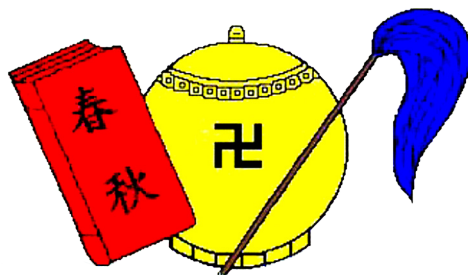


THE TEACHINGS OF THE GREAT WAY

**THE THIRD UNIVERSAL SALVATION
OF THE GREAT WAY
TayNinh Holy See**



**THE TEACHINGS
OF THE GREAT WAY**

Book **GIÁO LÝ**

by The Tiếp Pháp **TRƯỜNG VĂN TRÀNG**

Translated into English

First Edition in USA - 2015



“...The Supreme Being uses the name “CAO ĐÀI TIÊN ÔNG ĐÀI BỒ TÁT MA HA TÁT” to found “ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỔ ĐỘ.” This name denotes the return of the three main religions to their primordial unity.

The practice of the Tao follows the steps of the five branches of the Tao from the way of Humanity at the beginning, then progressively to the way of Genies or Angels, the way of Saints, the way of Immortals and the way of Buddhas.

The teaching of the “Three main Religions” and of the “Five branches” of the Tao has been spread all over the world since antiquity and practiced by all races. Nowadays, the communication between the five continents becomes easy and people of the world are living together like in one family, the Supreme Being brings all religions together into one universal philosophy for everyone. The scientists have to reorganize their faith, the religionists have to get rid of the superstition, and together they will try to practice this universal philosophy to realize the harmony between people.

Peace for humanity is in the daily prayer of the disciples of the GREAT WAY. ...”

(The Tiếp Pháp TRƯỜNG VĂN TRÀNG)



PICTURE OF
THE TIẾP PHÁP TRƯỞNG VĂN TRÀNG

4 THE TEACHINGS OF THE GREAT WAY

Contents

Forewords by the Author 17

Introduction 21

- Introduction by The HỘ PHÁP

- Introduction by The THƯỢNG SANH

- Introduction by The BẢO THỂ

PART I

Chapter I: History of The Great Way 26

Chapter II : Basis of The Great Way 33

Chapter III: Structure of The Great Way 38

Chapter IV: Rites and Laws of The Great Way 74

PART II

Chapter I: Cosmology 98

Chapter II: Study on Humanity 113

PART III

Chapter I: Lower Cycle 124

Chapter II: Higher Cycle 145

APPENDIX I

The Three Gems Become One 166

APPENDIX II

Summary of Confucianism 180

Summary of Taoism 195

Summary of Buddhism 208

Acknowledgement 217

Contact Information 218

PRAYER

We pray that the wisdom of the great Tao
Be widely spread on earth.
Shining the way to all creatures of nature's birth.
May all humanity be redeemed,
And our whole world know peace.
And may the places we meet to worship You
Be granted safety's lease.

Nam Mô CAO ĐÀI TIÊN ÔNG
ĐẠI BỒ TÁT MA HA TÁT

Sincere prayer from the
Tiếp Pháp TRƯỜNG VĂN TRÀNG

**THE THIRD UNIVERSAL SALVATION
OF THE GREAT WAY**
(CaoDai Year 38)
TAYNINH HOLY SEE

HIỆP THIÊN ĐÀI
Office of The Thượng Sanh
No: 174/VP

CERTIFICATE

This book “**The Teachings of The Great Way**” was edited from the religious point of view and approved to be published.

Holy See, the 25th day of the eighth month of the year Kỷ Hợi (September 26, 1959)

On behalf of

THE SACERDOTAL COUNCIL

The THƯỢNG SANH
(Signature and seal)

INTRODUCTION

By The Acting President of The Representative
Organization of The CaoDai Overseas
(Cơ Quan Đại Diện Cao Đài Hải Ngoại)

An old saying stated: “Everything is predestined including food or drink.” In other words, everyone has his/her own destiny. Today, you are predestined to hold this book in your hand, and it would give you a good chance.

The book “The Teachings of The Great Way” compiled by the Tiếp Pháp TRƯỜNG VĂN TRÀNG was chosen as a priority by the Research Department of The Representative Organization of The CaoDai Overseas to be translated into English for the need of the English speaking readers.

The book, meticulously compiled by the Tiếp Pháp TRƯỜNG VĂN TRÀNG, although with extreme simplicity, expresses clearly profound teaching of CAODAI.

At the first edition in 1948 with only 67 pages, the HỘ PHÁP allowed it to be published and highly commented: “The book is simple. Although it does not explain totally the whole Dharma, it’s useful enough for the self-cultivation. It will help the reader to find the truth, to step into the practice of the true secret teaching, which is the key to open the gate to the mystic sacred dimension.”

Later, as a medium being guided by Superior Spirits, the Tiếp Pháp became more and more enlightened and was able to improve the book, shedding more light in the path to truth.

Over a decade after the first edition, the book was published again four times, with the introduction of the HỘ PHÁP, the THƯỢNG SANH, the BẢO THỂ, and of many scholars and religious masters as well. The sixth and also the last edition was in 1974. This reflects the important role of the book in the ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỔ ĐỘ.

The more we read, the more we transcend the temporary physical body and realize the bright path of the ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM

KỶ PHỒ ĐỘ which is open to greet all predestined people.

In overseas, this book was reprinted in 2000. To satisfy the need of the non Vietnamese speaking researchers and of Vietnamese young generations who grow up far away from the motherland, Hiền Tài Hùm Đắc Bùì, MD and Sister Cẩm Hồng Đặng Bùì, MD have translated this book into English.

This is one of their many works of translating and writing CAODAI books in English for many years. We believe the translation will convey to humanity more profound and valuable teachings of CAODAI.

Please accept this book as a companion on your journey to the truth. It would shine the way for the spiritual traveler in the darkness like a compass for the boat of your life in the tormented ocean.

On behalf of The Representative Organization of the CaoDai Overseas, we solemnly introduce this book to all readers.

Nam Mô CAO ĐÀI TIÊN ÔNG ĐẠI BỒ TÁT MA HA TÁT

California, July 12, 2015

On behalf of The Representative Organization
of the CaoDai Overseas

Acting President

Hiền Tài PHẠM VĂN KHẨM

PREFACE

By Professor Janet Hoskins,
Professor of Anthropology and Religion, University
of Southern California

I am honored to be asked to write a Preface for this explanation of the Teachings of the Great Way by Truong Van Trang (1893-1965), an important dignitary from the founding generation of Caodaists. He served as a spirit medium and Zodiacal dignitary in the Heavenly Union Palace of Hiep Thien Dai, holding the office of Religious Legislator, and prepared this text while living in Tây Ninh in 1948.

This text is an introduction to Caodai belief and practice, which may be more accessible to a general audience than the sacred canon of spirit messages itself, since it provides a context for understanding the unity of Caodaism and its overall structure.

He provides details about the history of this new syncretistic religion, the time when it was founded, and how its ritual and laws came into being. He also describes Caodai interpretations of cosmology and the creation of humanity. He describes practical morality and codes of conduct for living as the citizen of a modern nation, and the duty of filial piety that a son or daughter must have towards their parents. These are values that have a long history in Asia, but have received new interpretations in Caodai religious teachings. He considers the question of whether it is necessary to modify Confucian precepts to fit the modern world, and concludes that if these precepts are understood correctly they are still relevant to modern life.

There is also an appendix, introduced by Trần Văn Quế, which deals more specifically with the practice of self-cultivation and unifying the three gems or forms of energy-physical, vital and spiritual. These relate to the higher or esoteric level of practice,

which is carried out in order to move to the highest levels of mediation and self-knowledge. The final section deals more specifically with how to reconcile the teachings of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. He summarizes the most important elements of the great Asian classics associated with these traditions, and shows how they fit together seamlessly.

The publication of these teachings in English will allow a larger reading public to understand Caodaism, and to see the contribution that it has made not only to the spiritual life of Vietnam (where it is the third largest religion, with over four million followers) but also to the world as a whole. As a professor of Anthropology and Religion who has studied Caodaism (with the assistance of Dr. Bui) for many years, I am grateful to him for preparing this translation.

Janet Hoskins

Professor of Anthropology and Religion

University of Southern California

FOREWORD

by the Translators

The Tiếp Pháp TRƯỜNG VĂN TRÀNG had spent a lot of time, tremendous work, with all his sincere heart to compile this book “THE TEACHINGS OF THE GREAT WAY” which offers to humanity the deep and subtle miraculous teachings of CaoDai.

For the need of humanity overseas, we, the younger scholars, are determined to follow his footsteps, use all our efforts to translate this book into English.

“The Tao that can be named is not the true Tao.”

It’s always difficult to use human words to express perfectly the non-action invisible miraculous mystic principles. Please excuse and show us any error for future improvement.

Sincere gratitude to Professor Janet Hoskins, Hiền Tài Nguyễn Văn Cầu, and many energetic youth for their valuable contribution to the realization of this book.

California, July 2015.

Brother Hiền Tài HÙM ĐẮC BÙI, MD and
Sister CẨM HỒNG ĐẶNG BÙI, MD.

FOREWORD

Professor NGUYỄN ĐĂNG THỤC
Dean of the Faculty of Literature - Saigon

The GREAT WAY CAODAI appeared in the South of Vietnam a half a century ago, and its attraction was so great that the disciples in the South, the Center and the North now amount to millions.

It is an extraordinary psychosocial phenomenon. This is not due to human talent of preaching but to the miraculous spiritual energy realizing the law of waves “Birds of the same feather flock together.”

A famous Indian master said: “If someone sits still in a secluded cave of a mountain, concentrates days and nights on a simple idea, he/she will develop strong spiritual energy, a thought power that can travel in the universe, penetrate into the minds of people.”

The CAODAI teachings embrace the three religions that are always in rhythm with the minds of the people of Vietnam. This spiritual tune is so deeply rooted in the Vietnamese culture that the French professor of the Viễn Đông Bác Cổ School, M. Durant said that: “Vietnamese spirit is typically from the influence of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism¹.”

In reality, the majority of CAODAI disciples are peasants who are illiterate and therefore cannot be influenced by the teaching of the three main Asian religions. Before the importation of the three religions into Vietnam, archeologists have found traces of two civilizations, which are Ancient East and Ancient Caves. The Ancient East represented the sacred country’s spirit and Ancient Caves represented worship of natural caves.

Both of them have the same background, defining the “sacred” from ancestors to immortals.

Therefore, Vietnamese people have been living in the

1 Maurice Durand Bulletin, Etudes-Indochinoises, Saigon 1953.

supernatural spirit as stated Priest Leopold Cadriere¹ or Alfred Meynard: “Oriental people have brought the invisible into their daily life².”

This was the deep root of CAODAI faith that brought Life and Faith into one spiritual origin:

“Life and faith follow each other,
Life without faith will be poor,
Life with faith will bring peace.

Strive to follow them whether they are easy or difficult”

(Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo)

CAODAI faith embraces the teachings of the basic oriental religions, unites them with the spiritual life of the people, who follow the oriental spirit with an awakening mind without superstition.

“The sounds of Awakening Drums waken people from delusion.

Return quickly following the drums.

Be awakened, repent and do good.

Delusion in this world is only suffering.”

Awakening Drums (Tiếng Trống Giác Mê)

With make this awakening work, the Tiếp Pháp Trương Văn Tràng has taken time to compile meticulously the book “The Teaching of the GREAT WAY”, which is very orderly, simple but profound. Its value is not only based on his great research but also on his whole life, including his personal experiences of self-cultivation, which deserve to be an example for disciplines to follow.

He asked me to write the foreword. I am not worthy to do it, but I simply use some words to honor my precious relationship with my senior.

Nguyễn Đăng Thục

Gia Định, September 5, 1964

1 Croyances et Pratique Religieuses des Vietnamiens - E.F.E.O, Paris.

2 Extrême - Revue Indochinoise - Mai 1928.

INTRODUCTION

By Mr. Trinh Tường NGUYỄN LƯƠNG HÙNG

The current era has shown us a very skillful civilization that can seduce people to materialism. This civilization has developed the capacity of human beings, which made humans most sacred compared to all other living beings. For this reason, human beings are now almost bound to the luxury of materialism.

Current philosophy defines human as a soul incarnating into the world and above all, having a consciousness about self and others known as human value.

This philosophy is considered as a mental activity coming from scientific civilization that accepts humans as a liberal self above their physical body, a sacred and miraculous self, which is naturally related to religions.

The current civilization has produced many doctrines, which have tensions with each other.

Although tension and competition can lead to perfection, human beings are still surrounded by a giant economic system and so they feel lost and disappointed in front of more and more complicated disputes between rival interests. They are dealing with the non-sense which may involve with human morality.

Beside the secular activities of materialism, many religions activities are promoted. Many religions are trying to harmonize the life of people, calling them back to their true origin, their true self. Religions now must be boundless because people of the world are all members in one big family.

CAODAI embraces all other religions, and places them together in the same scope of life, and considers them as just different manifestations of one same eternal truth.

CAODAI is also a sacred faith itself. Its sacredness comes from the mystic and miraculous spiritism that denotes the word of God, the Supreme Being, perfectly good, with great mercy, who comes to save all human beings.

Earlier, religious mysticism gave way to science. Today, through CAODAI, science and mysticism with their practical mystic communication with God, have confronted each other creating a vision for the future mystic scientific civilization for human beings.

The time has come when religion should be acknowledged as a science, a metaphysic science.

Concerning the teaching, the principle of CAODAI is to bring the three religions back to their primordial unity and to unify the five branches of the GREAT WAY, especially to follow the divine messages with poems and prose of deep and miraculous meaning beyond human knowledge.

The realization of CAODAI teaching system is therefore a most difficult task especially in the early phase of the faith.

The work of the *Tiếp Pháp Trương Văn Trảng* has manifested all practical effort to present the basis and the history of CAODAI, showing the embracement of the three traditional oriental faiths, the *đạo Nho* (Confucianism), Taoism, and Buddhism.

This work is truly useful for people who search for the truth, especially for people who practice self-cultivation in the midst of current scientific civilization.

Written at Minh Hưng Trung School.

August 18, 1964

*The eleventh day of the seventh month
of the Year Giáp Thìn*

FOREWORD

By The Author at the Fourth Edition

The book “The Teachings of The Third Universal Amnesty of The GREAT WAY” at this fourth edition doesn’t change any basic teaching, but only works on some details in the search for the perfection.

We believe that the study of the Tao involves three generations. Our generation has to learn the experiences of the past through previous scriptures. We also transfer our experiences to the future generations, and this is the way to study the natural Tao, which manifests through everything of the universe. In brief, human beings progressively discover the right way to guide people to return to their divine origin, the Supreme Being.

Recently, the experimental science is extremely prosperous and spreads from the West to the East, shaking the faith of the Vietnamese. Many Confucians are discouraged with their literal knowledge, and yogi masters are not happy to spread their meditation techniques. As a regular person, we just barely remember a little about our religious traditions.

In 1925, in the year Ất Sửu, the Supreme Being used the sacred and miraculous spiritism to found the “ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỔ ĐỘ.” The divine miracles struck hard our sub-conscience and woke up our faith. We then recognized the way to liberation from suffering that the three religions have been showing to people and that people have forgotten.

At this time, the Supreme Being doesn’t use any separate special teaching, but only brings those three religions back to their primordial unity and unifies the five branches of the GREAT WAY into a Universal Way. This Way reminds us about the life and teachings of the old time prophets that may be used as examples for people in the present time.

As one of the twelve mediums, thanks to spiritism experiences, we have learned the truth that consolidated our faith and our spiritual strength, shone the way and encouraged us to practice

the Tao.

The teachings of the three religions, combined with the new divine messages from superior spirits, made up a new Way which, at the beginning, was not easy for us to understand.

Fortunately, the Supreme Being guided us every day, eliminated outdated facts, added necessary new information, explained difficult literature. Thus we were able to compile this book that we offered to our co-disciples in 1950. Then, it was republished twice.

After publishing the book “Trên Đường Tấn Hoá” (On the Way of Progression), we realized the necessity of publishing this book again. This would be the opportunity for us to improve the book.

This book consists of three parts:

1. Point of view of religion
2. Cosmology and study on humanity
3. Lower Cycle and Higher Cycle

Appendix I

4. The three gems become one

Appendix II

5. Summary of Confucianism
6. Summary of Taoism
7. Summary of Buddhism

The three parts of the book describe the teaching of the GREAT WAY. The appendices describe the unification of the three gems and the summaries of the three religions.

Because “ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỔ ĐỘ” embraces the three religions, we add the summary of the three religions so that the readers would understand their primordial unity and the ultimate goal of the self-cultivation by unification of the three gems.

Please notice that for the purpose of self-cultivation, we emphasize on cosmology and the study of humanity, but not on

sociology. Indeed, we should start first with self-cultivation, and later, we will be able to take care of the family, the country and the whole humanity.

If we commit error with self-cultivation, we may self-correct and improve, because we can distinguish the good and evil, the right and wrong. Even if we cannot reach the perfection, we would not be far from the truth. Ancient saying stated: “Self-realization leads to the Tao.”

Dear readers,

One teaching is already vast. Now, CAODAI embraces the three religions and unifies the five branches of the GREAT WAY, you can imagine how vast would the Tao be.

In front of the immense ocean of Dharma, this book could not avoid errors. Please excuse the errors. We would be happy to receive comments from masters, scholars in order to improve the book in the future for the sake of wisdom for the future generations.

Respectfully,

The Tiép Pháp TRƯỜNG VĂN TRÀNG

INTRODUCTION

**At the first edition, introduction
by The HỘ PHÁP**

**At the third edition, introduction
by The THƯỢNG SANH
and The BẢO THẾ**

INTRODUCTION

By The **HỘ PHÁP**

(At the first edition)

The book is simple. Although it does not explain totally the whole Dharma, it's useful enough for the self - cultivation. It will help the readers to find the truth, to step into the practice of the true secret teaching, which is the key to open the gate to the mystic sacred dimension.

Disciples and dignitaries should read and cultivate themselves to reach enlightenment.

Approved for publication.

TayNinh Holy See, June 8, 1948

The HỘ PHÁP

PHẠM CÔNG TẮC

(Signature and seal)

INTRODUCTION

By The **THƯỢNG SANH**
(At the third edition)

Dedicated to the book “ĐẠI ĐẠO GIÁO LÝ” of the Tiếp Pháp TRƯƠNG VĂN TRÀNG.

“The teaching of the GREAT WAY lasts seven hundred thousand years.

Mr. TRƯƠNG has compiled this book for the future generations.

Return to the heart to reach wisdom,
Cultivate self to find the way to immortality.
Elevate the wisdom to shine the universe,
Strive to learn to deserve to be a talented and gentle person.

Be patient to follow the true teaching,
To reach the miraculous mystic true Dharma”

The Holy See, the fourteenth day of the eighth month of the Year Kỷ Hợi (September 26, 1959)

CAO THƯỢNG SANH

INTRODUCTION

By The Bảo Thế LÊ THIÊN PHƯỚC
(At the fourth edition)

To study the Tao is to find the truth. Whence the truth is reached, there would be extreme happiness that could be found nowhere in the world. That's why the disciples dare to sacrifice all emotional and spiritual attachments in order to escape from the suffering ocean to return to their divine origin.

Since antiquity, many religions have initiated ways to guide human beings to live according to the divine principle. However, while the material civilization progresses so much that the science is almost able to act as God, and the morality and spiritual belief of people deteriorate more and more despite all efforts of religions.

The Third Amnesty of the GREAT WAY has appeared to bring the three religions back to their primordial unity and to unify the five branches of the GREAT WAY. The disciples of this novel religion will not discriminate people of other religions, consider them as friends with the same goal of saving humanity.

Of course, CAODAI should have a teaching appropriate to the level of human being of this present time, to eliminate karma and to save them from reincarnation. Brother Tiếp Pháp TRƯỜNG VĂN TRÀNG has worked hard to compile this book to help the disciples not to get lost in their way of cultivation.

This book deserves to be spread to either virtuous family or to any by-stander for them to learn at any time in their life, to find the source of consolation, the guide of cultivation, so that in case of committing errors, they may use it as the guiding light to find the way to return to the true self.

Holy See, the twenty eighth day of the eighth month of the Year Kỷ Hợi (September 30, 1959)

Acting ĐÀU SƯ CỨU TRÙNG ĐÀI

The Bảo Thế LÊ THIÊN PHƯỚC

(Signature)

PART I

EXOTERIC ASPECT

This part has four chapters:

1. HISTORY OF THE GREAT WAY
2. BASIS OF THE GREAT WAY
3. STRUCTURE OF THE GREAT WAY
4. RITES AND RELIGIOUS LAWS

*CHAPTER I***HISTORY OF THE GREAT WAY**

As usual, everything whether great or lowly has a cause of existence. ĐÀI ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỔ ĐỘ is not an exception. It is although a great faith with the purpose of saving all human beings, it only began with the miraculous spiritism, which is an old way of spiritual communication that existed since antiquity. Therefore, before any discussion, we present a brief history of the GREAT WAY.

This chapter consists of two issues:

1. The training of Mediums
2. The founding of the GREAT WAY

I. TRAINING OF MEDIUMS

Mediums have a very important role in the founding of religions. Before to give the teachings, the Supreme Being had to choose and train the mediums either by Himself or by delegating to other superior spirits.

