Using the key features of practical theology which Cahalan and Mikoski (2014, 2–3) suggest inspecting the current state, Taiwanese theological education is not 'attentive to theory-practice complexity' successfully and holds little with regard to a holistic point of view on humans. Consequently, this causes an unhealthy separation

between 'practical' theology courses and 'theoretical' courses, and, consequently, an undue separation between Taiwanese seminaries and the local churches.[15]

A key factor for theological education is our understanding of truth, the *logos* of God: How we view *logos* affects how we imagine the content and how we teach. In this paper, I started with biblical studies, arguing that the concept of *logos*, the word 道 (Dao) in the Chinese Bible, is both active and relevant to the contemporary. It is situated in real-life experience and can even be passionate. Moreover, we cannot ignore the context within which we do theology, for a Taiwanese understanding of 道 (Dao) (borrowing thoughts from Daoism) can be framed as a harmony which uses a holistic view to see things that are opposite. The example of *Taijiquan* suggests an interdependent relationship between the mind and body, and leads to the integration between content and practice, which resonates with our recast understanding of the incarnation. Since Taiwanese theological education is rooted in its cultural environment and faithful to its religious texts and thoughts, it should mirror this holistic viewpoint on content and practice, so as to bring out a new way to imagine its curriculum without separating theory and practice.

Taiwanese theological education carries good potential when it comes to reframing itself in light of both the Bible and its surrounding culture. The majority of Taiwanese Christians are Evangelicals. One feature of Evangelism is the commitment to the authority of Scripture (Root 2014). The Bible is always the essential norm for Evangelicals to do theology. This is also the tendency among Taiwanese churches and seminaries (Chen 2018). Thus, it will not be unrealistic for Taiwanese theological educators to revise their understanding of truth according to the biblical, incarnated *logos*. Another feature of Evangelism is a culturally relevant approach to do theology. Compared to Fundamentalists, Evangelicals are more willing to engage their context (Root 2014, 94). Even though the Daoist ideology does not play a normative role in our theological agenda, their thoughts reflect how Taiwanese view this world. In order to be relevant to their surroundings, the Taiwanese theological educators should deliberate about their cultural habits, including a holistic view of human beings and their relationship with the environment.

The argument of this paper is not only helpful to Taiwanese Christianity but also brings two values for the global Church. First, the image of *Taiji* may be a good tool for practical theologians to express praxis – the dialectical relationship between theory and practice. Second, Chinese culture values integrity, it holds a holistic way of thinking about human experience and the relationship between knowing and doing. Western Christianity is deeply influenced by Enlightenment rationality. The price of this influence is the separation between theory and practice. Borrowing from Chinese wisdom, we have another way to imagine a new approach of doing theological education; in it, the content of theology interweaves with the practice of theology, as reflection and action depend on each other, and as the 'What' and 'How' follow each other.

Notes

1. These elements indicate that practical theological work begins at the point of 'human experience and its desire to reflect theologically on that experience.' See Swinton and Mowat (2006, v).
2. Dorothy Bass and other (2016, 2–3) say that Christian practical wisdom is not satisfied with the Aristotelian definition of wisdom, for Christian practical wisdom is always connected

with God and has transcendent aspect thus. Besides, they feel the wisdom in the Bible is more like practical wisdom than theory.