As we remember, around the sixth month of the year Ất Sửu (1925), at Saigon city, there was a movement of spiritism under the form of automatic writing, or tipping table, or writing basket (basket with beak). Here, people used tipping table to contact the spirits to compose poems, there, others used automatic writing to ask Immortals' spirits for medicine for serious diseases. In the midst of Saigon city, a group of civil workers used the tipping table to contact with superior spirits to entertain with poems and literature.

At the beginning, their goal was just for entertainment, but later, they became expert mediums helping the Supreme Being to found the novel religion, and then became important dignitaries of the Heavenly Union Palace of the new faith.

STORY OF THE TIPPING TABLE

The small table had four legs, two of them were about three

centimeters higher than the others so that the table became unstable. Two persons sat across each other, with their hands' palm down on the table. After about ten to fifteen minutes, the table started moving up and down rapping on the floor, which was the sign of the coming of the spirits. *The number of successive raps indicated a letter of Vietnamese alphabet.*

If the table knocked one time, it would be letter "A," two times, letter "Ă," three times, letter "Â," four times, letter "B" and so on for all the letters of the Vietnamese alphabet. One person was responsible to count the rapping of the table and to determine the corresponding letter and write it down into words.

At the beginning, it was difficult and time consuming, but it became later easier and easier.

One day, on the tenth day of the sixth month of the Year Ất Sửu (1925), a spirit called Đoàn Ngọc Quế came and gave a poem as followed:

"To whom may I confide my heart?

I have left this world young wasting all my talent and beauty!

I thought I was married to a noble gentleman,

But I died early instead.

I had not paid all hard works of my parents for raising me,

I could not keep my marriage promise either,

I kept bearing all those sentiments on my shoulders,

To whom may I confide my heart?"

Later, they discovered that Đoàn Ngọc Quế was just the pen name of the Seventh Female Fairy of the Jasper Pond Palace. Thereafter, she came back very often to give many interesting poems, and the mediums became important in the founding of the religion.

Later, a spirit called "A, Ă, Â" came, with very powerful energy, and this spirit turned out to be the Supreme Being. He said: "I have to come as a regular spirit to convince you."

If at the beginning, the Supreme Being, instead of using the name "A, Ă, Â," announced right away that he was the Supreme

Being, people would not dare to contact him for learning.

On the 30th day of the 10th month of the Year Ất Sửu, (December 15, 1925) the Supreme Being told them to set up a special table to pray God for the Tao, and then to use the basket with beak to contact him.

The basket was more convenient by allowing writing.

A pen device was attached at the end of a handle, which was also attached to a basket: the instrument was therefore called the basket with beak (*corbeille à bec*).



PICTURE OF THE BASKET WITH BEAK

The basket was made of bamboo, the handle was made of weeping willow wood, the end of which was carved into the head of a phoenix.

Two persons held the basket with their hands. When the spirit came, the basket moved. The pen-like writing device would write messages on a board or paper. A reader standing by read the messages, and another person recorded them.

On December 24, 1925, the Supreme Being gave the following message:

JADE EMPEROR or CAO ĐÀI TIÊN ÔNG ĐẠI BỒ TÁT MA HA TÁT, teaching the GREAT WAY to the Southern quarter:

“For ten thousand generations, I have been holding the power,

If you would please cultivate self, you will be blessed.

The miraculous Tao is spread all over the earth.

Your names will be remembered for ever.”

Jade Emperor CAODAI

Now we understand that the spiritism movement was the predicting sign of the founding of the novel faith in Vietnam.

Compared to the past religions, the GREAT WAY CAODAI developed in an extraordinary way beyond the knowledge of people.

Moreover, the past religions were established by a prophet, who had to cultivate self until becoming enlightened, and then became the founder of a religion. The religion became miraculous thanks to the acquired knowledge of a person.

In contrary, the CAODAI GREAT WAY, a visible faith, was started by the invisible miraculous Supreme Being, using the miraculous mechanism of spiritism. The miraculous teachings were difficult for people to understand, that led to the doubt of certain people at the beginning.

We have been following the GREAT WAY since the beginning, beside the rituals of an ordinary faith, CAODAI spiritism, used the basket with beak to give holy miraculous teachings. This proved that there were invisible superior spirits in the spiritual world, and subsequently, that a person does have an invisible spirit called soul created by a creator.

Hinduism stated about this matter: “The Great Spirit created all the small Spirits, or the Supreme Being created the universe and all beings.”

We venerated the Supreme Being that was explained by the following *Holy message*:

“When there was nothing in this universe, the cosmic ether gave birth only to Me, and My throne was the universal Monad (Tai Chi). I divided the Monad into the Diad which was Yin

and Yang, and then into the Tetrad and then into the Eight Trigrams.

The latter changed continuously to form the universe. I then divided My Spirit to create ten thousand things, from elements to living beings: plants, insects, animals and humans. You should understand that everything emanates out of My Spirit; wherever there is life, there am I. I am the progenitor of life.”

Therefore, the Supreme Being is the source of life in the universe where all beings inherit a sparkle of the Supreme Being.

Traditional religions of humanity venerate Him under different names: Brahma, God, Thái Thượng Đạo Tổ, Amitaba, etc... Although we cannot see Him, we believe that He is the “JADE EMPEROR” or “CAO ĐÀI TIÊN ÔNG ĐẠI BỒ TÁT MA HA TÁT” who is our Master.

Following are the prophecies that have clarified and solidified our faith.

1) The book Buddhist Principles stated the following story:

“When the Buddha was about to die, Ananda asked him “who will teach us when you return to the Nirvana?”

The Buddha said: “I am not the first nor the last Buddha. When time comes there will be another being extremely great, extremely conscious, extremely holy, extremely good, the master of all Buddhas, Immortals, Saints, and Angels who comes to save humanity. He will teach you a way, a glorious way at its beginning, its development and its end. He will promote a pure virtuous life.”

2) The Minh Sư faith founded at the Thanh Dynasty in China had a couplet as followed:

CAO như Bắc Khuyết nhân chiêm ngưỡng,
ĐÀI tại Nam Phương Đạo thống truyền.

Which means:

“The Tao founded in the South is as high as the North Palace, and is the CAODAI faith in Vietnam that people contemplate.”

3) The Taoist book Thanh Tịnh Kinh has stated¹: “When a

¹ Huệ Lương, Simple Explanation of CaoDai Faith, Ch. 21 and 22.

person has fulfilled all his work for humanity, he will receive the secret book for cultivation, whoever has the divine destiny shall spread the ĐẠİ ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỔ ĐỘ¹.”

4) The book Minh Thánh Kinh Linh Sơn has stated: “The Supreme Being uses the name of CAODAI to found the faith which is as bright as the full moon².”

5) The prayer book Tĩnh Thế Ngô Chơn stated³:

“At the last era, era of destruction, the universe becomes One, and all religions shall return to its original oneness.”

Another evident proof is that the Governor Ngô Văn Chiêu of Phú Quốc district has been worshipping the Supreme Being since 1924. He was the first disciple of CAODAI.

II. THE OPENING OF THE GREAT WAY

The GREAT WAY was spread more and more extensively. On May 7, 1926, the leaders of the novel faith submitted to the French Governor the petition for the opening of CAODAI with the signatures of 247 disciples. At the same time, the Supreme Being ordered to celebrate the grand opening of the GREAT WAY.

On the 14th day of the 10th month of the year Bính Dần, (November 18, 1926), at the Từ Lâm Pagoda Tayninh, the celebration of the grand opening of CAODAI was organized solemnly, which lasted for three months. This pagoda was constructed by a Buddhist monk who, after being initiated into CAODAI, has offered it as a temporary place for worshipping and for the Opening Celebration.

During the period of three months, many thousands of people came to be initiated into CAODAI. The Supreme Being established the CaoDai Constitution, the Sacerdotal Council, and rewarded meritorious disciples.

The Sacerdotal Council formed the New Religious Codes.

1 Ibid, Ch. 28

2 Ibid, Ch. 28

3 Ibid, Ch. 21,22

32 THE TEACHINGS OF THE GREAT WAY

The faith was well organized with rites and laws.

After three months, the Holy See was moved to the Holy City on the 13th day of the 2nd month of the year Đinh Mão. (1927)

Reminder:

The founder of the GREAT WAY is the Supreme Being, “CAO ĐÀI TIÊN ÔNG ĐẠI BỒ TÁT MA HA TÁT,” indicating that the three religions return to their original oneness, uniting the five branches of the GREAT WAY.

CHAPTER II

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE GREAT WAY

“ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỔ ĐỘ” means “THE THIRD UNIVERSAL SALVATION OF THE GREAT WAY.” Its principle is to bring the three religions back to their primordial unity, in uniting the five branches of the GREAT WAY into a universal teaching.

The First Salvation was in ancient time with:

- Dipankara Buddha founding the way of Buddhas.
- Hồng Quân Lão Tổ founding the way of Immortals.
- Văn Tuyên Đế Quân founding the way of Humanity.

The Second Salvation was in the middle time with:

- Sakya Muni reforming the way of Buddhas.
- Lao Tse reforming the way of Immortals.
- Confucius reforming the way of Humanity (this way was then called Confucianism).

Besides, Jesus Christ founded the way of Saints in the West and Khương Tử Nha founded the way of Angels, or Genies in China. At this time, there were clearly five branches of the GREAT WAY.

Now, **The Third Salvation** spreads widely to save all human beings regardless of the races, religious backgrounds, or in other words, all humans are the children of the same Father God, and all are destined to be saved.

THE NAME OF THE FOUNDER OF THE GREAT WAY

In the old times, religions were founded by different prophets sent by the Supreme Being. Now, the Supreme Being Himself, uses the miraculous spiritism to found the GREAT WAY, and He Himself is the founder. He is the Master of Heaven and Earth,

doesn't want to use the name Jade Emperor, but instead uses the name "CAO ĐÀI TIÊN ÔNG ĐÀI BỒ TÁT MA HA TÁT," which reflects the unification of the three religions.

- CAO ĐÀI means the high tower, the Monad of Confucianism, or the Supreme Being.
- TIÊN ÔNG indicates the great Immortal of the way of Immortals.
- ĐÀI BỒ TÁT MA HA TÁT indicates the Buddha in Buddhism.

The whole sentence "CAO ĐÀI TIÊN ÔNG ĐÀI BỒ TÁT MA HA TÁT" indicates the unification of the three religions.

Moreover, the prophet of the old times was a human, who cultivated himself to become enlightened, then used his knowledge to teach people, and became the founder of religion. The religion was therefore taught by a language, which is understood only by one race, and therefore was not widely spread.

Now the Supreme Being uses spiritism to teach people. Any race can communicate directly with God, and there is no more language barrier.

Holy message: (on 4-24-1926)

"Formerly, people lacked transportation and therefore did not know each other, I then founded at different epochs and in different areas, five branches of the GREAT WAY:

- The Way of Humanity,
- The Way of Genies (Angels),
- The Way of Saints,
- The Way of Immortals, and
- The Way of Buddhas,

each based on the customs of the race.

In present days, transportation has been improved, and people have come to know each other better. But people do not always live in harmony because of the very multiplicity of those religions. That is why I have decided to unite all those religions into one to bring them to the primordial unity."

In summary, The Supreme Being brings the three religions into one teaching, one principle, and the unification of the five branches of the GREAT WAY indicates the practical aspect.

At first, humans learn the way to be a good human, then progress to the way of Angels, of Saints, of Immortals and of Buddhas.

The concern is that every religion has its own rites and religious laws, how to bring them together, and unite them into one.

We will discuss about it in the following chapters.

ABOUT THE FAITH

Nho giáo, or the way of Humanity or Confucianism:

Confucianism believes that the soul is eternal. The death of humans is only the death of the physical body, while the soul is eternal, and always stays around the family. Therefore, Confucianism promotes the worship of ancestors.

The way of Immortals: The way of Immortals believes that in the invisible world, there are spirits actively guiding all beings in their progression.

The way of Buddhas: The way of Buddhas believes in the Dharma, a way that helps the virtuous to find the true self inside and to be enlightened.

In brief, Confucianism believes in the eternal soul, the way of Immortals believes in the spirit, the way of Buddhas believes in supra-natural self, that although named differently, indicates the same sparkle of spirit from God, which can return to God.

ABOUT THE TEACHINGS

Nho giáo or Confucianism: Confucius taught morality for human beings based on the Divine principle. Therefore, it is still applicable through times.

Taoism: Taoism taught mainly about the natural universe,

believing that all matters of the universe are just temporary. Scholars should find the absolute truth in order to live happily with the nature.

Ôn Như expressed this life in *Cung Oán Ngâm Khúc* as followed:

“Out of the secular world, to follow the ways of the nature,
One may live like an immortal, with the physical body not
attached to secular matters.”

Buddhism: Buddhism believes that the spirit is mysterious and miraculous. The virtuous person can contemplate on it in order to find the truth and become enlightened. Self-understanding is a method to escape from reincarnation.

Confucianism teaches on humanity, Taoism, about the natural life, Buddhism, about the way to liberation from reincarnation. Although their nomenclature, ways of study, ways of life are different, their basis is the same, which is the true self.

In order to reach the truth, to discover the miraculous principle, one has to use the “*Vô Vi Pháp*,” (Wu-Wei, Non-action Dharma), a way to return to the true self. This is the common point, common principle of religions.

- *In Confucianism*, I-Ching stated “Without thought, without action, the silence will lead to the understanding of all universe.”

or “Great persons don’t mind.” Great persons don’t have adverse thoughts, don’t discriminate. Their mind is always calm and quiet. They understand the Divine principle in humanity.

The book *Luận Ngữ* Chapter nine stated “The four No’s: no guessing, no fixed idea, no prejudice, no egoism.”

Other Confucian book said “no action, no speech, no greed.” This principle *Vô Vi* (Wu-Wei, Non-action) would help to realize the wisdom, understanding the Divine principle in humanity.

- *Lao Tse* was more clear and realized the *Vô Vi* (Non-action) principle. *Tao Te Ching* said “Life has no attachment with secular matters” and also “Wise person doesn’t ask for favor, self, or fame.”

- *Sakya Muni* left the royal palace to search for the truth, and also realized the Vô Vi (Non-action) principle.

The Prajna Paramita Heart Sutra stated “There is no form, no emptiness, no self, no Dharma, no competition, no action, no acquirement.”

In brief, the three religions nurture the nothingness, transcend the physical body to become one with the universe and the Supreme Being. One may say that the three religions have the same principle or unity in diversity.

Confucius said: humanity all come to the same place, although using different ways, by different thoughts.

THE THREE RELIGIONS IN VIETNAM

Vietnam is a country in the South East Asia and receives influence from India and China. Buddhism came from India, Taoism and Confucianism were from China. The Vietnamese harmonize those three religions into a special tradition.

According to history, the Đinh, Lý and Trần dynasties have considered the three religions as national religions. Although we received the French education, we notice that Vietnamese venerate ancestors, recite Buddhist mantra, and worship spirits.

Morally, we honor the ethical principles of Confucianism (the three duties, and five virtues of man), the Reincarnation and Karma law of Buddhism. Recently, the presence of Christianity has widened the religious conception of the Vietnamese.

In the year Bính Dần (1926), The Supreme Being, used the name “CAO ĐÀI TIÊN ÔNG ĐẠI BỒ TÁT MA HA TÁT” to found the “THIRD SALVATION OF THE GREAT WAY,” instructed us to worship God, and the founders of the three religions, and the five branches of the GREAT WAY.

The Supreme Being has adapted the Vietnamese tradition to create a profound Divine principle for all humanity.

CHAPTER III

STRUCTURE OF THE GREAT WAY

- The BÁT QUÁI ĐÀI (The Octagonal Palace)
- The HIỆP THIÊN ĐÀI (The Heavenly Union Palace)
- And the CỬU TRÙNG ĐÀI (The Nine Sphere Palace)

I. THE BÁT QUÁI ĐÀI

(THE OCTAGONAL PALACE)

The sanctuary was constructed in the form of an octagon, and is used as the place to worship the Supreme Being and Superior Spirits.

WORSHIPPING THE SUPREME BEING

The Divine Eye representing the Supreme Being is at the highest place on the universal globe. Inside the globe, a lamp is continuously lit representing the Monad energy controlled by the Supreme Being, the Master of the universe. “CAO ĐÀI TIÊN ÔNG ĐẠI BỒ TÁT MA HA TÁT” is used as the name of the Supreme Being.

Holy message on the 12th day of the 8th month of the year Bính Dần (September 17, 1926)

“It is a globe like the earth, understand? The diameter is 3.3 m. It is rather large but it represents the miraculous mechanism of Creation. Paint it azure, draw the North Star and other stars on the globe. The thirty six heavens and the four great dimensions are not stars. Only 72 earths and three thousand worlds are considered as stars, which make three thousand and seventy two stars in total. You must represent that number.

Look in the Western books on Astronomy and imitate the pictures of the stars. For the North Star, you are to draw both the Ursa Major and Ursa Minor. Above the North Star is the Divine Eye. Understand? Theoretically, the globe should be in crystal,

in which there is an eternal light, representing the precious vital principle for humanity and the universe. However, you don't have enough time, this must be completed by the time of the convention.

Obey my commands! Regarding the statues of Buddhas, Immortals, Saints, and Angels, you may arrange them below the globe. Understand?"

THE DIVINE EYE

Holy message:

“The heart manifests at the eye,
Two sources of light (Yin and Yang) preside everything,
Light is spirit,
Spirit is GOD.”
GOD is Me



PICTURE OF THE UNIVERSAL GLOBE
AND THE DIVINE EYE

Another reason about the spirit is that for enlightenment,

there should be unification of the three gems Tinh (physical energy), Khí (Chi, vital energy), and Thần (spirit, or spiritual energy).

Without the Thần (spirit), Tinh-Khí can not enter the spiritual dimension. Worshipping the “Divine Eye” or the Spirit indicates that there should be the Thần in order to form the second body, the spiritual body to enter the Nirvana.

Holy message:

“Since the *Tao* was closed, there has been a lack of the spirit in the miraculous mechanism of enlightenment. With this third salvation, I will allow the Thần (spirit) to be unified with the Tinh (physical matter) and the Khí (emotions), leading to a unification of the three elements, which is itself the miraculous mechanism of the enlightenment. Remember to explain this to disciples.”

At the first two revelations, the founders were human, and people made statues of the founders to venerate. At this third revelation, the Supreme Being does not incarnate into a physical body, but instead uses the miraculous spiritism to found the GREAT WAY.

Therefore the “Divine Eye” is used to represent God, or the Spirit of the Supreme Being.

WORSHIPPING THE THREE RELIGIONS and THE FIVE BRANCHES OF THE GREAT WAY

The three religions:

Close to the globe in the Holy See, on the fronton, there are statues of the founders of the three religions:

1. In the middle is the Buddha Sakya Muni,
2. On his left is Confucius.
3. On his right is Lao Tse.

Besides, the representatives of the three religions at the Third Salvation are:

1. Lý Thái Bạch representing *Taoism*,
2. Quan Âm representing *Buddhism*, and



STATUES OF THE REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE FIVE WAYS

3. Quan Thánh Đế Quân representing *Confucianism*

The five branches of the Great Way:

1. The Giáo Tông, Chương Pháp and Đầu Sư represent the way of Humanity
2. Khương Thượng represents the way of Angels/Genies.
3. Jesus Christ represents the way of Saints.
4. Lý Thái Bạch represents the way of Immortals.
5. The Buddha Sakya Muni represents the way of Buddhas

In brief, the Octagonal Palace is the place where the three religions and the five branches of the GREAT WAY are worshipped, and the Supreme Being is the Master of all. All the Dharma (Divine principle) is from the Octagonal Palace.

II. THE HIỆP THIÊN ĐÀI (THE HEAVENLY UNION PALACE)

According to its name, the HIỆP THIÊN ĐÀI is the tower where there is union between man and God, it is the bridge between the BÁT QUÁI ĐÀI and the CỬU TRÙNG ĐÀI (The Nine Sphere Palace).

It has two roles, the spiritual and the temporal roles.

THE SPIRITUAL ROLE

The HIỆP THIÊN ĐÀI is the place where God uses the spiritism to give His teachings and orders to the CỬU TRÙNG ĐÀI.

Without the HIỆP THIÊN ĐÀI, the CỬU TRÙNG ĐÀI has no way to contact with the BÁT QUÁI ĐÀI. It is compared to the KHÍ (Chi) that connects the physical body with the soul. Without it, the physical body, the Chi and the soul cannot be unified.

Holy message: “The HIỆP THIÊN ĐÀI is the sacred place where God manifests Himself to give spiritual direction to the GREAT WAY. As long as CAODAI endures, the HIỆP THIÊN

ĐÀI will exist. Moreover, the HIỆP THIÊN ĐÀI is the mystical place where the Giáo Tông comes and communicates with the Thirty-Six Heavens, the Three-Thousand Worlds, the Sixty-Eight Planets and the Ten Courts of Hell to plead for the salvation of humanity.”

THE TEMPORAL ROLE

The HIỆP THIÊN ĐÀI has three branches: Dharma, Spiritual, and Temporal.

Holy message: the 21st day of the 1st month of the year Đinh Mão (February 13, 1927)

“The HIỆP THIÊN ĐÀI is placed under the authority of the Hộ Pháp (Head of the Legislative Body). He is assisted by the Thượng Sanh (Director in Temporal Affairs) and by the Thượng Phẩm (Director in Spiritual Affairs.) I choose twelve Zodiacal Dignitaries and assign them into three branches.

The Hộ Pháp is concerned with the law and with justice.

Under the Hộ Pháp there are four Zodiacal Dignitaries, as follows:

- The Bảo Pháp (Juridical Conservator),
- The Hiến Pháp (Juridical Renovator),
- The Khai Pháp (Juridical Reformer),
- The Tiếp Pháp (Juridical Legislator).

The Hộ Pháp is concerned with the conservation and application of the religious laws and rules, temporally and spiritually. Every transgression of the law must be brought to the awareness of the HIỆP THIÊN ĐÀI.

The Thượng Phẩm is the Director in Spiritual Affairs. Under his command he has four Zodiacal Dignitaries:

- The Bảo Đạo (Religious Conservator),
- The Hiến Đạo (Religious Renovator),
- The Khai Đạo (Religious Reformer),
- The Tiếp Đạo (Religious Legislator).

He is concerned with the meditation cells (Tĩnh Thất) and the Temples; he supervises all disciples and defends them against abuses of authorities.

The Thượng Sanh is concerned with the temporal life of the GREAT WAY. Under his command he has four Zodiacal Dignitaries:

The Bảo Thế (Temporal Conservator),
The Hiến Thế (Temporal Renovator),
The Khai Thế (Temporal Reformer),
The Tiếp Thế (Temporal Legislator).

I advise you to maintain your impartiality in your functions. Do not forget that anyone who has great power has a heavy burden of responsibility.”

In brief, the Dharma and all religious rules of the GREAT WAY are from the BÁT QUÁI ĐÀI, the temporal powers are entrusted with the maintenance and application of the religious rules and laws.

CEREMONIAL DRESS OF THE HIỆP THIÊN ĐÀI DIGNITARIES (HEAVENLY UNION PALACE)

THE CEREMONIAL DRESS OF THE HỘ PHÁP

The ceremonial dress of the Hộ Pháp includes 2 ceremonial vestments, one for the big ceremony and one for the small ceremony¹.

For the big ceremony.

The Hộ Pháp dresses in a uniform like an old style marshal. He wears a high gold headdress (Kim Khôi), the top of which ends in a shape of Tam Sơn (Three Mountains) and looks like

¹ The Religious Constitution, p. 100



PORTRAIT OF
THE HỘ PHÁP PHẠM CÔNG TẮC

a trident, as a symbol of his power of command over the Three Heavens of the West of the Nirvana (Tây Phương Cực Lạc).

He wears boots with the character “PHÁP” on the toes.

Over his armour he wears an apron, which allows the left side of his armour to be exposed. On the side of the Thượng Phẩm (spiritual side), his right hand holds the staff Giác Ma Xử (*Rule over Evil*), which symbolizes the temporal controlling the spiritual, while on the side of the Thượng Sanh (temporal side) his left hand holds the string of beads called Từ Bi (Mercy) which symbolizes the spiritual controlling the temporal. This means that the Hộ Pháp holds the power over both spiritual and temporal affairs.

Around his waist is the three colored belt of command (yellow, sky blue, and red) which symbolizes his great power over the union of the three ancient religions and over the temporal procedures and the mystic procedures. Its knot lies right in the middle of the abdomen.

For the small ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment is made of yellow silk (the symbol of Buddhism). He wears a head covering called Hồn Nguồn Mạo (cosmo-genesis or world creation) which is 10 cm high.

On the front of this headdress, the three signs of the three ancient religions are embroidered: the Bình Bát Du (Charity Bowl of Sakya Muni), the Phất Chủ (Whisk of Purification), and the Book Xuân Thu (Spring and Autumn). Above these three signs is the character “PHÁP” (Dharma).

On his feet are the Vô Ưu (worry free) shoes. They are white and the character “PHÁP” is also on the toes. Around his waist is the three colored belt of command just like the one worn with the ceremonial vestment for the big ceremony.

The Hộ Pháp wears the ceremonial vestment for the small ceremony when he presides over the religious tribunal, and wears ceremonial vestment for the big ceremony only when he is to sit on his throne.

THE CEREMONIAL DRESS OF THE THƯỢNG PHẨM, DIRECTOR IN SPIRITUAL AFFAIRS

The Thượng Phẩm also has 2 ceremonial vestments, one for the big ceremony and one for the small ceremony¹.

For the big ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the big ceremony is made of white silk, and over it is worn a sky blue chasuble which has an edging of silver-white thread. On his feet are the Vô Ưu shoes. They are white and the character “ĐẠO” (Spiritual) is on the toes.

Around his waist is the belt of command, like the one worn by the Hộ Pháp, with the knot on the right side. His right hand holds the Long Tu Phiến (Fan of Exteriorisation) made from thirty-six linked white crane feathers. At the top of this Fan is the Phất Chủ (the Whisk of Sanctification).

When considered mystically, the Long Tu Phiến has the spiritual power to bring forth completely the spirits who are released from the flesh, and to send them to the thirty-six heavens of Nirvana.

In his left hand he holds the string of beads called “Từ Bi” which symbolizes the presentation of the GREAT WAY to the Hộ Pháp.

For the small ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the small ceremony is also made of white silk, with the belt of command similar to the one in the ceremonial vestment for the big ceremony. The headdress is a Hồn Nguồn Mạo in white, like the one worn by the Hộ Pháp. On the front of headdress is embroidered the Fan called Long Tu Phiến with the character “ĐẠO” (Spiritual) above it.

The Thượng Phẩm wears the ceremonial vestment for the small ceremony when he goes before the religious tribunal and wears the ceremonial vestment for the big ceremony when he is to sit on his throne.

¹ Ibid, p. 100



PORTRAIT OF
THE THƯỢNG PHẨM CAO QUỲNH CƯ

THE CEREMONIAL DRESS OF THE THƯỢNG SANH, DIRECTOR IN TEMPORAL AFFAIRS

The Thượng Sanh also has 2 ceremonial vestments, one for the big ceremony and one for the small ceremony¹.

For the big ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the big ceremony looks like the one worn by the Thượng Phẩm. On his head, he wears the Thanh Cân (headdress made of sky blue silk which covers the head), and around his waist is a band of red silk called Thần Thông (knowledge of spirituality).

Like the Hộ Pháp and Thượng Phẩm, he wears the belt of command around his waist with its knot on the left. The Thu Hùng Kiếm (Yin-Yang Sword of Elevation) is at his back, and it symbolizes the presentation of the temporal realm to the Hộ Pháp, and his left hand holds the string of beads called “Từ Bi” which symbolizes the offering of the GREAT WAY to humanity.

He wears white Vô Ưu shoes with the character “THẾ” (Temporal) on the toes.

For the small ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the small ceremony is like the one worn by the Thượng Phẩm, except that on the front of the headdress are embroidered the Thu Hùng Kiếm and the Phát Chủ with the character “THẾ” above them. Around his waist is the tri-colored belt of command.

The Thượng Sanh wears the ceremonial vestment for the small ceremony when he goes before the religious tribunal and wears the ceremonial vestment for the big ceremony when he is to sit on his throne.

1 Ibid, p. 101



PORTRAIT OF
THE THƯỢNG SANH CAO HOÀI SANG

**THE CEREMONIAL DRESS OF THE
“THẬP NHỊ THỜI QUÂN,”
(THE TWELVE ZODIACAL DIGNITARIES)**

The twelve Zodiacal dignitaries of the HIỆP THIÊN ĐÀI also have 2 ceremonial vestments, one for the big ceremony and one for the small ceremony¹.

For the big ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the big ceremony is made of white silk with an askew collar edged with silver-white thread.

On their heads they wear the white silk mitre of the bonze superiors.

Around his waist they wear the tri-colored belt of command, with its knot in the middle, on the right or on the left, depending on the branches “PHÁP”, “ĐẠO” or “THỂ”, that they belong respectively to. They all wear white Vô Ưu shoes.

For the small ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the small ceremony is likewise made of white silk. They all wear the belt of command. Their headdress are like the one worn by Hộ Pháp, Thượng Phẩm, and Thượng Sanh respectively embroidered with the characters “PHÁP”, “ĐẠO”, or “THỂ” depending on their functions. They wear white Vô Ưu shoes.

The twelve zodiacal dignitaries wear the ceremonial vestment for the small ceremony when they carry out their functions, and the ceremonial vestment for the big ceremony when they participate in big worshipping ceremony.

Later the Tam Quan headdress is added to the HIỆP THIÊN ĐÀI dignitaries’ ceremonial vestment for the small ceremony.

1 Ibid, p. 102



Hỗ Nguơn Headdress
of the DHARMA Branch

Hỗ Nguơn Headdress
of the SPIRITUAL Branch



Hỗ Nguơn Headdress
of the TEMPORAL Branch

HEADDRESS OF THE
TWELVE ZODIACAL DIGNITARIES



Tam Quan Headdress

III. THE CỬU TRÙNG ĐÀI (THE NINE SPHERE PALACE)

The BÁT QUÁI ĐÀI is the soul of the Tao. All the Dharma is from it.

The CỬU TRÙNG ĐÀI is the body of the Tao, the Dharma manifests through it shining the way for human beings.

According to its name, the CỬU TRÙNG ĐÀI is a tower built following the model of the nine sphere celestial dimension with nine steps. The nine level superior spirits (from Angels to Immortals) of the CỬU TRÙNG ĐÀI take orders from the Jade Court, the BÁT QUÁI ĐÀI to govern the GREAT WAY in the visible world.

All spirits in the universe have to go through the CỬU TRÙNG ĐÀI in order to reach their original spiritual positions. The CỬU TRÙNG ĐÀI is governed by the Sacerdotal Council, which consists of male and female councils.

The Supreme Being establishes the Constitution for both male and female councils.

A. DIGNITARIES OF THE MALE CỬ TRÙNG ĐÀI

The Giáo Tông: “He is your eldest brother. The Giáo Tông has the power to represent Me in the guidance of My children in their spiritual and temporal life. He has authority over bodies but not souls. He has the authority to communicate spiritually with the thirty-six Heavens, the three thousand Worlds, the sixty eight Earths and the Ten Courts of Hell to ask for the salvation of your souls.”

The Chưởng Pháp: “There are three Chưởng Pháp (Censor Cardinals), one for each of the three branches: Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Although the rules of the three faiths seem different, they are all one.

The three Chưởng Pháp have the right to examine the religious codes before they are implemented, whether the proposed codes come from the Giáo Tông or from the Đầu Sư (Cardinals).

If the two parties (the Giáo Tông and the Đầu Sư) disagree, these proposed codes should be sent to the Hộ Pháp (Dharma Protector), who will bring them to the HIỆP THIÊN ĐÀI (Heavenly Union Palace), where he will invoke Me for the modification of the codes, or he may change it himself.

The three Chưởng Pháp therefore have the right to examine the prayer books before they are published. If they find any book dangerous to traditional morals, they will forbid its publication. All followers have to get together to support them.

Each Chưởng Pháp has his own seal. The three seals must all be present on each code for it to be valid.

The Đầu Sư (Cardinals) have the right to administer the religion, and have jurisdiction over the disciples, both spiritually and temporally. They have the right of to make new laws. However, any laws must be approved by the Giáo Tông. They must examine them carefully to verify that the proposed laws would be useful to humanity and then must ask the Chưởng Pháp to examine the laws before approving them.

The **Đầu Sư** must respectfully obey the **Giáo Tông**'s orders. They may ask the **Giáo Tông** to abolish any laws which could be contrary to the activities and interests of the followers.

I ask you to love and help them. Remember, if there is any issue important to humanity, you are to address it to them.

Although the three branches are different, they have the same importance. If all three **Đầu Sư** disagree on any law ordered by the **Giáo Tông**, this law must be returned to the **Giáo Tông**, who will submit it to the **Chưởng Pháp** for re-examination.

Each **Đầu Sư** has his own seal. Any document must have all three seals of the **Đầu Sư** before implementation.

The Phối Sư (Archbishop): There are thirty six **Phối Sư** for the three branches, twelve for each. Among them, there are three **Chánh Phối Sư** (Principal Archbishops). The **Chánh Phối Sư** have the **Đầu Sư**'s authority, but do not have the right to request amendment or abolishment of Laws.

The Giáo Sư (Bishops): There are seventy two **Giáo Sư** in total, twenty four for each branch. They have jurisdiction over the spiritual and temporal education of the faithful. They take care of them as they would be their brothers. They maintain all the registries of the faithful and provide help to them with weddings and funerals. In larger cities, the **Giáo Sư** have the right to preside over religious ceremonies, as do the **Đầu Sư** or the **Phối Sư**.

They also have the right to request abolishment or modification of Laws, which could be otherwise harmful to the faithful. They should lend a hands to disciples like a brother.

The Giáo Hữu (Priests): The **Giáo Hữu** have the mission of propagating the faith. They have the right to request modification of the religious laws and to preside over religious ceremonies in the smaller cities. There are three thousand **Giáo Hữu**, one thousand for each branch. This number may not be increased or decreased.

The LỄ Sanh (Student-Priests): The LỄ Sanh are chosen among the sub-dignitaries, who exhibit good virtues. They have the right to preside over the altar installation ceremony at a follower's home. Remember that I love the LỄ Sanh.

Do not take advantage on them.

To become dignitaries, one must first become a LỄ Sanh, except when specifically appoint dignitaries via séances.

The Chánh Trị Sự, Phó Trị Sự, and Thông Sự:

The Religious Constitution was initially established only for the dignitaries, but as the GREAT WAY was more and more popular with a lot of new disciples so that the Sacerdotal Council doesn't have enough man power to handle, The spiritual Giáo Tông LÝ THÁI BẠCH then created the sub-dignitaries positions, the Chánh and Phó Trị Sự, and the Hộ Pháp created the other sub-dignitary position, the Thông Sự. Those three sub-dignitaries have the duty to take care of the disciples of the villages.”

**RELIGIOUS DRESS OF THE DIGNITARIES
OF THE MALE COLLEGE OF
THE CỬU TRÙNG ĐÀI**

THE GIÁO TÔNG'S VESTMENT

The dress of the Giáo Tông consists of two ceremonial vestments, one for the big ceremony and one for the small ceremony¹.

For the big ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the big ceremony is made of white silk embroidered with gold lotuses from top to bottom and decorated on both sides with the three insignia: Long Tu Phiến (the Fan of Exteriorization), Thù Hùg Kiếm (the Yin-Yang Sword of Elevation), Phất Chủ (the Whisk of Sanctification). These are the distinctive symbols of the Thượng Phẩm and the

1 Ibid, p. 60









Thượng Sanh, the respective Chiefs of the Religious Affairs and the Temporal Affairs of the HIỆP THIÊN ĐÀI.

The Giáo Tông wears a large golden headdress, octagonal in shape with five levels, symbolizing the five religious branches. This headdress is closed in the middle and has a Swastika at the top; in the middle of the Swastika is the “Divine Eye” surrounded by a gold circle (Vòng Minh Khí). On the front of the headdress are embroidered the three distinctive insignia described above.

In his right hand the Giáo Tông holds the papal staff, about 90 cm long, the upper end of which is decorated with a gold Swastika. In the middle of the Swastika is the “Divine Eye” surrounded by a gold circle.

For the small ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the small ceremony is also made of white silk, embroidered in gold with Eight Trigrams.

-  The trigram “CÀN” (Heaven) on the headdress corresponding to the forehead.
-  The trigram “KHÂM” (Water) on the abdomen.
-  “CẤN” (Mountain) on the right arm.
-  “CHẤN” (Thunder) on the left arm.
-  “ĐOÀI” (Lake) on the right shoulder
-  “TỐN” (Wind) on the left shoulder
-  “LY” (Fire) over the heart.
-  “KHÔN” (Earth) on the back.

Giáo Tông wears the mitre “Hiệp Chương” (mitre for the chief of monks) made of white silk, 0.333m high, the top of which is divided into two points, linked both front and back by a fold (symbol of the union of the Yin and the Yang).



PORTRAIT OF THE
QUYỀN GIÁO TÔNG THƯỢNG TRUNG NHẬT

This soft headdress is surrounded by a white silk cord, the ends of which are of different lengths. The longer end measures 0.3 meters in length and 0.03 meters in width. On the front of the headdress is embroidered the trigram “CÀN” (Heaven).

The Giáo Tông also wears Vô Ưu shoes (worry free shoes) made of white silk, symbolizing the “Freedom From Worry.” The two baptismal names of the male and female dignitaries, “THANH HƯƠNG” (Purity and Fragrance), are embroidered on the toes of the shoes.

“THANH” is the baptismal name of male dignitaries and “HƯƠNG” is the baptismal name of female dignitaries.

DRESS OF THE CHƯỞNG PHÁP (CENSOR CARDINALS)

1) The dress of The Chưởng Pháp of the Buddhist branch.

The dress of the Chưởng Pháp of the Buddhist branch includes two ceremonial vestments, one for the big ceremony and one for the small ceremony¹.

For the big ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the big ceremony is made of gold silk embroidered with the Eight Trigrams, as is the Giáo Tông’s vestment for the small ceremony. The Buddhist Chưởng Pháp wears over this the large red Buddhist cloak, called Bá Nạp Quang (cloak with a hundred squares, symbolizing the hundred aspects of patience). He wears the mitre of the Superior of the Bonzes (Hiệp Chưởng Hòa Thượng).

He holds the Bình Bát Du (the Bowl of Charity) in his right hand, and wears gold Vô Ưu shoes. The character “THÍCH” (Buddhism) is embroidered on the toes of the shoes.

For the small ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the small ceremony is also made of gold silk, as is the vestment used in the big ceremony, but without a cloak, mitre or headdress. Instead, the Buddhist

1 Ibid, p. 61

Chưởng Pháp wears a gold turban with nine successive layers in the form of the character “NHÚT” (the Chinese number one, representing unity).

2) The dress of The Chưởng Pháp of the Taoist branch.

The dress of the Chưởng Pháp of the Taoist branch consists of two ceremonial vestments, one for the big ceremony and one for the small ceremony¹.

For the big ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the big ceremony is made of white silk. The “Divine Eye” is embroidered on the chest and on the back, surrounded by a golden circle (Vòng Minh Khí).

The Taoist Chưởng Pháp wears the same mitre, the Hiệp Chưởng, as found in the ceremonial vestment for the small ceremony of the Giáo Tông.

He holds the Phất Chủ (Whisk of Sanctification) in his right hand. He wears white Vô Ưu (worry free) shoes, with the character “ĐẠO” (Taoism) embroidered on the toes of the shoes.

For the small ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the small ceremony is white, like the one for the big ceremony. However, in the small ceremony, the Taoist Chưởng Pháp wears a white turban with nine successive layers in the form of the character “NHÚT.”

3) The dress of The Chưởng Pháp of the Confucianist branch.

The dress of the Chưởng Pháp of the Confucianist branch also consists of two ceremonial vestments, one for the big ceremony and one for the small ceremony².

For the big ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the big ceremony is entirely red. The “Divine Eye” surrounded by a golden circle, is embroidered

1 Ibid, p. 61

2 Ibid, p. 61

on the chest and on the back. He wears the headdress of Confucius (Văn Đẳng). On the front of the headdress is embroidered the “Divine Eye” surrounded by a gold circle with the Ursa Major Star (Bắc Đẩu Tinh Quân) above. He holds the Book Xuân Thu (Spring and Autumn).

He wears red Vô Ưu shoes. The character “NHO” (Confucianism) is embroidered on the toes of the shoes.

For the small ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the small ceremony is in red, like the one for the big ceremony. However, in the small ceremony, the Confucianist Chưởng Pháp wears a red turban with nine successive layers in the form of the character “NHÚT.”

He wears red Vô Ưu shoes. The character “NHO” (Confucianism) is embroidered on the toes of the shoes.

**DRESS OF THE ĐÀU SƯ
(CARDINALS)**

1) The dress of The Đẩu Sư of the Buddhist branch (Thái).

The dress of the Đẩu Sư of the Buddhist branch consists of two ceremonial vestments, one for the big ceremony, and one for the small ceremony¹.

For the big ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the big ceremony is made of gold silk. Six characters, “ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỔ ĐỘ” (The Third Salvation of the GREAT WAY), surrounded with three mystic circles (vòng Vô Vi) are embroidered on the chest and on the back. These characters are arranged in circle, and in the middle the character “Thái” (Buddhism) is embroidered. There are nine ribbons attached to this vestment.

In addition, the Buddhist Đẩu Sư wears a red Buddhist cloak, (Bá Nạp Quang) similar to that worn by the Buddhist Chưởng Pháp. The Buddhist Đẩu Sư also wears a gold Bát Quái Mạo (a high yellow octagonal headdress), embroidered

1 Ibid, p. 61

all the way around with Eight Trigrams. He wears black Vô Ưu shoes with the character “Thái” (Buddhism) embroidered on the toes of the shoes.

For the small ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the small ceremony is made of gold silk, like the one for the big ceremony, but without any cloak. There is no headdress, but instead a gold turban with nine successive layers in the form of the character “NHÚT.”

2) The dress of The Đầu Sư of the Taoist branch (Thượng)

The dress of the Đầu Sư of the Taoist branch also consists of two ceremonial vestments, one for the big ceremony and one for the small ceremony¹.