3. Due to the country's complicated history, the word 'Chinese' has two meanings. One is cultural Chinese (shared by both People's Republic of China and Taiwan), another is political Chinese (People's Republic of China). In this paper, I use this word in the former sense.
4. When it is 道家 (Dao Jia), it means a philosophical system; when it is 道教 (Dao Jiao), it refers to a religion.
5. I do not hint that Daoism has a normative position in our theological education or Christian faith. The purpose of this chapter is depicting how deep Taiwanese culture has already embraced an active and embodied 道 (*logos*) which sees everything with a holistic view.
6. The original version is: 繫辭傳說：「一陰一陽之謂道。」(Xi Ci: Yin and Yang refers to Dao.)
7. The original version is: 繫辭傳說：「易有太極，是生兩儀。」(Xi Ci: Yi there was Taiji, it gave birth to heaven and earth.)
8. This process means that 'even unity or the wholeness of Being-before-being is not the *Dao* in its ultimate sense' (Fowler 2005, 65).
9. This is also a difference from Hegel's philosophy. Hegel notices that everything has its negation and differentiation, however, his dialectical method *itself* does not have 'one.' He cannot imagine a world without the differentiation of *Geist*. The Daoists also use the principle of differentiation as the framework of their cosmology, but they can imagine a state where this principle does not work, which is the stage before 'the One.'
10. This is why for ancient Chinese horrible things might happen in the mountains at night. For the ghosts belong to *yin*, and there is little *yang* part in the mountains at night, so the ghosts are active at that time.
11. Li Ze-Hou points out that the paradigm of thinking which dominates Chinese is pragmatism. Thus I borrow thoughts from Dewey, the representative of American Pragmatism, for a comparison in order to help the Western readers locate the thoughts of Daoism. See Li's work (1987, 320).
12. This is also what Dewey talks about. For Dewey, the media of art refers to 'means that are incorporated in the outcome.' He uses the bricks and the house as an example. After the builder finishes the house, the bricks are also a part of this outcome and perceived by people. See Dewey (2005, 197).
13. For more information which elements do *yin* and *yang* symbolize, see Fowler and Ewers (2005, 63).
14. Besides, in the fight, the elbow is easier to be twisted and broken off by the enemy if one's arm remains straight.
15. And we can anticipate that the next step is the weakening of both the seminary and church. The churches stop sending people to the seminaries and stop providing financial support since the seminaries cannot offer them a theological education which is on the ground and relevant, the seminaries thus do not have enough students and funds; the churches then lose the ability to think theologically because they become disconnected from their 'brains' (the seminaries).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributor

Steven K. Chen is a postgraduate in applied theology at Wycliffe Hall, the University of Oxford. Before he came to the UK, he completed his ThM in practical theology at Princeton Theological Seminary (USA) and served as a full-time minister in Taiwan.

ORCID

Steven K. Chen http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0571-1536

References

Barrett, Charles K. 1961. *New Testament Background*. New York: Harper & Row.

Bass, Dorothy C., Kathleen A. Cahalan, Bonnie J. Miller-Mclemore, James R. Nieman, and Christian B. Scharen. 2016. *Christian Practical Wisdom: What It Is, Why It Matters*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans.

Browning, Don S. 1995. *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Cahalan, Kathleen A., and Gordon S. Mikoski. 2014. *Opening the Field of Practical Theology: An Introduction*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Chen, Steven. 2018. 福音派實踐神學的展望 *[The Future of Evangelical Practical Theology]*. New Taipei: *Campus*.

Dewey, John. 2005. *Art as Experience*. New York: Penguin Publishing Group.

Doong, David. 2019. *21*世紀門徒現場*:* 實踐神學新探索 *[Practical Theology as Discipleship]*. New Taipei: Campus Evangelical Fellowship Press.

Forrester, Duncan B. 1999. "Can Theology Be Practical?" In *Practical Theology: International Perspectives*, edited by Friedrich Schweitzer, Johannes A. van der Ven, and P. Lang, 16–27. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Fowler, Jeaneane D. 2005. *An Introduction to the Philosophy and Religion of Taoism: Pathways to Immortality*. Portland: Sussex Academic Press.

Fowler, Jeaneane D., and Shifu Keith Ewers. 2005. *T'ai Chi Ch'üan: Harmonizing Taoist Belief and Practice*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press.

Komjathy, Louis. 2014. *Daoism: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: Bloomsbury.

Laozi, and Kwan-Yuk Claire Sit. 2010. *Lao Tzu and Anthroposophy: A Translation of the Tao Te Ching with Commentary and a Lao Tzu Document 'The Great One Excretes Water'*. Great Barrington: Lindisfarne Books.

Li, Ze-Hou. 1987. 中國現代思想史論 *[The History of Modern Chinese Thought]*. Beijin: The East Press.

Mitchell, Stephen, and Lao Tzu. 1988. *Tao Te Ching: A New English Version*. New York: HarperCollins.

Nussbaum, Martha Craven. 1994. *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Root, Andrew. 2009. "Practical Theology : What Is It and How Does It Work?" *Journal of Youth Ministry* 7 (2): 55–72.

Root, Andrew. 2014. "Evangelical Practical Theology." In *Opening the Field of Practical Theology: An Introduction*, edited by Kathleen A. Cahalan, and Gordon S. Mikoski, 79–96. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Swinton, John, and Harriet Mowatt. 2006. *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*. London: SCM Press.

Tracy, David. 1998. "Traditions of Spiritual Practice and the Practice of Theology." *Theology Today* 55 (2): 235–241. https://doi.org/10.1177/004057369805500208.