For the big ceremony.

The big ceremonial vestment is blue. Six characters “ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỔ ĐỘ”, surrounded with three mystic circles (vòng Vô Vi), are embroidered on the chest and on the back.

The character “Thượng” (Taoism) is embroidered in the center of the six embroidered characters “ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỔ ĐỘ.” There are nine ribbons on this vestment.

The Taoist Đầu Sư wears a Bát Quái Mạo similar to that worn by the Đầu Sư of the Buddhist Branch, but in blue.

He wears black Vô Ưu shoes with the character “Thượng” (Taoism) embroidered on the toes of the shoes.

For the small ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the small ceremony is made of blue silk, like the one for the big ceremony, and he wears a blue turban with nine successive layers in the form of the character “NHÚT.”

3) The dress of The Đầu Sư of the Confucianist branch (Ngọc)

The dress of the Đầu Sư of the Confucianist branch also consists of two ceremonial vestments, one for the big ceremony

1 Ibid, p. 62

and one for the small ceremony.

For the big ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the big ceremony (like that of the other *Đầu Sư*,) is made of red silk. The character “Ngọc” (Confucianism) is embroidered in the center of six embroidered characters “ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỒ ĐỘ”. There are nine ribbons on this vestment.

He wears a *Bát Quái Mạo* similar to that worn by the *Đầu Sư* of the Taoist Branch, but in red. He wears black *Vô Ưu* shoes with the character “Ngọc” (Confucianism) embroidered on the toes of the shoes.



BÁT QUÁI HEADDRESS OF THE
ĐẦU SƯ OF THE BUDDHIST BRANCH

For the small ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the small ceremony is red, like the one for the big ceremony. The Confucian *Đầu Sư* wears a red turban with nine successive layers in the form of the character “NHÚT.”

**DRESS OF THE CHÁNH PHỐI SƯ AND PHỐI SƯ
(PRINCIPAL ARCHBISHOP AND ARCHBISHOP)**

There are two types of ceremonial vestments¹, as for the *Đầu Sư*, but the “Divine Eye” surrounded by a mystic circle (*vòng Vô Vi*), is embroidered on the chest and on the back. The *Chánh Phối Sư* wear nine ribbons, while the *Phối Sư* wear only three.

The *Chánh Phối Sư* of the Buddhist branch wears a large *Bá Nạp Quang* which is a large square red cloak, while the *Phối Sư* wear a small *Bá Nạp Quang*, a small cloak of the same color.

They both wear the *Bát Quái Mạo* like the *Đầu Sư*, but the color varies depending on the branch. They wear black *Vô Ưu* shoes with no characters embroidered on the toes.

The dress for the small ceremony is like the one for the big ceremony, but they also wear a turban with nine successive layers in the form of the character “NHÚT,” in the color according to each branch.

DRESS OF THE GIÁO SƯ (BISHOPS)

The *Giáo Sư* also wear two ceremonial vestments, one for the big ceremony and one for the small ceremony².

For the big ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the big ceremony is made of silk colored according to the branch. The “Divine Eye” surrounded by a mystic circle (*vòng Vô Vi*) on the chest and the back. The vestment also has three ribbons. The *Giáo Sư* wear a *Thiên Ngươn*

1 Ibid, p. 62, 63

2 Ibid, p.63

Mạo (a rounded headdress, octagonal in shape). Its color varies according to the branch. The Eight Trigrams (Bát Quái) around it are embroidered, and its peak is decorated with a Diamond, the symbol of the purity of the divine doctrine.

The Giáo Sư do not wear shoes

The Giáo Sư of the Buddhist branch wear a small Bá Nạp Quang (a small square red cloak), and also the mitre of the Chief of monks Hiệp Chưởng Mạo, embroidered with the “Divine Eye” on each side.

For the small ceremony.

The ceremonial vestment for the small ceremony is like the one of the big ceremony. They also wear a turban, the color of which varies according to each branch, with seven successive layers, arranged in the form of the character “NHƠN” (Humanity).



OCTAGONAL THIÊN NGUỒN HEADDRESS



HIỆP CHƯỚNG HEADDRESS OF
THE GIÁO SƯ OF BUDDHIST BRANCH
DRESS OF THE GIÁO HỮU (PRIESTS)

The Giáo Hữu have only one form of vestment made of silk, and the color varies according to each branch. There is no embroidery, and there are three ribbons.

They wear a *Ngũỡng Thiên Mạo* (a round headdress with a flat top). Its color varies, according to each branch and it is 0.15m high, with the “Divine Eye” on the front, surrounded by three mystic circles (*vòng Vô Vi*).

Priests do not wear a turban or shoes.



NGŨỠNG THIÊN HEADDRESS OF THE GIÁO HỮU

DRESS OF THE LỄ SANH (STUDENT PRIESTS)

The Lễ Sanh have only one form of vestment made of silk, as do the Giáo Hữu.

Their ceremonial vestment varies in color according to each branch. They wear a white *Khôi Khoa Mạo* (the headdress of Confucian bachelors), with the “Divine Eye” on the front, surrounded by single golden circle (*Vòng Minh Khí*).

Lễ Sanh do not wear shoes.



KHÔI KHOA HEADRESS
OF THE LỄ SANH

B. DIGNITARIES OF THE FEMALE COLLEGE

Đầu Sư of the Female College:

“The dignitaries of the Female College work under the command of the Đầu Sư of the Female College. In her turn, she depends on the authority of the Giáo Tông and of the Chưởng Pháp.

The Female Đầu Sư has the same power as the Đầu Sư, but her authority extends only as far as the Female College without any involvement with the powers of the dignitaries of the male college. In their turn, the latter must refrain from intruding into the power of the Female College.

The Female *Đầu Sư* has a ceremonial vestment similar to that worn by the male *Đầu Sư*.

The white silk robe has nine ribbons and is embroidered with lotus flowers.

The head-covering is a hood, just like the one worn by female bonzes, and is also made of white silk. The hood (*Phương Thiên Mạo*) is overlaid with a golden headdress called *Ni Kim Cô* on the top of which is engraved the “Divine Eye” surrounded by a golden circle (*Vòng Minh Khí*).

This headdress also includes a white sheer stole which hangs down as far as the heels.

On her feet, the Female *Đầu Sư* wears white *Vô Ưu* shoes. On the toes they have the character “*HƯƠNG*” (fragrance), the baptismal name of the dignitaries of the Female College.



PHƯƠNG THIÊN HEADDRESS
OF THE FEMALE *ĐẦU SƯ*



NI KIM CÔ HEADRESS

The Chánh Phối Sư and the Phối Sư of Female College:

Chánh Phối Sư wear a ceremonial vestment just like the one worn by the Female Đầu Sư. Their robes are made of white silk, have nine ribbons and are embroidered with lotus flowers.

On the front of the chest is embroidered the “Divine Eye” surrounded by a golden circle (vòng Minh Khí). They wear the headdress Ni Kim Cô like the one worn by the Đầu Sư, but without wearing the Phương Thiên hood. On their feet are Vô Ưu shoes embroidered with their baptismal name “HƯƠNG” on the toes.

The ceremonial vestment of the female Phối Sư is the same as the one of the Chánh Phối Sư, except that the robe has only three ribbons. They also wear Vô Ưu shoes with the baptismal name embroidered on the toes.

The Giáo Sư of the Female College wear robes made of white silk, with three ribbons, and with the white “Kim Cô” as their headdress. They do not wear shoes.

The Giáo Hữu of the Female College wear a ceremonial vestment like the one worn by the female Giáo Sư, with no headdress. A simple white lotus flower with the “Divine Eye” is pinned in their hair.

The Lễ Sanh wear a form of ceremonial vestment like the one worn by the female Giáo Hữu and they cover their head with a long veil knotted at the nape so that the two ends of unequal length hang down. A white lotus flower is pinned into their chignon.

The Chánh Trị Sự, Phó Trị Sự, and the Thông Sự of the Female College have the same functions as the Chánh Trị Sự, the Phó Trị Sự, and the Thông Sự of the Male College, but they are concerned only with the females.”

ELECTION LAWS DIGNITARIES OF THE CỬU TRÙNG ĐÀI AND OF THE FEMALE COLLEGE

Holy Message:

“The Đầu Sư may only be promoted to the position of Chưởng Pháp by a special election held by all of them.

The Phối Sư may only be promoted to the position of Đầu Sư by a special election held by all 36 of them.

The Giáo Sư may only be promoted to the position of Phối Sư by a special election held by all 72 of them.

The Giáo Hữu may only be promoted to the position of Giáo Sư by a special election held by all 3000 of them.

The Lễ Sanh may only be promoted to the position of Giáo Hữu by a special election held by all of them.

Only the Chưởng Pháp and Đầu Sư may be candidates for the Giáo Tông’s election. They are to be promoted to the Giáo Tông’s position by an election held by all the followers.

Everyone must obey these election regulations, except when it is instructed differently by Me through a spiritism séance.”

Currently, there are not enough dignitaries as expected, so that the election laws could not be implemented. On April 9, 1958 (the 21st day of the 4th month of the year Mậu Tuất), The Spiritual Giáo Tông LÝ THÁI BẠCH gave a temporary rule as followed:

Holy Message:

“Regarding reward for dignitaries, it should not be an automatic advancement after five years of seniority, but dignitaries should meet essential criteria:

- Virtues
- Education level
- Willing to serve
- Teaching capability

As the Giáo Hữu is representing the Supreme Being to bring the Tao to all humanity, he/she would not be a regular person, but an extraordinary one. I give you an exception this time, but for the next petition for advancement, dignitaries have to have at least 5 year seniority and only 80% were allowed to be in the list for advancement.

The Sacerdotal Council of the CỬU TRÙNG ĐÀI should base on their eligibility according to the above criteria and select 80% of them to submit to me through the HIỆP THIÊN ĐÀI.

Brother Thượng Sanh and the Zodiacal Dignitaries should keep an eye on this.

The advancement of female dignitaries should follow the same criteria. this message will be effective until the CỬU TRÙNG ĐÀI could set up the law of election of dignitaries.”

In summary, the CỬU TRÙNG ĐÀI male and female dignitaries beside their self-cultivation have the duty to spread the Tao, to teach and guide humanity, and conserve the Dharma.”

Holy message from the Supreme Being:

“To promote the Tao, and to show good examples to humanity,

the Supreme Being decided to create:

- One Buddha position *which is the Giáo Tông.*
- Three Immortal positions *which are Chưởng Pháp and Đầu Sư.*
- Thirty six Saint positions *which are thirty six Phối Sư.*
- Seventy two sage positions *which are seventy two Giáo Sư.*
- Three thousand disciple positions *which are three thousand Giáo Hữu.”*

In theology, in order to save others, one has first to save self as the Buddha usually taught. And this is the difference between a writer and a virtuous person.

Virtuous person has to study to practice and to apply the Tao's principle in his daily life, showing good examples to people. In contrary, the writer only learns to increase his knowledge in literature and philosophy.

Therefore, dignitaries of the CỬU TRÙNG ĐÀI should learn and cultivate self so that he may acquire enough knowledge and virtues to show good examples to people.

That is only from one angle of view, if we look at their title, they are equivalent to a saint among many other saints. Even if they are not quite a saint, they should have at least enough knowledge and virtues to guide humanity in their spiritual journey.

In the future, because the CỬU TRÙNG ĐÀI is the physical backbone of the Tao, the success of the ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỒ ĐỘ depends on the attitude and the work of the CỬU TRÙNG ĐÀI dignitaries.

The responsible person should think deeply about this and should cultivate self to deserve the mission of guiding humanity by their good examples.

CHAPTER IV

rites and religious laws

Like all other religions, CAODAI has rites and religious laws, which shine the faith of people on one hand, and encourage people to follow the true Dharma on the other hand. The details are explained as followed:

I. RITES

Initially, rites were used for worshipping ceremonies, creating solemnity, respect atmosphere to induce religious intention of people. Later on, they were used as etiquette in the relationship between people in community.

In this book, we will address only their use in the worshipping ceremonies. We will base on the rites applied at the Tayninh Holy See.

WORSHIPPING GOD

At the highest place in the octagonal palace, a globe like the earth, on which three thousand and seventy two stars and the Divine Eye are painted. In the universal globe, a light called Light of God (Thái Cực or Tai Chi light) is continuously lit. The whole represents God reigning on the highest throne to command the Tao and the universe.

In ceremony, the two lights on two sides represent the Yin and Yang logos. And the five incenses represent the five elements of the earth (metal, wood, water, fire, and earth).

The rites explain the principles of the universe, in which, the Supreme Being, the Master of the Monad (Tai Chi), creates Yin and Yang energies, the five elements of the earth, and then the whole universe with the sky, the earth and ten thousand things. The scholars, with their observation, may learn the changes of the universe, and classify the Tao into Pre-Creation and Post-Creation ones.

Pre-Creation Tao exists before the creation of the sky. King Phục Hi based on it to create the Pre-creation Eight Trigrams.

Post-Creation Tao exists after the creation of the sky. King Vo of the Ha dynasty based on it to create the Post-Creation Eight Trigrams.

The Pre-Creation Eight Trigrams uses the Yin and Yang principle, while the Post-Creation Eight Trigrams uses the five element principle. Yin and Yang inter-act with the five elements to create the whole universe.

Without a word, the Supreme Being has shown the whole principle of creation of the universe. Lao Tse called this fact as “Teaching without words.”

WORSHIPPING THE THREE MAIN RELIGIONS and THE FIVE BRANCHES OF THE GREAT WAY

The three main religions and the five branches of the Tao are shown on the fronton in front of the altar (the universal globe).

Those three main Religions are represented as followed:

- Sakya Muni in the middle (representing Buddhism)
- Confucius on the left of Sakya Muni (representing Confucianism)
- Lao Tse on the right (representing Taoism)

Three Lords representing the three Religions in the Third Salvation of the GREAT WAY.

- Lý Thái Bạch in the middle (representing Taoism)
- Kwan Kung on the left (representing Confucianism)
- Kwan Yin (the female Boddhisattva) on the right (representing Buddhism)

The five branches of the GREAT WAY are:

- The way of Buddhas
- The way of Immortals
- The way of Saints

- The way of Angels and Genies
- The way of Humanity

OFFERINGS

Flowers, wine and tea are offered at each ceremony. They represent the three gems:

- Flowers represent TINH (physical energy)
- Wine represents KHÍ (Chi, vital energy)
- Tea represents THÀN (Sen, spiritual energy)

The offering of the three gems reminds people of their three own gems. Disciples have to cultivate themselves so that their three gems TINH, KHÍ, THÀN become unified, become one with the nothingness, and they will be liberated from life and death cycle.

In other words, humans have to cultivate the TINH to transform it into the KHÍ, to cultivate the KHÍ to transform it into the THÀN, to cultivate the THÀN to transform it into the nothingness, which is the state of enlightenment.

RITES AND MUSIC

What is the purpose of Rites and Music in ceremony?

Rites: The rite students are dressed properly, carry offered objects at the level of the eyes (as a the sign of respect), walk rhythmically to the altar along with music (like dancing). The proper attire, the solemn attitude demonstrate the respect which is the spirit of the ceremony.

Music: Drums, bell, guitars, clarinets, flutes, blend together different sounds. Although seemingly chaotic but there is harmony between loud and soft, high and low pitches reflecting the spirit of harmony.

Originally in ancient times, the sages observed the universe and based on the harmony and orders of the universe to create rites and music. Therefore, there was a saying “rites are the body

(physical form), and music, the harmony of the universe.”

The sages in creating rites and music had the intention to use their spiritual strength to stimulate people. In a temple, the Buddha statue, the rites and music touch people’s heart and induce them into the spiritual elevation.

Similarly, people are touched when they witness the funerals or find deserted tombs in cemetery. However, rites and music have to be together. In ceremony, there would be no solemnity if rites and music are not blended together. Similarly, the respect and harmony have to be together in order to have good influence on life.

- Example of respect without harmony: the younger is scared of the older (although he respects), and the older is despising the younger, and they don’t like to get close to each other, and there would be no harmony. Respect without harmony leads to separation.

- Example of harmony without respect: when people do not respect each other, the older is rude and despising the younger and the younger is impolite, insulting the older, the order is upside down, which would lead to separation. So, harmony without respect leads to chaos.

Alas! With separation in family and chaos in community, how can people get together and help each other to survive? Therefore, rites and music, beside their application in ceremony, are a way for people to cultivate self.

People who perform rites and music without respect and harmony are like people who eat sugar cane while disregarding its juice.

PROSTRATION

In front of the altar, when one kneels down, with hands joined together and says “NAM MÔ PHẬT, NAM MÔ PHÁP AND NAM MÔ TĂNG,” what does it mean?

Hands joined together in “TÝ” mudra:

The left hand represents Yang energy or heaven, with its thumb pointing at the base of the 4th finger (corresponding to the year Tý, year of the mouse) and other fingers wrapping around the thumb. This symbolizes that heaven is created in the era of the mouse (the very first era, as the mouse being the very first of the zodiacal animals)

“**Nam Mô Phật,**” commitment to the Supreme Being: with hands joined together in “**Tý**” mudra and placed in the middle of the forehead, the person says Nam Mô Phật to express the commitment to the Supreme Being who is omniscient, omnipotent, absolutely perfect, with his immense love of life toward all beings. The duty of people is to worship the Supreme Being and to follow his perfect goodness.

“**Nam Mô Pháp,**” commitment to the Dharma: The “**Pháp**” means Dharma, a natural way that the Supreme Being recommends people to follow in order to cultivate self to become genuinely pure. Among the Dharma, the three main human relationships, the five virtues for men, the three duties and four virtues for women would make people gentle and right.

Self-restriction, concentration and wisdom are ways to wake up people’s natural conscience in order to reach enlightenment. Nam Mô Pháp means that people respect and follow the Dharma to become a true virtuous and enlightened person.

“**Nam Mô Tăng,**” commitment to people, is to recognize virtuous people, to learn from their attitude and actions.

In summary: “The Master created the Eight Trigrams to form the universe according to the Dharma and then created human beings called Tăng. The Master is the Buddha, the Master of the Dharma and Humans, creates the Tao to lead all children back unified with the Master¹.”

The above three prayers correspond to the three commitments of Buddhism.

1 Spiritual Message on October 21, 1926 (15th day of the 9th month of the year Bính Dần)

What is prostration?

“Prostration is to show respect both from the attitude and from the heart.

Why joining hands?

Left hand is Yang, right hand is Yin. Yin and Yang unification will form the universe with creation and transformation which is itself the Tao.

Why prostrating?

Prostration is to show your respect.

Why placing your hands together in such a manner?

The left hand represents Yang, the sun; the right hand represents Yin, the moon. The combination of Yin and Yang is the Tao, the principle for the creation and transformation of the universe.

Why prostrating twice before a living person?

Two represents the Yin and Yang combined, or the Tao (human being is formed from Yin and Yang energies.)

Why prostrating four times before a dead person?

Two prostrations are for the person, one is for Heaven and one is for the Earth.

Why prostrating three times before Saints and Genies?

Because they are the third rank of the celestial classes. This pattern also indicates the unification of TINH (physical matter), KHÍ (emotions), and THẦN (spirit), which is the Tao itself.

Why prostrating nine times before Buddhas and Immortals?

Because they are the creators of the nine heavens.

Why, then, must you prostrate 12 times before Me?

You could not understand. Because I am the Emperor of the universe and have twelve Zodiacs in My hands. Number 12 is thus My own number.”

(Spiritual Message)

DAILY CEREMONIES

Disciples perform four ceremonies every day at 6 AM,

12 PM, 6 PM and 12 AM.

At first look, people may think that CAODAI disciples rely too much on spirituality, but in reality, daily performance of worshipping ceremony is a way of mysterious, and miraculous self-cultivation.

Naturally, life energy of the universe is abundant at 12 AM, 6 AM, 12 PM and 6 PM. At these times, people would keep body and spirit in peace, vital energy of a person would be harmonized with life energy of the universe and the person becomes in peace, unified with the Supreme Being and may receive His blessing and teaching. The body and the spirit of the person would be purified and harmonized with the vital energy of the universe.

Besides, before entering the Holy Temple for ceremonies, we should get rid of secular worries. At the ceremonies, rites and music will be in harmony with the prayer chanting. The person would be in extreme peace with only sincerity and respect to God. This would help to maintain our own Divine principle in our body realizing the saying “When there is no more human greed, divinity appears.”

Concerning self-cultivation, the Supreme Being taught: “Before praying to Me in the evening, you should ask yourself in your best conscience if you have completed your duties of the day, or have done anything against your conscience. If your duties were left incomplete, or your conscience was left unsatisfied, you must repent.

This will serve to make you more and more holy day by day. My hope is that each of you would tend heartily to your self-improvement, so that the Tao would benefit from your efforts, and you would set a good example for others.”

“Ceremonies regularly performed would enhance your Divine heart.”

WORSHIP OF ANCESTORS

Beside worshipping God and Superior Spirits in temples,

disciples have to worship ancestors at home.

We believe that the soul is eternal. Only does the body of people die. On the “Bát Nhã boat” (Salvation boat) that carries the coffin for funeral, there is a couplet as followed:

“Everything is nothing, the body created from earth will return to earth.

Emitting since thousands of years, the soul created from God will return to God.”

This couplet describes the destiny of the body and the soul of the dead person.

This belief shows the importance of the worship of ancestors, which demonstrates the gratitude toward our parents for the giving birth and raising of the children. The prayers to ancestors are to ask for protection, support and help to the children.

People who worship ancestors should find a sacred place to install an altar for daily worship. At the anniversary of the death of ancestors, all members of the family would get together for the celebration. The ceremony consists of 2 days, the pre-anniversary and the anniversary itself. All members of the family will gather together to commemorate the ancestors and to discuss other family businesses as well.

At time of the ceremony, people show respect to ancestors when passing in front of the altar believing that the ancestors’ spirits are reigning on the altar, although they are not seen or touched, but are present everywhere and aware of everything.

The ceremony is solemnly organized. The head of the family prays and prostrates first in front of the altar, then all children and grandchildren take turn to do the same.

Besides, disciples are already open to the belief and have a religious heart, the worship of ancestors would maintain a beautiful tradition.

In summary, Rites are simple but have brought good results for religious tradition. Individually, Rites are a way of self-cultivation, and from the point of view of family and community,

Rites would maintain good traditions.

II. RELIGIOUS LAWS

After the formation of the Sacerdotal Council, the Supreme Being instructed the Sacerdotal Council to establish the religious laws called New Codes including three parts:

1. The Dharma or Religious laws
2. Secular laws
3. Meditation hall

A. THE DHARMA OR RELIGIOUS LAWS

There are eight articles determining the power of each administrative dignitary and conditions for rewards. We do not need to copy those articles here.

DISCIPLES

This Chapter consists of seven articles determining the conditions to become a follower of the Great Way.

When the recruiting séances were still available, whoever wanted to become a follower had to attend a séance where the Supreme Being, or the three lords representing the three religions Lý Thái Bạch, Kwan Yin, Kwan Kung granted the person a poem and the acceptance order.

At this time, there is no more recruiting séance, whoever wants to be initiated, should be introduced to the village religious leader by two virtuous disciples. The dignitary who conducts the initiation ceremony will issue to the new follower a certificate of “Gate Way” (initiation).

The two virtuous followers who introduce the new follower have the responsibility to guide him/her in his/her cultivation, to understand the Dharma, the religions laws, prayers, rites, duty toward Sacerdotal Council and other followers.

The ĐẦU TỘC ĐẠO (Student Priest) has to come to the

new follower's home to preside the altar installation ceremony, and to instruct the new follower on rites and ways of self-cultivation.

***There are two levels of followers:** The low and high levels.

- *Low level followers* consist of new followers, and followers who have family. They have to fulfill duties toward family, community, and to follow vegetarian diet for six to ten days per month. Beside abiding the civil laws of the country, they have to follow Religious Laws, to observe the Five Precepts.

- *High level followers* consist of disciples who follow full vegetarian diet, and all Religious Laws, particularly the "Four Great Rules." They don't shave hairs and beard, wear all white clothes, and don't run after luxury. Dignitaries above Priest level must be chosen among high level followers.

ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGIOUS VILLAGE

Any area with more than five hundred followers may be allowed to establish its own religious village with its own temple. The Sacerdotal Council is responsible for the provision of administrative dignitaries.

In order to establish a religious village, there must be a permission of the Giáo Tông. Followers of the religious village must follow the orders of the administrative dignitary. No one has the right to change any Religious Laws.

There are two great ceremonies each month, "**the new and full moon days**" when the followers have to come to the temple for worshipping and listening to the sermon. Any absentee has to have proper reason.

Administrative dignitary of the temple should perform four ceremonies each day. Followers who live nearby may attend the ceremonies at their convenience.

VEGETARIAN DIET

Vegetarian diet consists of eating vegetables and grains, but

not meat. Why have disciples to be on vegetarian diet?

First reason: Science uses the mind to study physical materials, and the end result is obtaining ways to improve the physical life, while religious teachings are more profound and looking for liberation from reincarnation. To reach this goal, spiritual scholars have to cultivate the whole body (body, mind, and spirit) to form a strong and wise spiritual body (or second body), which is lighter than air, in order to transcend the universe.

Besides, there is electricity in the atmosphere, people who eat meat (containing impure materials) would make a good electricity conductor. The spirit with electrical conductor would be electrocuted by thunder in the atmosphere.

Second reason: According to the law of attraction, if the spirit is attached to impure materials (by eating meat), it will be attracted by materials of the world and could not be liberated.

In order to be liberated, one has to be on vegetarian diet.

Third reason: Hygiene makes us clean. Cleanness is both physical and spiritual. Vegetarian diet is easier for digestion and excretion and internal organs are therefore clean (healthy).

Fourth reason: All beings in the universe are created by the Supreme Being and therefore “All beings are of one same constituent” from the father God, or in other words, all beings are just brothers and sisters of one same family. This principle would not allow us to kill living beings (our brothers and sisters) for our lives.

Besides, people have two kinds of food for nurturing the body: physical food and mystic food. Physical food consists of vegetable and grains which are digested and become nutrients in blood. Mystic food consists of pure air of the universe, which is ingested by the lungs to keep the blood clean and healthy to nurture the body.

For example, if the body needs six pounds of food a day, the food may be composed of three pounds of physical food and three pounds of mystic food. We may therefore eat more and

more mystic food and less and less physical food so that we have enough for total pounds of food. At one point, one may use only mystic food to live.

Notes: We like to remind about the goal of cultivation of ancient masters for us to understand the Dharma. We were used to live with physical food, if suddenly, we change to complete mystic food, then our body would not be able to adjust and may deteriorate. Therefore, the NEW CODES suggest people to get progressive vegetarian diet, from six to ten days of vegetarian diet at the beginning. When our body gets used to the diet, we may progress further to full vegetarian diet.

THE FIVE PRECEPTS

1) NOT TO KILL.

In the year Mậu Thìn (1928), the Supreme Being gave the following message:

“I have told you that when there was nothing in this universe, the cosmic ether gave birth only to Me, and My throne is the universal Monad.

I divided the Monad into the Diad which is Yin and Yang, and then into the Tetrad and then into the Eight Triagrams. The latter changes continuously to form the universe. I then divided My Spirit to create ten thousand things, from elements to finally living beings: plants, insects, animals and humans. You should understand that everything emanates out of My Spirit; wherever there is life, there am I. I am the progenitor of life. My love of life is unfathomable.”

Notes: According to this teaching, we understand that when a sparkle of spirit is separated from its origin (Supreme Being) will travel in the universe and is under the rule of transformation of the universe. Wherever it dwells in the universe, it will have a material body made of diverse components of that area. As human, we have a soul (from the spirit of the Supreme Being) and a material body made of Yin and Yang energies and the five

elements (of the universe) the soul and the material body form a human unit.

Tao Te Ching Chapter forty-two stated: “All ten thousand things are made of Yin and Yang which are opponent to each other but are blended together in harmony.”

Our life is commanded by the soul, a sparkle of the Supreme Being’s spirit, as the Supreme Being taught: “Everything emanates out of My Spirit; wherever there is life, there am I. I am the progenitor of life.”

Confucian teaching stated: “Parents love children boundlessly in any way they are.” And this is regarding only the parents of the physical body, not yet addressing the Supreme Being, the “Great gentle Father” who created and nurtured all living beings.

The Supreme Being created the universe, with four seasons every year, and five kinds of grains and vegetables to maintain life of all ten thousand things. All these facts have enough demonstrated the immense love of life of the Supreme Being.

Holy message:

“Life erupts like a flower from a tree: it develops from the bud into bloom, and evolves to form fruit that seeds more trees ad infinitum. If someone cuts that flower, the fruit of life is interrupted and future evolution is prevented. Each life has its own Karmic plan. It does not matter whether it is an original or secondary living being, its life on this earth is divinely appointed.

If you kill any living being, you shall be punished; no one knows whether a living being may have been an Immortal or a Buddha reincarnating to Earth. As I have said, all life is Me. To destroy life is to attempt to destroy Me. And it is not easy to destroy Me. Teach that to human beings.”

Notes: The Supreme Being, Jade Emperor of the Tai Chi is the origin of ten thousand things. He is the source of life, like a trunk of a tree, and each living being is like one branch of this trunk and shall have their own time to develop.

Example: A grain of bean needs to have appropriate weather to germinate, to become a plant, to bloom and to bear fruits.

Whoever kills a living being, kills a life, prevents it from growing and transforming. Life is the Supreme Being, and killing the Supreme Being is not an easy matter.

Secular law judges severely murderer, and so does the Divine Karmic law. Murderer has therefore to pay their Karmic debt. That's the reason the Supreme Being forbids killing.

In summary, we have to contemplate on the above issue, honor the Divine Law and avoid killing. It's an active way to observe the precept of not killing. Not only observing the precept of not killing, we have to help all living beings. To promote life for all living beings is to promote our own life, we have to love all living beings like ourselves.

Moreover, all living beings have one same origin, the father God, and are therefore brothers and sisters, we have to open our heart to love and help each other on the way to return to our Father. We have to realize love according to the love of life of the Supreme Being.

2) NOT CHEATING.

In the year Mậu Thìn (1928) the Supreme Being taught:

“Alas! When I created you, I loved and respected you so profoundly, I sent you to this world with a sacred body made in My own image, so that originally you did not need to eat in order to live, or to make clothes to cover yourself. However, you did not listen to Me but were seduced by materials, tastes, sexuality, power and wealth, which ultimately led to suffering in this world.

I reserved enough wealth for all of you to share, but because of greed, some of you took too much, leaving others to suffer hunger without sustenance.

I granted the same powers to you that I granted to the Genies, Saints, Immortals, and Buddhas so that you could discipline yourselves to respect and honor My saintly love of life. Unfortunately, these powers have become a tool to treat other beings as slaves. Alas! What a tragedy! I am so disappointed!

Do you know why people become so dishonest and greedy?

The principal needs of people are food and clothing-no one can avoid those needs. Unfortunately, many people bicker for exclusivity over the distribution of these necessities, and put their own needs above others'. They struggle for material goods beyond all reason, stockpiling beyond all possible need, regaling in trickery and evil to satisfy their cravings for material gain.

And how do they acquire this power? They bend the meek to their will until the power is betrothed to them to call evil, good. The brutes acquire all, while the meeks lose all. Thus society falls into chaos. There is no justice as God's laws are no longer observed; this is the cause of all suffering on Earth.

When dishonesty and greed penetrate your heart, there is no room for virtue. When they penetrate your home, there can be no moral teachings. When they penetrate your country, there can be no honorable administration. When they penetrate the world, Genies and Saints cannot arise. Crime is the natural outcome of dishonesty and greed; therefore, dishonesty and greed in the heart, even unmanifest, are crimes against God's laws."

Notes: It is clear that the Supreme Being taught "I sent you to this earth with the Divine Holy Body...." The Divine Holy Body is the sacred light of the Supreme Being combined with part of the cosmic ether. This Holy Body does not need to eat or to wear clothes in order to live, but in incarnating to this earth, human beings have too much desires in materials to satisfy the physical body's needs that lead to greed, fighting for power and subsequently loss of virtues so that the Supreme Being said that greed creates corruption where ever it is.

It should be understood that a property whether small or big is earned by people's hard work. If we steal others' property it would not be just. The injustice would hurt not only people, but also the Divine Law. To avoid stealing, one should not be greedy.

In order not to be greedy, one should know how to be

self-sufficient and to give to others.

Self-sufficiency is to wish for us to have enough to survive but not to want anything extra fancy. Without self-sufficiency, the greed would stimulate people to acquire for them and their children (and family) the property of others. There is a saying that “the greed is boundless.”

Tao Te Ching Chapter forty-four stated:

“Greed is bad.

Acquiring more will lose more.

Self-sufficiency is not ashamed

To stay out of the fighting for power

Is harmless and may last.”

Donation: We should give to others either money or counsels (or teaching) according to our capability without expecting to be paid back. In order to enlighten this virtue, one has to have selflessness (altruism) which is to donate to others just for the interest of others but not for our own (including honor, power or fame).

People who practice the Tao would give all their life to the Tao and to humanity. They would not mind either their life or their property. In contemplating on this, the selflessness will grow and replace the selfishness.

3) NOT TO COMMIT ADULTERY.

Holy message of the 26th day of the 6th month of the year Bính Dần (June 30, 1926)

Why is obscenity a severe crime?

“Ordinary people see the physical body as a single unit. In reality, it is a mass of innumerable living cells, assembled to form a body with a divine essence. This body is nourished by living beings such as vegetable matter, fruit, and rice; these all contain vital matter, as all these foods are fresh with the essence of life

and potential, they are not dead. Foods already dead do not carry this life essence and potential. Cooking by steam or quick-frying simply disinfects foods and prepares them for our digestion. The nutritional energy of these foods does not disintegrate after being cooked.

Foods are then transformed in your gastrointestinal system into KHÍ (vital energy), and then their life essence is carried into the blood. As you have been taught, there is spiritual energy in KHÍ and in blood. It is transmuted from spirit into the human body as a result of the cycle of death and birth. Therefore, there is a certain amount of spiritual energy even in a drop of blood.

Since sexual TINH (life matter) is composed partly of blood and partly of KHÍ, excessive sexual activity thus causes an unnecessary expenditure of TINH and therefore of spiritual energy. After your death, you will be confronted with and judged by this spiritual energy, about the way you wasted it, at the “*Nghiệt Cảnh Đài*.” You will not be able to deny how you wasted your spirit. So, you should observe this precept closely.”

According to this teaching, excessive sex would be harmful to people. Moreover, the physical body is created by sex and when there is life there should be naturally death. The death would lead to decomposition of the physical body into materials which are earth, water, air and fire. Therefore, the physical body will never last, why would we commit crimes in order just to satisfy this transitory physical body.

The Karma of the spirit lasts thousands of lives especially the one of adultery, which induces people into the wrong way ruining others' family life, and which is therefore the worse crime.

In brief, our physical body is not different from the body of an animal. Its activity is mainly very selfish. We should be very careful with this precept in order to control the physical body, and to guide it to the right path.

4) NOT DRINKING

Holy message from the Supreme Being on the 15th day of the

12th month of the year Bình Dân (1-18-1927)

DO NOT INTOXICATE YOURSELF

“Why abstain from intoxication?”

I have taught that your body is composed of a mass of everlasting spirits contained within living units. You should understand that the internal organs of your body are also formed by these living units whose function, whether they are aware of it or not, is commanded by Me. I therefore use your body to teach.

Firstly, I'll explain why alcohol is harmful to your physical body. Your physical body is still like an animal's and needs to eat in order to live. When alcohol is ingested, it is absorbed into all internal organs of your body including the heart which is the foremost mechanism of life.

Alcohol forces the whole cardiovascular system to function excessively, and the lungs do not have adequate time to purify (oxygenate and purge carbon dioxide) the blood, so that waste products will accumulate in the whole body, polluting the living units, leading to progressive sickness and finally to the demise of the living units of the organs and then of your whole body. Many people's bodies are half-dead just because of alcohol.

Secondly, I'll explain why alcohol is harmful to your spirit.

I have said that the soul forms the second body. It is composed of the KHÍ which surrounds your body like a mold. Its center is the brain, and the portal by which your second body enters and exits is the fontanelle on top of the head which is guarded by the Hộ Pháp. (With meditation, there is unification of the TINH, the KHÍ and the THẦN, leading to enlightenment.)

The brain is thus the origin of the KHÍ. When polluted blood accumulates in the brain, the brain is disrupted by confusion and languor so that your spirit and human intelligence are clouded, no longer in control of the body. The body will lose its human personality and revert to its animal essence. Lost is the hope to advance to the states of Genie, Saint, Immortal, and Buddha. At the same time, when the brain is confused, it becomes an open gate for evil, wreaking havoc on your environment and pushing

your soul into continuous reincarnation. Therefore, listen, I forbid you to drink alcohol.”

Perhaps, any one of us who was drunk at least once, would have a clear experience on how being drunk damages the brain and the mind, and science shows that it damages also different other organs. This precept is therefore very important.

5) NOT TO SIN BY WORDS.

Holy message from the Supreme Being in the year Mậu Thìn /1928.

“Why is lying forbidden?”

I have said that I have set up a spirit in your physical body that protects your life. As you have been taught, this spirit is impartial and can communicate with the Genies, Saints, Immortals, Buddhas, and Superior Spirits of the Ngọc Hư Cung (Cabinet of God) and can record all of your good and bad actions. This spirit then transmits this Akashic record to the Celestial Judgment Court. All will be recorded there.

Moreover, this Holy spirit has a duty not only to protect you, but to educate you as well, through what most people describe as the “Conscience.” Thus, Confucian Saints have said: “One who despises people despises one’s own heart. God has determined that this is a crime from which there is no escape.” When you lie to people, you first lie to yourself, to your own conscience, and thus to your own spirit (which is a part of God).

As I have said, this spirit will submit your every word to the Celestial Judgment Court and even though you may never have acted on your words, you will be punished for them just the same, because the effect on the spirit (and therefore on God) will have been the same. Therefore, at the Celestial Judgment Court, none of your words will be omitted. This is why I have instructed you to be careful in your words and your virtues. You should be twice as careful in your speech as in your actions, because the punishment for morally reprehensible speech is the same as punishment for morally reprehensible actions.”

According to this precept, virtuous people should not lie at all whether for any tiny or big matter. There was a saying “without trust, man could not succeed.” Not counting the case when we encounter with the superior spirits, for dealing with people, if we lose trust, we cannot succeed. Therefore, we have to say the truth and always to keep our promises.

Virtuous people should not tell lies, but also should tell what is right. In dealing with any matter, one has to say with all sincerity to gain trust from people. One should also clarify any confusion.

Not to tell different stories. One should not tell different stories to induce arguments and conflicts between people. One should not tell bad things about others.

Not to say cruel words. Virtuous people should not say cruel words or insult people, but instead, use gentle and sweet words to counsel, comfort, encourage people in difficult situations. One should counsel cruel people as well.

Not to maneuver words. Virtuous people should not use words with double meaning to criticize, or to induce others into sexuality. In contrary, they'd rather say the truth with sincerity.

Virtuous people understand well that we should keep our words right and pure, but it's easy to say and difficult to realize. Without practicing is like without learning. Initially, one should try to be less talkative, take time to contemplate on our words before speaking. With time, it would be easy to have the right speech.

THE FOUR GREAT RULES

1. Should follow instruction of the superiors. Not to be ashamed for being corrected by juniors. Use politeness to deal with people. Repent when committing errors.

2. Not to be arrogant. Not to be selfish. Help people to cultivate self. Should let go personal conflict with others. Should not obstruct gentle and talented people.

3. Be accurate in money management. Should always pay debt. Should not despise the superiors. To have courtesy with juniors, and politeness with superiors.

4. Treat people the same in their presence or absence.

In brief, in dealing with people, there should be modesty and respect, whether they are present or not. Do not discriminate people based on their wealth. Should use nice words to people. Should follow rules and laws of the country and religions.

EDUCATION

There should be schools for general knowledge, literature, and religious teachings with their own rules and regulations.

In order to participate in the Sacerdotal Council, one has to be certified by religious school.

Monastery:

There are two programs. Bishop is responsible to run the program for Student Priests and Priests. Priest is responsible to run the program for Sub-dignitaries. The religious teaching is under the administration of the HIỆP THIÊN ĐÀI (Heavenly Union Palace). If failed at the final examination, people should take the class again.

School for general knowledge:

Children of six years old and above should attend the school for general knowledge and literature.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline in religions is different from secular laws. The main purpose of religious discipline is to counsel, to teach and to correct the errors.

Whoever commits errors should listen to counsels and repent. If there is no improvement after counseling, the matter should be brought to the local leader. If there is still no result, the matter should be brought to the Sacerdotal Council. The person

involved may be expelled.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGIOUS LAWS

Disciples have six months to implement the religious laws.

Exceptions:

1. Whoever practices a profession which is against the religious laws, has two years to change.

2. Dignitaries who have not been fully vegetarian, have two years to become fully vegetarian.

B. SECULAR LAWS

Being disciples of the same Father, we are like brothers and sisters and should love and support each other in both religious and secular life. We have to be generous and forget past conflicts in order to build happiness together. We have to yield each other to avoid hot arguments. Loving each other in both secular and religious life would be a precious gift to our Father.

The Way of Humanity teaches the “Three obligations and the five virtues” for men, and the “Three supplications and the four virtues” for women¹. Religious persons should use them as the basic principles of life.

CAODAI disciples should not have concubine, except when the man becomes widow, or the wife could not bear children. In this latter case, the wife would agree to marry another wife for the husband. There should be no divorce, except in the case of adultery or when there are misconducts of the couple toward parents.

Children should have God father for their care in case of the death of their parents. Children of seven years old should attend school for religious teaching, literature and general knowledge. Civil legal matters, wedding, funerals, worshipping ceremonies

¹ The “Three obligations and the five virtues for men”, and “the three supplications and the four virtues for women” will be explained in section Lower Cycle.

should be performed together as brothers and sisters of the same family. Funeral should be simple without luxury, or partying, or delay of burying. Offerings for ceremonies should be vegetarian. Rites are performed as determined in the New Codes, mourning dresses are to be like in the old tradition.

The Tao of life begins by a marriage, which is a life time important issue. Any error at the beginning becomes difficult in the long run. One should look for partner among co-religious disciples, except when the partner agrees to follow the same religious path. Eight days before the wedding, a notice should be posted at the local temple for prevention of any future objection. The wedding ceremony should be performed at the local temple.

For living, disciples should choose a profession without corrupting the tradition, or involving killing living beings.

C. MEDITATION HALL

The cell of meditation is a solemn and sacred place where the followers are admitted for initiation and self-cultivation in order to reach enlightenment. The followers will receive the teaching from the Supreme Being and will be guided to enlightenment.

Disciples of high spiritual level who have fulfilled the duties toward humanity and have no secular attachment will be considered by The Sacerdotal Council for admission to the meditation cell.

The meditation cell has its own rules and schedules. All written communications with the outside shall be forbidden except with the parents, and be screened by the head of the cell.

The disciples should follow the rules of the meditation cell, must obey the head of the cell and follow closely the schedule for cultivation.

In brief, Rites and Religious Laws have the same effects on the self-cultivation. Rites improve the mind, Religious Laws control the attitudes.

People should examine, apply to discipline self.

PART II

COSMOLOGY

and

STUDY ON HUMANITY

In this part, we discuss about life of human beings related to the universe.

There are two chapters:

- COSMOLOGY
- STUDY ON HUMANITY

CHAPTER I COSMOLOGY

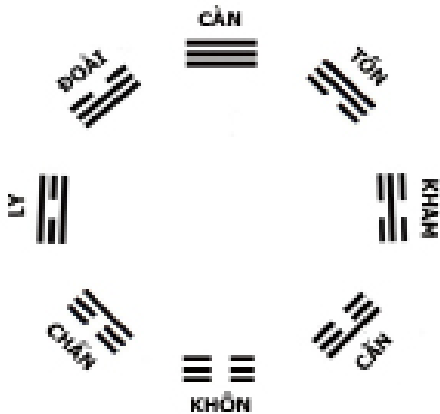
What is the universe? Chinese Lục Cửu Uyên (1139-1192) stated: the four directions, the above and below are the Vũ, the times from the past to the future are the Trụ. The Tao creates the sky, the earth, and all creatures. This denotes that the principle of the universe is related to our life. The Tao spans over two periods, the Pre-Creation Tao and the Post-Creation Tao.

PRE-CREATION TAO

The Tao that existed before the creation is without name, without form, and the master of which is the Supreme Being as described by this *following Holy message*:

“Before the existence of the sky and the earth, the nothingness (the void) gave birth to the Master (the Supreme Being), and the Master presided the Monad (Tai Chi), divided it into Diad, the Diad into Tetrad, and the Tetrad into Eight Trigrams. The Eight Trigrams transformed to create the universe.”

According to this message, we understand the following: at the beginning of times, the nothingness created the Supreme Being and the Monad (Tai Chi). God presided the Monad and



SCHEMA OF THE PRE-CREATION
EIGHT TRIGRAMS

divided it into Yin and Yang energies. Thereafter, Yin and Yang energies reacted with each other to create the universe.

In other words, one becomes two, two becomes four, four becomes eight, and transforms incessantly to create the universe.

King Phục Hy of the Chinese ancient time, 4,449 years BC, based on the above to draw the Eight Trigrams, which was the Pre-Creation Eight Trigrams.

PRE-CREATION EIGHT TRIGRAMS¹

Through the three religions, we observe the following:

a) Taoism.

Tao Te Ching Chapter one said: “The nameless is the beginning of the heaven and the earth.”

What is the nameless? Tao Te Ching Chapter twenty-five stated:

“Something mysteriously formed, born before heaven and

¹ The legend of the Pre-Creation Eight Trigrams.

King Phục Hy was born in Chinese ancient time when spirituality was at its highest development. He was the king of high virtues, generous, bright and wise, capable to use all the innate intelligence granted by God. He could envision all the invisible world. While traveling along the Hà river, he saw an animal with the body of a horse, and the head of a dragon, called dragon-horse, having fifty five spots on its back. King Phục Hy based on those spots to draw the “Pre-Creation Eight Trigrams,” which is usually called “Phục Hy Eight Trigrams.”

Legend of the dragon horse.

According to Confucian book, the dragon horse is eight meter five, with a long neck, legs of a horse, head of a dragon, and scales on the body like that of a dragon. The I-Ching stated that the dragon horse is a sacred animal with eight essences of the solar system.

To King Phục Hy, the sincerest saint who can understand the invisible world, dragon horse is the sacred animal transporting the exquisites of the solar system.

Dragon is one of the four sacred animals: dragon, unicorn, turtle, and phoenix. It has the exquisite characters of the universe. Horse carries man and is a rapid animal.

In brief, the dragon horse represents the harmonious association of Yin and Yang, which, with times flowing rapidly, brings the exquisites of the universe to living beings' life.

earth, in the silence and the void, standing alone and unchanging, ever present everywhere and in motion without being tired. It is the mother of ten thousand things. I do not know its name, call it Tao.”

b) Confucianism.

Chu Liêm Khê (1017-1073), a Chinese Confucian, stated: “The nothingness is the Monad (Tai Chi).”

The reason why the nothingness is the Monad is because the Monad emanates from the nothingness. In other words, the nothingness is a contented essence, silent and non transforming. One cannot use the word to express it nor the mind to contemplate on it. But from the point of view of I-Ching, the nothingness is called Monad, the origin of Yin and Yang.

c) Buddhism.

Buddhism called Tao the “True-Self.” The True-Self is the essence of the universe, not born, not destroyed, without past, without future, without more, without less. Being quiet, the Tao is the True-Self; being active, it is the creation and the nurture of ten thousand things.

In brief, the cosmic ether, the nameless, the nothingness, the True-Self, although being called with different terms, all point toward the same essence “Nothing.”

One point to remember: Although the Tao is without name, without form, without color, and thus, the essence of the nothingness, it is not empty, but exists under the form of energy of creation and nurture.

Tao Te Ching Chapter fourteen stated:

“ The Tao has three states: Di, Hi, Vi.

DI: Look but cannot see, it’s beyond the form,

HI: Listen but cannot hear, it’s beyond the sound,

VI: Grasp but cannot hold, it’s intangible.”

DI, HI, VI, the three states, which, combined, constitute the essence. This essence does not reflect light at the above, does not obscure darkness at the below, is bright but does not have a name, then returns to the nothingness. The Tao is the form of the

formless, the image of the imageless.

In summary, if we say that the Tao is “Nothingness,” it’s not right, if we say that the Tao is “Existing,” it’s also wrong, thus we should say that the Tao is probably nothingness, probably existing. In the nothingness there is existence, which is the energy of creation and nurture.

The Monad (Tai Chi), once manifested, transforms from the still to the active, and gives birth to the duality. When still, the Tai Chi becomes the Yin. After being still, it becomes active, and becomes the Yang. The Tai Chi is alternately still and active, and generates the two Yin and Yang energies.

The Yin and Yang appear incompatible, but actually compatible. Because of incompatibility, when Yin and Yang meet, they give rise to chaos, then at their highest chaotic state, they become harmony. With the chaos and the harmony, Yin and Yang generate the universe.

According to Confucianism, when the Yin and Yang transform back and forth between chaos and harmony, what is light rises into the sky, what is heavy sinks into the earth.

After the sky and the earth are in place, The Tao continues its transformation and creates all living forms. This period is called Post-Creation Tao.

POST-CREATION TAO

Reminder: once the sky and the earth are settled, the Yin and the Yang continue to transform between chaos and harmony creating all ten thousand things. The Supreme Being taught:

Holy message:

“...After the creation of the universe, I then divided My spirit to create ten thousand things, forming elements, and finally living beings: plants, insects, animals and humans. You should understand that everything emanates out of My spirit; wherever there is life, there am I. I am the progenitor of life. My love of life is unfathomable.”

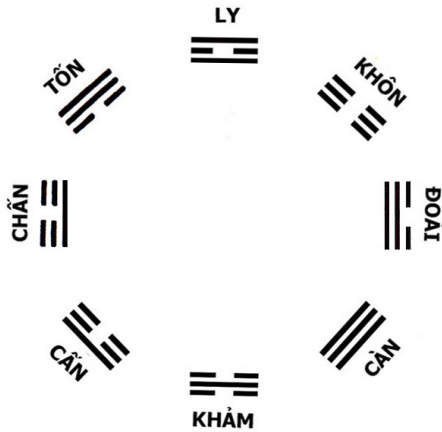
Tao Te Ching Chapter one stated: “The named is the mother

of ten thousand things.”

The word “named” designates the sky and earth, with form, which are the origin of ten thousand things.

I-Ching stated: “The sky and the earth harmonize all things. All creatures, in turn, when mature, male and female unite and create.” The creation therefore never ends.

POST-CREATION EIGHT TRIGRAMS¹



SCHEMA OF THE POST-CREATION EIGHT TRIGRAMS

Chinese Confucian Chu Liêm Khê (1017-1073) stated: “The active Yang transforms, the inactive Yin gathers. From the transformation and the gathering of Yin and Yang energies, are born the five aggregates: water, fire, metal, wood, and earth. The truth of the nothingness is the Lý (invisible principle), the essence of the Yin and Yang and the five aggregates is Khí (vital energy).

1 Legend of the Post-Creation Eight Trigrams:

Lạc Thơ is the book named after the river Lạc. King Võ of the dynasty Hạ was born around 2206 BC. When the flood of the river Lạc was controlled, King Võ found a sacred turtle with dots on its back corresponding to nine numbers. Based on those nine numbers, King Võ created the Post-Creation Eight Trigrams.

The invisible principle and the vital energy combine with each other forming trigram “CÀN” as male, and trigram “KHÔN” as female.

Yin and Yang unite to create ten thousand things, male and female unite to produce ten thousand species¹.

King Võ, of the dynasty Hạ in China, born around 2206 BC, drew the Post-Creation Eight Trigrams to express these principles.

In summary, the Pre-Creation Tao transforms from the Monad to Yin and Yang and then into Tetrad (four seasons) and then into Eight Trigrams. So number one becomes two, two becomes four, etc...

The Post-Creation Eight Trigrams direct the five elements: The active Yang energy transforms, the inactive Yin energy gathers. The transformation of the Yang, the gathering of the Yin give birth to the five elements (water, fire, metal, wood, and earth).

The two Pre and Post-Creation Eight Trigrams complement each other and create the “Principle of Change” of the universe.

The Principle of Change has two states: the scattered state in the void and the permanent state in ten thousand things. One is scattering, one is gathering, all together form the opening and the closing miraculous and mysterious mechanism of the Tao², where the opening leads to birth and the closing to death.

I-Ching stated: “Alternate opening and closing constitute the transformation, the continuous back and forth movement is the Tao.”

Thus one day, Confucius while standing contemplating the water on the riverside, exclaimed: “Are day and night flowing like this?”

1 Trần Trọng Kim, Nho Giáo

2 The Tao is the miraculous and mysterious machine the opening of which is the birth of ten thousand things from the Tao, and its closing is the death, the return back to the Tao. Ôn Như Hầu in his book *Cung Oán Ngâm Khúc* stated “the opening and the closing of the miraculous and mysterious machine are unpredictable.”

He wanted to mean that the “Principle of Change” (the Tao) transforms continuously exactly like water flowing while the weather follows the cycle from Spring to Summer, to Fall, to Winter, and ten thousand things the cycle from birth to growth, to death, then to reincarnation.

For example, water under the effect of the heat of the sun evaporates to form clouds, then falls down into rain becoming water again. (Leaves become insects, weed roots become crickets, mice become bats, eels become foxes, etc..., and many other transformations beyond people’s knowledge).

Let’s examine the rice grain.

At the beginning, Yin and Yang energies interact forming a single element that moves around in the universe, and according to the principle “birds of the same feather flock together,” forms a rice grain in a way that we may not understand. This grain of rice, under the effects of earth, fire, water, wind, germinates into a young rice plant, then becomes mature, blooms, forms rice seeds. This new rice seed will follow the same cycle again. Notice that the original status of a form disappears when it transforms into another form: a flower will disappear when it becomes a seed, and a seed will be denatured and disappears when it becomes a new plant.

This would be similar to the birth and death cycle. Ten thousand things transform and evolve so rapidly following the miraculous cycle of God that human senses could not recognize.

Tao Te Ching Chapter thirty-nine stated:

“When reaching the Oneness, the heaven becomes clear and bright, the earth becomes silent, the spirit becomes sacred, ten thousand things persist. About the Oneness, if it was not reached, the heaven would not be bright, but crashed, the earth would not be silent but decayed, the spirit would not be sacred but scattered, and ten thousand things would not persist but be destroyed.”

Therefore, human beings should follow the Tao to survive and progress to perfection, otherwise they would be destroyed.

The following chapters about Higher Cycle and Lower Cycle will explain ways to reach enlightenment, however, I will discuss about Cosmology, Karma, and Reincarnation first before the discussion on ways of cultivation.

DIVINE COURT

We observe the immense universe, above is the sky, below is the earth with landscape, plants, animals and humans. They all are arranged so orderly, solemnly and miraculously. If we continue to think we would believe that beyond this visible world, there would be a spiritual world which is reigned by the Supreme Being and Angels, Saints, Immortals and Buddhas. This spiritual world is called Divine Court, the court of God.

Holy message from the Eighth Female Fairy:

“In the immense universe, above, the highest invisible space of the secret and miraculous Dharma, is reigned by the sacred power of the Master Supreme Being, and protected by Angels, Saints, Immortals, and Buddhas. Below, the time with its vital energy has formed the visible world. This miraculous creation is from the absolute power of the Supreme Being combining the space and time in a miraculous mechanism to form the universe with the sky, the earth and the ten thousand beings. The Supreme Being also establishes the Divine Law to rule the whole universe.”

DIVINE PALACE

1) Description of the Jade Palace.

“The Divine Jade Palace is so magnificently bright,
 Connected to the universe by innumerable twinkling stars.
 Far far away from the North star,
 But is closer to the South star.
 Its changing bright colors blind the Angels,
 And its miraculous power scares the Saints.
 It always stands still against all lightning,

And lasts forever.”

(Holy message)

2) Jade Court: The Jade Court has Divine Law to discipline all eight kinds of souls¹. The Executive Post is the Linh Tiêu Điện (Linh Tiêu Palace) with all the power of the Supreme Being to control the evolvement of the universe.

The evolvement of the eight kinds of souls is controlled by the absolute power of the Supreme Being. The evolvement is in cycle from the nothingness to the form and then from the form to the nothingness, based on the nothingness as the ultimate goal, the transformation as the action, the harmony as the way, and the justice as the rules.

THE SUPREME BEING

Ordinarily, in looking at a magnificent building we think about the architect who created it. In looking at a cute child, we think about his/her parents.

In looking at the immense universe with the sky above on high, the earth below with landscape, colorful plants, ten thousand beings with innumerable different forms magnificently arranged, we would think about the creator which is called the Supreme Being by Confucianism.

Following are scriptures about the Supreme Being:

Hinduism explained the Trinity as:

- Brahma : Creating Buddha
- Vishnu : Transforming Buddha
- Shiva : Destructing Buddha

Taoism explained the Trinity as:

- Thái Thanh : Yellow manifestation
- Thượng Thanh : Blue manifestation
- Ngọc Thanh : Red manifestation

Trinity is the manifestation of the Supreme Being.

¹ The eight kinds of souls are: material soul, plant soul, animal soul, human soul, angel soul, saint soul, immortal soul, and Buddha soul.

Reference about rites:

Every religion reveres its Supreme Being and calls it by different names according to language of the country and to the way of religion establishment.

Theravada Buddhism (great carrier) reveres the Amitaba, the very first Buddha.

Taoism reveres the Thái Thượng Đạo Tổ, the previous life of Lao Tse, as the Supreme Being.

Confucianism reveres Đức Thượng Đế, the Supreme Emperor.

Today, at the “ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỔ ĐỘ”, the Supreme Being uses the name “CAO ĐÀI TIÊN ÔNG ĐẠI BỒ TÁT MA HA TÁT” as His name, the name that embraces all three main religions.

Reference about reality:

No people has ever seen or heard of God, but each time, in difficult or dangerous situation, they call God for help, this belief in God existed since the ancient time.

Fortunately for humanity, the Supreme Being used divine miracles to found the Tao, and Himself took control of the faith. Thanks to the sacredness of the spiritism, we may understand better the Supreme Being. (*Please see the Chapter on the “History of CAODAI”.*)

We like to relate a story of Buddhism in which the son asked his father about the truth.

The father told the son to put a full hand of salt into a bucket of water.

The following day, the father asked the son to bring the salt back to him. The son could not because the salt was dissolved in the water. The father then asked the son to taste the solution on the surface, in the middle and at the bottom of the bucket. The son told him that they tasted salty the same. The father told him to taste again carefully. The son reported the same.

The father said solemnly: that was the truth. You could not recognize the truth which is the delicate reality that creates

the universe and the ten thousand beings because it is already becoming one with the universe and the ten thousand things exactly like the salt dissolved in water.

The main idea of the story is similar to the teaching of the Supreme Being in this following *Holy message*:

“Every living being on this earth is from my spirit. I am present in every life and I am the Father of all life.”

Upanishads scripture also stated:

“There is God in everything on earth. God is the source of life of the universe from the stars to the planet earth, even of all living beings, that are all evolving in an order. Thanks to this source of life, all may persist and progress.

In our body, there is life that no one can hear, see, or touch. This is not the reason that we should deny life. The existence of the Supreme Being is the same. It’s not because we could not hear, see, or touch the Supreme Being that we should deny the existence of the Supreme Being!”

It’s difficult to convince regular people, for regular senses could not reach the Supreme Being reigning on high of the universe. In contrary, the true religionists may feel the Supreme Being clearly thanks to their faith.

KARMA LAW

The Karma law is compared to the seed and fruit relationship which means you reap what you sow.

Karma law means that if you do good deeds you will receive blessing, if you do bad deeds you will receive mishap.

Buddhist scripture stated that if you sow melon seed you will get melon, if you sow bean you will get bean. We will analyze the fact of growing bean as followed in order to understand Karma:

- The bean is the *cause*.
- Soil, water, wind (air) and the sun’s heat are *opportunities*.
- Bean from bean plant is the *result*.

Cause, opportunities and results are the three elements of

creation and transformation of ten thousand beings.

If we use the example of the growing of bean to examine the Karma law in human life we would understand that:

- The thoughts, the words and the actions of people leave effects in the space, which are the *cause*.
- The universe is the *opportunities*.
- The blessings or mishaps are the *results*.

The blessings or mishaps of this present time are the results of the previous actions, the current actions are the cause for the future, either in this life or in the future life.

We may deduce that the current life is for paying for what we have caused in the previous life and also is the cause for the future life. Causes and results follow each other from this life to the next life creating a chain that ties humans in a wheel of reincarnation without exit if humans do not wake up.

REINCARNATION LAW

Reincarnation means continuous incarnation like a turning wheel. Religiously, reincarnation is the transformation of all living beings through life; for example, in this current life, living being may be a human, in the next life, living being may be transformed into Immortals, Buddhas, or animals, or demons according to result of their current action.

The Supreme Being taught:

“You were born here on this earth: You live and suffer here, and you will also die here. Do you know what will happen to you after your death?

Do you know where you will go? None of you understands this miraculous, mystic mechanism.

I will now explain: Throughout many thousands of years, all beings are transformed through the reincarnation cycle from minerals to plants to animals - finally reaching the stage of human beings.

Human beings on this earth are themselves divided into

different classes. For example, the class of “Emperor,” as you understand it, on this earth (the 68th earth) is not even as worthy as the lowest class on the 67th earth. The value of worlds increases as their assigned number decreases from the 68th to the first earth, through the three thousand worlds, then through the four great ethereal continents and then finally through the 36 heavens.

Human beings must persevere in cultivating themselves to reach the pinnacle, the “Bach Ngoc Kinh” (Diamond Palace), or Nirvana (according to Buddhism).

Anyone who is although not religious but has fulfilled one’s duty honestly and justly, s/he will follow this ladder to advance, so, when can s/he return to Me? Therefore I have granted humanity an enormous privilege to return to me after even only one lifetime if s/he repents and spends that life in self-cultivation.

Alas, unfortunately, I have not often had the pleasure of seeing those who have accomplished this.”

Regarding the reincarnation of humans, we have the following statement:

Each individual has three bodies:

1. The first body is the physical body
2. The second body is the Chơn Thần
3. The third body is the spirit, Chơn Linh

1) Reincarnation of the physical body.

All transformations from one life to another are realized by the interaction between Yin and Yang energies and the five elements from the formation to the maturation of the physical body, i.e. from the formation of the fetus to the birth of the baby, then to the maturation into an adult, and to the death. The physical body is then destroyed and returned to the four original essential elements which are earth, water, fire, and wind.

The physical body is therefore a temporary body constituted by elements of the universe, that a human has borrowed under the form of a loan of Yin and Yang energies and of the five elements,

which is called prenatal debt. Karma law determines that human has to pay off that debt in order to be liberated from reincarnation.

2) Reincarnation of Chơn Thần.

Holy message of the year Mậu Thìn (1928):

“Chơn Thần is the second body, the vital energy that covers the physical body exactly like a mold. Its center is the brain, its gate is the fontanel, which is guarded by the Hộ Pháp during meditation. Meditation is the way of cultivation to transform the TINH (physical energy) into the KHÍ (vital energy), then the KHÍ into the THẦN (spiritual energy). Unification of the TINH, KHÍ, THẦN would lead to enlightenment.”

The duty of the second body is to guide the physical body to live according to Divine Law. If in this current life, the second body could control the physical body and guide the latter to follow the Divine Law, at the end, the second body may be unified with the Chơn Linh (spirit) forming an ethereal body that may not only transcend the earth after death but also travel in the universe during this life. This state is called enlightenment.

On the other hand, if in this life, the second body could not control the physical body so that the latter commits crimes because of materialism, the second body, after the death of the physical body, has to be punished by reincarnation into a lower and more coarse physical body. This is called retrogression. Therefore, the second body has an important role in the progression or regression of humanity.

3) Reincarnation of The Spirit.

Holy message of the year Mậu Thìn (1928):

“I have said that I have set up a spirit in your physical body that protects your life. As you have been taught, this spirit is impartial and can communicate with the Genies, Saints, Immortals, Buddhas, and Superior Spirits of the Ngọc Hư Cung (Cabinet of God) and can record all of your good and bad actions.

This spirit then transmits this (Akashic) record to the Celestial Judgment Court. All your good or bad actions will be recorded there.

Moreover, this holy spirit has a duty not only to protect you, but to educate you as well, through what most people describe as the “conscience.”

We understand that the spirit follows the second body in the school of humanity services on earth. The second body has the duty of control of the physical body and the spirit has the duty of protection of the second body.

In the current life, if the second body could not control the physical body and the spirit could not guide the second body to follow the Divine Law, after the death of the physical body, the second body has to reincarnate. The spirit has to wait until the next life, when the second body could control the physical body, to be unified with this second body to form an ethereal body to reach enlightenment.

According to this holy message, a human has to have this kind of ethereal body in order to come to the Supreme Being.

In summary, the earth is a school for all beings, where ten thousand beings take examination on the services to humanity. If passed, they may return to Nirvana, if failed, they have to reincarnate to take examination again among other beings, in order to transcend the transformation, particularly, the Karma cycle of reincarnation.

Karma and Reincarnation go together to determine the progression or regression of all beings. Therefore, if beings may stop creating new Karma they may stop reincarnation and vice versa. Without Karma, without Reincarnation, one would reach liberation.

In brief, the conception on the universe emphasizes on spiritual principle of creation of the universe and transformation of all beings that we need to know in order to cultivate self.

As mentioned in Chapter thirty-nine of Tao Te Ching, if all beings do not reach the oneness, they would not persist but be destroyed. Therefore the Tao is so important to humanity.

CHAPTER II

THE STUDY ON HUMANITY

The Tao that created the universe and nurtured all beings is nameless, but when it acts to any other matter, it will have a name.

For example:

When it acts on the universe, the Tao is nameless but is reluctantly called the principle of nature or Tai-Chi principle. When it acts on human beings, it has a name and is called Divine destiny, Divine principle, or the Tao.

The book Trung Dung has stated: “Divine destiny is the Divine principle, following the Divine principle is the Tao.” Therefore, in humanity, Divine destiny is the Divine principle that humans have to follow in order to live as a good person and to be liberated from Reincarnation cycle (or to reach Nirvana).

Holy message of the Supreme Being in the year Bình Dân, 1926:

“The Tao is a way that leads exiled Saints, Immortals, and Buddhas back to their original home. It is also a way for human beings to avoid reincarnation. Without the Tao, they would all be lost, and could not return to their initial positions. The Tao has deep meanings, one needs to know first the basic concepts in order to understand accurately and precisely further miraculous facts.

The Tao and life are the same. Without the Tao, life would be meaningless. The Tao and life complement and help each other to be more enriched and meaningful. In following the Tao, one may cultivate self and lead a worry free and contented life, and nothing could be better.”

Therefore the Tao is the Divine principle and vice versa. In humans, the Divine principle is the heart. The heart and the Divine principle although having different names, have the same action. Regrettably, when humans reincarnate into this world, when the physical body gets in touch with materials, it will generate greed

and stimulate the heart so that the Divine principle would develop different states of the mind.

Vuong Duong has stated:

“The master of the physical body is the heart.
 The manifestation of the heart is the thought.
 The base of the thought is the mind.
 Where ever the mind stays is the matter.”

Therefore we may say that the heart includes all Divine principle, thought, mind, and matter.

To understand clearly the variation of the heart, we use temporarily the theory “Eight senses” of Buddhism to explain. We divide this theory into two:

- Six external senses
- Two internal senses

I. THE SIX EXTERNAL SENSES

The six organs	The six matters	The six senses
Eyes	Colors	Vision
Ears	Sounds	Hearing
Nose	Odors	Olfactive, Perception, & Smelling
Tongue	Flavors	Tasting
Skin	Touch	Tactile, Sensations
Mind	Thoughts	Consciousness

When eyes see colors, vision is generated.

When ears hear sounds, hearing is generated.

When nose smells odors, smelling is generated (olfactive perception).

When tongue tastes flavors, tasting perception is generated.

When skin feels, tactile sensation is generated.

When mind thinks¹, consciousness is generated.

¹ Mind is the thought, the emotions related to secular life.

1). Action of the five senses.

Regarding the five senses (vision, hearing, olfactive perception, tasting, and tactile sensation) we consider the five organs as cause, and the five matters as opportunity. Cause and opportunity react with each other generating the five senses. But in the spiritual view, we base on the consciousness.

The book on “Discussion on Consciousness” lesson fifteen stated: The five senses use the consciousness as basis and manifest according to opportunities either separately or together exactly like waves that use water to manifest.

When the heart has no action, the five senses reflect the truth from the still heart. When the heart is in action the five senses interact with matters and transmit all informations to the mind. Interaction between the consciousness and the mind will create many complicated desires and romantic thoughts.

2). Action of the thought.

The thought uses the human heart as basis and appears when receiving perception from the five organs (the five senses). Being the sixth sense, it is capable to think and distinguish right from wrong, good from bad and therefore may generate desires or hatred.

- 1st example: In case of unpleasant perception, hatred is generated and chases away unpleasant objects.

- 2nd example: In case of pleasant perception, the desire is generated and stimulates human body to acquire those pleasant objects.

If the desire is satisfied, the human body is joyful and wants to keep and care what s/he acquires. In contrary, if the desire is not satisfied, sadness, hatred, anger will be generated.

We need to understand that emotions are from the thought and therefore manifest under innumerable forms. Buddhist scripture categorized them into “seven emotions” (joy, anger, sadness, happiness, love, hatred, and desire) and “six desires” (desire of the six senses like beauty, good sounds, fragrance, good taste, good

touch, good thought).

Seven emotions and six desires are in the thought, and will manifest according to the six stimulations from outside. When there is no more stimulation from outside, they will reside in the conscience.

Greed, Anger, and Confusion (ignorance) are the three poisons responsible for all human emotions.

For example, the greed stimulates people to acquire what they want. If our selfishness is satisfied, we will be joyful and then will care, protect and keep what was acquired. In contrary, if it is not satisfied, the hatred and then the anger are generated that lead to confusion or ignorance which covers the conscience, the Divine heart inside that controls all actions of humans.

The six senses are although separated and would lead to separated action are all controlled by the thought.

II. THE TWO INTERNAL SENSES

ACTION OF THE SEVENTH SENSE (Human heart, or Mạt Na Thức)

Lesson five of the book “Discussion on Consciousness” (Duy Thức Luận) said:

“The second energy is the human heart (Mạt Na Thức) which uses the consciousness for thinking, and the thought is its character.”

Explanation: Human heart (Mạt Na Thức) is generated thanks to the thought. It resides inside the conscience (Divine heart or A Lai Da Thức, or the eighth sense). The human heart (Mạt Na Thức) has the role to send information from the conscience to the six external senses for appropriate action and at the same time, bring information from the six external senses to the conscience (A Lai Da Thức).

For example, the thought collects the romantic stimulations, the complicated desires of the six external senses to store in the conscience. Then according to each stimulation, the human heart

(Mạt Na Thức) will contemplate on it.”

What is contemplation?

Contemplation is the thought, the opinion, the worries. Human has accepted the physical body, misunderstand it as his/her real self and considers all the ten thousand things of the outside world as precious, and then based on this perception to manage the situation so that the physical body would be satisfied, happy and living longer.

This capability of contemplation works continuously. As we are thinking about present matters, the thought of the past or the future may appear and interrupt. Even during the night, during the sleep of the physical body, the human heart is still working, which explains the dreams.

Regarding dreams, many people may have experienced some other life such as the life of a rich person with luxury or the life of a poor person in rags and without a shelter. Trang Tử dreamed as being a butterfly. At that time, he also loved to be a butterfly. He said: “I wonder if Trang Chu dreamed as being a butterfly or the butterfly dreamed as being Trang Chu.”

The reason is that the human heart has confused the person who could not recognize any more the current physical body and just like to live the life in dreams.

Lăng Nghiêm scripture stated “one is aspiring when being awake, and is dreaming during sleep.”

Buddhist scripture also mentioned that the desire of living¹ is the cause of re-incarnation. Why? When alive, we consider our physical body as our real self, and want it to live forever.

When we die, the body is decomposed, the desire of living urges us to create another physical body in order to continue to live, and therefore we are in the cycle of reincarnation. Thus, the desire of living is the seed of reincarnation.

The book “Duy Thức Học” (Consciousness Study) stated:

¹ The desire of living leads to egoism which in turn leads to crimes and karma.

“There are four main causes of sorrow, which are ignorance, stubbornness, arrogance, narcissism.” Those use to lead to greed, anger, and confusion.

We will explain the four causes of sorrow.

a) Ignorance: It is lack of knowledge. Being ignorant, the person misunderstood the temporary body as the true self. Regarding the Tao, although not understanding the true self, the universe, and humanity, but because of being stubborn, the person thought that he is intelligent, and knows thoroughly everything.

b) Stubbornness: The person believes that his knowledge is absolute, and is the best, and does not want to learn.

The Buddhist scripture related the story of the blind men examining the elephant. The one who touches the tail, believes that the elephant is like a broom. The one who touches the leg believes that the elephant is like a post. They believe that they are the only one who knows the truth and are very proud of themselves.

In watching those blind men, anyone would laugh. People who examine things in basing only on their human heart are just like those blind men.

c) Arrogance: Arrogant people would consider themselves as the best and look down on others.

d) Narcissism: The person loves self so much and considers self as the best, and wants to be respected and to live forever.

In brief, the human heart is very stubborn, confused, ignorant, considers the physical body as the real body, without realizing that this body is just temporary. It's sad that they consider the temporary body as the real body, and think they are the best.

ACTION OF THE CONSCIENCE (Divine heart or A Lai Da Thức, or the Eighth Sense)

The conscience has two states, active and rested.

When rested, it accumulates facts of the truth. When active, it generates delusions, which are like a veil of ignorance that covers the truth.

At the beginning, the conscience is rested, it accumulates facts of the truth, and in transmitting the truth to the seven senses, it transforms the divine truth into human truth. When the conscience is seduced by the physical body, it would incline to materialism, then collects delusions from the seven senses. It is therefore called accumulating conscience.

Lăng Nghiêm scripture stated:

“The calm ocean becomes rough because of the wind. Human senses are originally calm, but the wind constantly raises waves one after the other and constantly disturbs the true heart (conscience). The active status of the conscience (human desires and greed) takes advantage over the calm rested status (the true heart, or conscience).”

The conscience (A Lai Da Thức), beside the role of controlling all other senses, has based on the human heart (Mạt Na Thức) to act, because it has in itself accumulation of all informations (seeds) to generate all kinds of actions.

The seed here is not the physical seed such as bean or melon seeds, but invisible seed with various energies and strength which may according to the environmental opportunities become either exteriorizing into the physical material world, or interiorizing into spiritual world.

The actions of the seed may be summarized as followed: When the six organs are in contact with the six matters, they will result in the six senses with six kinds of desire, which will be accumulated and stored under the form of accumulated seeds of the conscience. Depending on exterior stimulation opportunities, it will be reactivated.

Each time when it is stimulated, the conscience acquires more and more innumerable seeds with new energy throughout many lives namely sorrow, worries, greed, anger, ignorance, etc...All those seeds form the human karma that covers the

Divine principle, the conscience.

In order to be liberated from reincarnation, one has to cultivate self to clean up this karma. Ways of self-cultivation will be explained later in chapters Lower Cycle and Higher Cycle.

In summary, the Chapter one on Cosmology discusses about the constant transformation of the universe, from the creation of the heaven and the earth to the nurturing of all living beings who themselves transform constantly as well.

The Chapter two on Humanity discusses about the transformation of humans. Human body is considered as a little universe, and therefore has the same transformation as the great universe. Chinese Lục Cửu Uyên (1139-1192) stated: “The matters of the great universe are like the function of a human body, and vice versa.”

Regarding the cultivation, Đổng Trọng Thư of the West Hán Dynasty stated: “The Tao of humans is from God.” Why?

It is the Divine destiny, Divine principle and the Tao. Regrettably, when the physical body gets in touch with materialism, the desire and greed stimulate the divine heart (or conscience) and generate all various delusions and emotions that cover the divine heart (conscience) and keep humans inundated in the ocean of suffering.

If one likes to preserve the Divine destiny in order to return to the origin, the Supreme Being, one has to destroy the veil which is covering the Divine heart. This is the principle of the cultivation following the Lower Cycle and the Higher Cycle.

PART III

HIGHER CYCLE

and

LOWER CYCLE

INTRODUCTION

By **Lương Văn Bồi**

Former Deputy President of Theosophy

The Third amnesty of the GREAT WAY founded by the Supreme Being by spiritism since 1926, is a universal faith. The teaching of the GREAT WAY consists of two parts: *The Lower Cycle or Exoterism and The Higher Cycle or Esoterism*.

From the outside aspect, CAODAI, the GREAT WAY is different from other religions and philosophies in the world regarding rites, way of worship etc., but from the esoteric aspect, the teaching of the GREAT WAY is very deep and miraculous including all the truths of other religions and philosophies. In exploring selected holy messages given by Superior Spirits from many séances, we find that CAODAI teachings are very rich, guiding us in all mystic fields such as cosmology, humanity, reincarnation, karma, transformation of the universe and humans, the sacrifice, the service to humanity, the universal fraternity and ways of self cultivation in order to reach enlightenment etc. . .

The book “GIÁO LÝ ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỔ ĐỘ” of brother TRƯƠNG TIẾP PHÁP, although addressing only the essential issues, but includes many holy messages carefully selected and arranged into five parts:

The first part discusses about the Lower Cycle that every disciple has to know. The next three parts present the Higher Cycle. The last part presents guidelines of the three main religions including Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism.

In summary, the book is very well prepared with clear and scientific presentation into parts, chapters, with rich information, concise and easily understandable style. It will help providing complete teaching of the GREAT WAY not only to CAODAI disciples but also to scholars of different countries who are searching the truth.

This is one of the first books that pioneers in presenting the teachings in all aspects.

How to develop and spread the Tao,

The unifying CAODAI, to all five continents.

Saigon, the 1st day of the 6th month of the year Giáp Thìn (July 9, 1964)

LƯƠNG VĂN BỒI

PART III

HIGHER CYCLE AND LOWER CYCLE

The Supreme Being taught via séance:

“I, out of great love and mercy, have founded the Third Amnesty of the GREAT WAY based on love of life, with the purpose of raising the predestined spirits to higher dimensions, avoiding reincarnation, and bringing the virtuous to a more precious domain of freedom and repose than this poor, vile earthly world.”

Based on this Holy message, the New Codes of the GREAT WAY determine two levels of CAODAI practice: Higher Cycle and Lower Cycle.

Higher Cycle: consists of people or scholars who are not any more attached to secular life. They practice the highest level of the Tao until enlightenment, and then use their knowledge to serve humanity realizing the principle “First save self, then save others.”

The New Codes of the GREAT WAY determine that dignitaries from level of Priest and up have to be chosen from disciples of Higher Cycle.

Lower Cycle: consists of people who are just initiated, and will lead a regular secular life, having a family, serving the community with the main goal of fulfilling duties of humans and if possible, preparing to enter the Higher Cycle.

CHAPTER I

LOWER CYCLE

This chapter consists of two main points. Practical morality and a manual to deal with other people.

Practical morality is for both males and females. For males, there are three obligations and five virtues, for females, there are three subordinations and four virtues. The manual to deal with people discusses ways of self-cultivation for both males and females.

I. PRACTICAL MORAL FOR MEN

A. THE THREE OBLIGATIONS

- King and people obligation
- Father and children obligation
- Husband and wife obligation

1. KING AND PEOPLE OBLIGATION

The Head of the country is considered wiser than most people. We will not discuss about the Head of the country but will discuss about the duties of the officers and of people of the country.

a) Duties of officers: Officers represent the king and the government to execute the laws, administer the people and protect the country. They have the duty to teach the people to do good and keep the community peaceful. In order to fulfill this duty, the officers have to be righteous to the king and just to people.

The officers must have honesty, righteousness, and diligence as the basis for all their actions.

- Honesty: the honest people should not be greedy, receive bribes and harm people. The government trusts the officers, leaves the destiny of the people in their hands; if they receive bribes, become unjust, do wrong things, all their wrong and dishonest

actions may not be discovered by people and the king but would not be able to escape the Divine Law. Therefore, officers have to be honest to show good example to people.

- Righteousness: the great virtue of the officers is love and justice, without them, officers would not be useful for humanity.

- Diligence: to perform timely any duty, one has to be diligent. Do not leave for tomorrow whatever we can do today because any matter has its own time. If it is done timely, it would be useful; if it is done late, it becomes useless¹.

b) Duties of people:

As citizen of a country, we have to fulfill our duties. We should love our country, our people, pay fully taxes, not be involved with gangs to rob and disturb the community. We should observe the laws of the country, religious laws of the Sacerdotal Council, and especially, the divine karma law. We should take care of our own family, love people of the community, help to maintain peace and beautiful traditions of the country.

2. FATHER AND CHILDREN OBLIGATION.

Father should be good, children should have filial piety.

Goodness refers to the duty of parents to raise their children into useful persons. Good parents teach, discipline children so that they would avoid evil and perform good services. They should

¹ Visit to the officer.

Tôn Thúc Ngao was the officer of the Sở country. When he first came to the office, local people dressed up formally to greet him except one old man who dressed simply and wore a white hat. Tôn Thúc Ngao greeted solemnly the old man and asked him advice for the job.

The old man replied: "People would not like the noble officer to be arrogant, the king would not like the officer to overuse his power. If the officer receives plenty benefits and is still greedy, disaster will come." Tôn Thúc Ngao respectfully appreciated the old man and asked for more advice. The old man added: "The higher is the title, the more modest should be the officer. Being a powerful officer, you have to be sensitive. Having great benefit, you have to be careful in your action. If you follow those three forms of advice you would be able to administer people."

not spoil children, because children are so young and do not have enough maturity to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad, and to avoid material seduction.

They therefore need parental guidance.

Family education is the basis of human relationship.

The parents will also have the rights to receive help from children when they get old. In order to have this right, they have to fulfill their duty as parents, which are raising children into useful persons. If not, it would not be fair to oblige children to serve their parents.

Regarding children, they have to have filial piety as their main obligation. Old sayings stated: “Among one hundred virtues, filial piety in the first priority.”

Why must a person have filial piety? One cannot count all the work of parents in raising children, the mother has to carry the baby for nine months, and after birth, to nurse, to care the baby for three years.

“The work of a mother is like water flowing continuously from a spring.” And the father has to work hard in all circumstances to support the family. “The work of a father is as great as the mountain Thái.”

The work of parents is that great, who in the world would not love their parents? Mere love is not enough, The duty of children is to fulfill the filial piety.

First, they have to nourish (nurture) their parents according to their financial capability not only to provide food, clothes, shelter but also to please them. Mr. Tữ Du asked Confucius about filial piety, Confucius said: “If one says that filial piety is to nourish their parents, but if one does not have love and respect how can we distinguish this nourishment from nourishing animals?”

The most precious act in nourishing parents is the sincerity and respect. We should not follow the saying “one would have filial piety only when rich.”

In contrary, we should follow the saying “one would recognize the filial piety of a child in the situation of poverty, and the loyal

citizen in the situation of war.”

Since ancient time, good examples of filial piety and of loyalty were mostly found in difficult situations.

When living together with parents, do not make parents frustrated. When we have our own worries, do not manifest so that parents may recognize. When reprimanded by parents we have to look back at our mistakes, self correct and not to tax our parents. We should pay attention to the silence of parents. Because they are afraid of making us worry, they would not express the truth. Following is an example of filial piety:

One day, Bá Du was whipped by his mother, and he kept crying. His mother asked him why he kept crying while in previous times, he recognized his mistake and accepted the punishment.

He replied “Last time, when you whipped me I felt the pain. I knew that you were still strong. This time, I do not feel the pain; I realize that you become weak. That’s why I cry.¹”

It’s great for his concern about the health of his mother. When parents are still alive, we should not go away too far. If needed, we have to let our parents know where we will be so that they may contact us if needed. When our parents are sick, we have to try our best to seek for the treatment. We have to take care of our parents by ourselves and not rely on others who may aggravate the parents’ health condition because of their carelessness.

Every day, keep an eye on our parent’s appearance to see if they are in good or bad health.

The filial piety is innate in every one’s heart. Sometimes many persons neglect it because of materialism. As children, we have to be careful in fulfilling our duty toward our parents.

The filial piety does not oblige us to follow blindly all parents’ orders. We need to be wise to distinguish if the orders are right or wrong. If they are right we need to follow them wholeheartedly. If not, we counsel them with respect.

1 Essence of Ancient Literature (Cổ Học Tinh Hoa)

Confucius taught: “If our parents are wrong, we counsel with respect and love¹, if parents order us to work hard, we should not tax them.”

When our parents passed away, we have to mourn with all our heart and love. The New Codes of the GREAT WAY determine that the funeral should not be luxurious. We should not keep the coffin for a long time, not use colorful ostentatious materials, do not celebrate noisily and lose the solemnity and sorrow.

Confucius taught about filial piety:

“Respect whom our parents respect, love whom our parents love. Respect parents always the same either they are alive or dead. It’s the true filial piety.”

Duties to siblings:

“Older sibling should love, younger sibling should respect.”

A proverb stated: “A clot of blood is divided in five.” Brothers and sisters are from one same blood, living together under one same roof, partaking the same meal, sleeping on the same bed,

1 Essence of Ancient Literature II (Cổ Học Tinh Hoa II)

“Điền Anh, father of Điền Văn, was an officer who concerned only about his own interest while serving people. One day, Điền Văn asked his father:

Dad, how do you call a child of a child?

We call grand child.

How do you call a child of a grand child?

Great grand child.

How do you call a child of a great grand child?

Who knows?

Dad, you are a the general of the country Tể for three generations. You have become extremely rich but you don’t have any good followers. I learned that a good general would produce a good officer, a good civilian official would produce a good scholar. You dress nobly but the talented persons of the country are still ragged, your servants are having plenty of treats, while the talented persons are still hungry, you don’t pay attention to the matters of the country but only to the accumulation of money and treasures for the children of future generations that you don’t know how to name. Isn’t it strange!

The words of Điền Văn were right and respectful and his father followed his counsel.”

sharing all the feelings whether joyful or sad. There is no other love more intimate than the love between siblings.

To preserve this kind of love, elder siblings should love their younger siblings, and younger siblings should respect and obey their older siblings.

When parents are absent, older siblings should take over the role of the parents to raise and educate their younger siblings. The old saying stated: “Fulfill the duty before considering interest.”

As a common sense, when grown up, each sibling has his/her own family and lives far apart from each other. They should preserve the love between siblings of the same blood. They should aspire to love and help each other in all matters whether tiny or big, regardless of other people’s backbiting.

Our duty is to realize the truthful relationship between siblings and brothers and sisters in-laws, avoiding friction that may lead to separation. Siblings are compared to arms and legs of the same body.

Whoever performs seriously the filial and sibling piety in a family, would have a spirit of love and harmony. Piety and harmony are the basis of the relationship, whoever performs those two virtues would be a loyal person to the king and a loving person toward people.

Duty toward grandparents:

Grandparents gave birth to our parents. They raised our parents. Our parents love and respect them. Filial piety requires us to love and respect them as well. We have to respect all people, there is no reason that we don’t respect the parents of our parents.

Therefore, on behalf of our parents, when our grandparents are alive, we have to take care of them in our capability, and when they pass away, we have to worship their spirit.

According to Vietnamese moral tradition, at the anniversary of the death of ancestors, all members of the family would get together for worshipping. The ceremony consists of two days, the pre-anniversary and the anniversary itself. All members of the family will gather together to remember the ancestor’s stories

and to discuss other family businesses.

At the time of ceremony, people show respect to ancestors when passing in front of the altar believing that the ancestors' spirits are reigning on the altar, although they are not seen or touched, but are present everywhere and are aware of everything.

The ceremony is solemnly organized. The head of the family prays and prostrates first in front of the altar, then all children and grandchildren take turn to pray and prostrate.

ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỔ ĐỘ maintains the worship of ancestors. Besides, disciples are already open to belief and have a religious mind, the worship of ancestors would maintain a beautiful tradition.

Duties toward aunts and uncles:

Aunts and uncles are parents' brothers and sisters. We have to love and respect them exactly like our parents. When we are unfortunately orphans they will replace our parents to raise us. When we get married, we have to love and respect our aunts and uncles in-laws as well.

3. HUSBAND AND WIFE OBLIGATION

Harmony and agreement between spouses.

People have to get married to build a family. This way has never been changed.

In religions, the best is that the couple would live in harmony with each other until the end of life. Spouse should realize and fulfill his/her duty. The husband is the backbone of the family, is responsible for dealing with people, working for the life of the whole family to raise and educate the children.

The old saying stated "educate the wife when she first comes to the family, educate children when they are young." In order to teach people, we have first to be serious and honest. If the husband is lazy, does not care to work, keeps playing games, not taking care of the family, he would not be a good example for his wife and children.

The husband, the father should work to take care of the family and give good example for the family. "To govern the

family, one has to cultivate self first.”

One should realize that the wife is his companion for life; she needs protection and support in order to build the family. She is the one who shares everything in life both physically and emotionally in all situations whether poor or rich. The husband should love and protect her.

The husband has the right to counsel his wife and terminate the marriage, but he has first to fulfill his duty, and should follow the principle of love, harmony and respect without being violent.

The wife should be agreeable in harmony to maintain the happiness of the family. Of course there are times of disagreement.

The husband and wife should listen and understand all the facts, yield but not insult each other.

The best value of a wife is loyalty.

The old saying “Do not adjust your sandal while passing by a watermelon field, or adjust your hat while going through the apple orchard” means that such an action would cause misunderstanding about you, as being the one who may have picked watermelon and apple. The duty of a wife is to take care of the house from the kitchen to the budget in order to build happiness in the family¹

1 Story of the gentle and wise wife (Essence of Ancient Literature - Book II).

Dương Tử found a jar of gold on the street. His wife counseled him: “The honest person does not eat or use stolen products. Would it be right to bring home something you found on the street which is not yours?” Feeling guilty, Dương Tử threw away the jar of gold and went out to find a teacher to study. A year later, Dương Tử returned home.

The wife asked: “Why do you return home?”

Dương Tử replied: “because I miss you.”

The wife took a knife, went to the frame of the weaver and said: “The piece of fabric that I am weaving is made of silk. I have to raise worms to get silk and set the silk up on the weaver. If one thread of silk is broken, it would break the whole piece. If now I cut this piece, it would ruin the whole work. You went out to study for years in order to become a smart person, if you drop your study in the middle, it would be like I cut the piece of silk that I am weaving.

(See the next page)

In brief, there should be harmony between husband and wife. When there are harmony and agreement between husband and wife, they can fulfill anything.

CAODAI religious laws indicate: “Marriage is most important in life. One should choose spouse among co-religious people unless the other party agrees to follow the same faith.” This is to prevent disagreement in future.

The law forbids the husband to have concubines. If the wife passes away, the husband may get re-married. If the wife cannot have children, she may allow another wife for her husband, but there should be no divorce, except in the case of infidelity or non piety toward parents and parents in-law.

B. THE FIVE DUTIES

(Humaneness, Righteousness, Civility, Knowledge, Integrity)

1) Humaneness.

Everyone inherits a sparkle of the Sacred Light from the Supreme Being known as conscience or Divine heart, or Divine principle. The divine heart is calm, still, and pure. When it is activated, it manifests under the form of humaneness, which includes all the good personalities such as loyalty, piety, chastity, modesty, generosity, wisdom, diligence, courage, firmness.

Whoever realizes humaneness in his/her life, may be considered as having fulfilled human duty. Confucius said: “Wise men who have humaneness as basic personality, may become mature.”

Who has humaneness will be peaceful, easy, self-contented, calm, and quiet and always have an instinct of wisdom and diligence. They understand thoroughly all matters. Their actions are always right. They are innocent, simple and have good emotions. They are pious and nice in family and harmonious in

(continued) Dương Tử was very touched, decided to continue his study for seven years and then returned home only after graduation while his wife stayed home to work, to take care of the family, and to nurture her mother-in-law.”

community. They love and help all people to succeed. They do not endanger virtues for running after fame. They do not hesitate to drop fame for virtues.

Chinese Truong Hoành Cừ (1020-1076) believed that there are many degrees of humaneness.

He said “Honoring elders is from the mind of respect. Loving children is from the mind of defense of the meek. The respect of virtuous people is in accord with the Divine principle and is considered as the character of a saint. And virtuous persons are considered as sage. All people including disabled persons, widows, orphans are like our brothers and sisters of the same family.¹”

This sentence means that humaneness should be universal toward all beings, because it reflects the love of life of the Supreme Being.

Practicing humaneness needs the knowledge to distinguish good from evil, right from wrong.

Tử Hạ said: “Knowledge must be extensive, goal must be high, inquiry and thoughts must be relevant. They are all related to humaneness.”

Knowledge is very indispensable to humaneness in order to distinguish right from wrong, so that we may love and help people properly at the right times. Ancient people based on this principle to establish the formula “Love - Knowledge - Power.”

Confucius said: “The person with universal love lives in mountain and has a calm mind.” With a calm mind, the person can maintain the Divine principle in his heart which will guide him in his life.

The universal love does not include only good virtues of a person but also reflects the “Love of life” of the Supreme Being.

Love starts first with sympathy, thus love and mercy go together. This is reflected in the saying “The disciple in family is pious toward parents; out in the community, respects the elders.

He works with care, and loves people. He frequently makes

1 Confucianism, Trần Trọng Kim

acquaintance with nice people.”

The Chinese character humaneness consists of two parts. One part means person, the other means two, which means that love is the feeling between two persons, such as between mother and child or husband and wife. The spouse may sacrifice self for each other.

Notice that the true love should be unconditional, without any personal interest. Otherwise, it is not true love.

“Wise birds choose the safe branch to perch;
 Good person must have the love of life.
 Respect people as Buddha and God and
 Love all beings.”

(Holy message)

Practice: Confucius was asked as how to realize humaneness. He said: “Help others to establish themselves exactly like you want to establish yourself, help others to have the same knowledge like yours.” Whoever can do that has fulfilled the humaneness.

Từ Trùng asked Confucius as how to realize humaneness.

He said: “Do five of the following: Modesty, Generosity, Trust, Diligence, Favor.

Modesty would be without despise, Generosity would please people, Trust would lead to being trusted, Diligence would provide work for people, and Favor would win people’s heart.”

Nhan Hôi also asked about humaneness. Confucius said: “Control self in order to have civility to others.” When a person can control self, there would be no more selfishness and the person would follow the Divine principle.

Phản Tri asked Confucius the same question, he said: “Simply love people.”

The Analects of Confucius mentioned that for the same question, Confucius gave different answers to different people depending on their weak point.

Why can people not realize humaneness when everyone has the instinct of love inside?

Because the hatred has prevailed and controlled the body. When there is hatred between parents and child there would be no more piety. When there is hatred between spouses, there would be no more harmony. When there is hatred between brothers, there would be no more mutual respect. When there is hatred between people, the stronger prevails over the weaker.

Love and hatred never go together. We should open our heart to love people, the hatred will not be able to come, exactly like when there is peace, war could not exist.

Confucius used the humaneness as the basis of life. With humaneness, people would easily follow the Divine principle to live in peace and harmony in all situations.

2) Righteousness.

Spiritually, righteousness helps disciples to cultivate self to become virtuous. Morally, righteousness helps disciples to accomplish human duties, or in other words, to realize the virtue love. Love and righteousness go always together. Love without righteousness is just a theory (without practical benefit) and righteousness without love is like a body without soul.

Example: We love a victim but do not provide effort or money to help, our love is not realized and therefore useless. If we provide help without love, the help may be for other interest (e.g. for fame, or earning respect from other people).

3) Civility.

Initially, civility was the rites for worshipping. Later, it is applied for the relationship between people of the community.

The word *Lǐ* (civility) has the same meaning as the word *Lǐ* (principle) therefore, the civility may be adjusted according to the situation in order to improve and progress.

In the point of view of worshipping, the first goal of civility is to make the ceremony solemn, and the second goal is to create respect and sincerity in the heart of people. Respect is a way to maintain people's virtue and sincerity is to create spiritual inspiration.

Civility is therefore a way to help people to cultivate self to improve their personality and heart. According to the book

Lê Ký (civility procedure), people always have the tendency to feast, to enjoy sexuality but are afraid of death, of being poor and suffering. If people do not think thoroughly and control self, the Divine principle would be corrupted. Civility helps people to maintain the Divine principle.

According to civility, all our activity should be careful. Living should be with modesty, working should be with respect. Social relationship should be with devotion. We must keep this way even when we live with barbarous people.

With civility, we should deal with people in the community like treating a special guest, or when we command our subordinate, we should have respect, and this is the courtesy. All our action, speech, and thought should be right and persistent, and this is the good character.

In social relationship, civility should be manifested accordingly. When we meet an elderly, the respect is manifested by bowing. Bowing is the procedure (manifestation) of civility.

The procedure may be adjusted according to civility. For example, we have respect toward a person, if we do not bow, the respect is not manifested. In contrary, if we bow without sincere respect, the bowing is senseless.

Civility is to determine the order of people, either high or low. For example, in a meeting, if the elders keep speaking and acting rudely, and the younger have no respect to the elders, how can there be harmony or agreement. No civility would lead to chaos.

To learn civility is not difficult as many people thought. Civility is just to please people, but not to force them. An ancient saying stated regarding education “First is to learn civility, then learn literature later.” Or in other words, people have to learn to become virtuous before to acquire general knowledge.

Laws are to control bad people, civility is to prevent bad attitudes. However, in common sense, people are afraid of laws but not of civility, because laws are supported by punishment.

Action, speech, and thoughts should be in moderation.

Moderation is the measure of a person's value like the rhythm in a piece of music. Civility determines the moderation.

In brief, civility is the measure of the thoughts, the speech, and action of a person. Lao Tse said, "When the Tao is lost, learn Virtues. When Virtues are lost, learn Love. When Love is lost, learn Righteousness. When Righteousness is lost, learn Civility."

We may understand that when we have civility, we may return to righteousness. When we have righteousness, we may return to virtues. When we have virtues we may return to the Tao.

4) Knowledge.

Wisdom is the capability of knowledge. Thanks to wisdom, we can distinguish right from wrong, good from evil. Wise person is virtuous and may improve the situation from bad to good, from evil to kindness, and improve self every day to become more and more virtuous.

To become wise, one has to learn. In Confucianism, the student has to accomplish five things: learn, question, think, explain, and practice.

- Learn: is to find information to improve self.
- Question: is to find explanation to clarify the matter.
- Think: uses the mind to clarify the matter.
- Explain: understand the matter and make it clear to others.
- Practice: apply or use the knowledge, by action.

Study and practice should be together in order to be practical. For example, we know that worshipping God is good. But this knowledge itself is not good enough. We have to realize it by worshipping God everyday with sincerity and respect. Sincerity is from the true self, it can help us to eliminate the selfishness and to be sensitive to the Divine principle. Worshipping God is a way to become wiser and more virtuous.

Master Tuân Tử said:

"Not hearing is not as good as having heard. Having heard is not as good as having seen. Having seen is not as good as knowing. Knowing is not as good as realizing. Studying is to know. Knowing is to realize. By this way, we will become wiser

and wiser.”

There are many ways to study. Study by experiences and study by thinking.

Example: We have not known that fire is hot. If somehow, we got burnt by fire. With this experience, we now know that fire is hot.

Life is like a school. If we are unfortunately frustrated, we should not blame on God, or on people, but should contemplate on the cause of our frustration. Was it because of our lack of knowledge, or lack of time, or of our hot temper? When we find the cause of the frustration, we may find the solution, and we would have better result in the future.

Our mind is the master of our action. Thanks to the mind, science has invented many wonderful instruments. We should use our mind to understand our life. For example, we look at the universe with all the stars and planets constantly evolving, we look at the ten thousand things solemnly and quietly existing, and then look at ourselves: we are born, grow up and then simply die. Is this the true life? What happens after death?

There are many other things in the universe that we don't understand. We should contemplate on it to find out the relationship between God and man, between man and man, and between man and all other things.

When we discover the secret of the creation, we certainly can find solutions for our life. Of course, life is not limited in materials but should transcend the material dimension to reach the Tao or God and to live a meaningful life with all beings.

The goal of a wise person is to reach the Tao. Therefore, the student should be patient, open-minded, asking carefully, thinking thoroughly, distinguishing with clarity, and trying the best to realize wisdom. We should evaluate ourselves every day and cultivate self patiently, and then one day we will be perfectly good.

When we have wisdom, we will understand the truth of the good and evil, we will know the limit of the physical body.

At that time, we will follow easily the Divine principle and will live with a harmonious and calm attitude according to the nature.

5) Integrity.

Keeping a promise is a precious virtue of man particularly for a virtuous person. Words spoken are precious and acknowledgeable. If they are not true, people would not trust. Whoever has no integrity, could not become an established person.

Toward ourselves, we should be even more trustful. The book “Great Learning” stated: “Being sincere is not to deceive ourselves.” If a person deceives himself, he would never succeed.

Example: If we promise to ourselves to study well but do not keep our promise, we have cheated ourselves, our conscience. Cheating our conscience is cheating God. Would we cheat God?

Whoever breaks the promise, is not loyal, denies his/her own words, or tells lies, is offending superior spirits and shall soon be punished. When a person has lost the trust of others, he/she will lose the confidence, become a detestable person, and will fall in miserable situations. Virtuous person should control self, be sincere and keep his/her promise.

In brief, the five virtues are for people to apply in all of their actions in order to become virtuous. The five virtues are compared to a ruler or a compass. In order to make square or circle, one has to use a ruler and a compass. Similarly, in order to become virtuous, one has to have the five virtues.

Among the five virtues, humaneness is the most important. Civility is used to measure the humaneness. Realization of humaneness is the realization of the Divine principle and also the fulfillment of human duties.

II. WOMEN’S DUTIES

The Three Subordinations and The Four Virtues

A. THE THREE SUBORDINATIONS

Being either male or female, we all have all to fulfill human duties.

Particularly for women, Confucian school determined the three subordinations in order to be a good daughter, a good wife and a good mother.

We may ask whether in this current century, this old teaching would be outdated? Now from the East to the West, from the countryside to the city, everyone lives a modern life, the promotion of the three subordinations would be against the progress?

The answer would be “no,” because Vietnamese moral tradition was originated from Confucianism, and Confucius has stated **“moral law may be adjusted according to the progression of humanity.”**

According to the book Trung Dung (The Mid Way), Confucius related the stories of Kings Nghiêu and Thuấn who followed the examples of King Văn and King Vũ who adjusted their governing way according to the progression of the universe and of the earth in order to have peace and harmony for humanity.

We may therefore analyze the old teachings, the three subordinations and adjust them to fit with the modern time. With that in mind, I will express the three subordinations of women as followed:

1) Subordination to father.

The duty of a child, either boy or girl, is to be pious to parents. For girl, the subordination to the father is related to the marriage. In life, although the child may have high education, she may not have enough experiences in life like her father. It is best for her to listen to her father. Nobody loves the children more than their parents. All parents always want their children to be happy.

There is no reason for the children not to listen to the parents. If there is disagreement between children and parents, the children should politely present, analyze the situation rather

than impolitely argue.

In this modern time, children are free to make decision for their marriage. This would be reasonable and agreeable because spouses are permanent companion in life, they should know well each other and be in harmony with each other in order to be able to live together for life.

But practically, before the girl accepts the boy, she should wait for the agreement of her parents. The parents with their experience may have good advice for her to avoid undesirable situation in the future.

Marriage is the most important issue of our life, if we make a mistake, we may suffer for the whole life. As a girl, the happiness depends much on the husband. What if we have chosen a bad person?

As parents, we should not use our authority to force the marriage because if our daughter is incompatible to her husband, we could ruin her whole life. Comparable wealth and fame between the two families are good but not as important as the compatible personality of the spouses. Choosing son or daughter in laws should be based on their virtues and personalities.

There should be agreement between parents and children in order to build happiness for the children. If the parents have unfortunately passed away, the daughter may listen to aunts or uncles, etc...

2) Subordination to husband.

When the girl gets married, she would spend her whole life to take care of her family fulfilling her duties toward her in laws, neighbors, and most importantly, she should be loyal to her husband.

3) Subordination to children.

When she becomes a widow, she should fulfill the duty of a mother by raising her children until they become established.

Confucian book related the story of Mạnh Tử's mother. She chose a proper location to live to facilitate the education of her son Mạnh Tử. One day, Mạnh Tử was lazy, she cut the piece of

silk that she was weaving to teach him. Mạnh Tử later became a saint, thanks for the work of his gentle mother, who was a good example for people.

B. THE FOUR VIRTUES OF WOMEN

(work, speech, appearance, virtues)

Work: beside the literature, and martial art (like heroines), a woman has to be skillful in woman's works, such as sewing, cooking, house works, budgeting, raising family, etc... Housework is usually used to value a woman.

Speech: people base on speech to know the personality because words are the reflection of the thought. Woman's words should not be seductive, foolish, evil, backbiting, lying. Woman should think carefully before talking.

Physical appearance: the countenance of woman should be clean, decent, graceful with natural attitude.

Virtues: virtues are from the heart. Women should cultivate the heart in order to have good virtues. Woman should be sincere, gentle, elegant. Sincerity would create trust; gentleness would prevent cruelty; elegance would prevent arrogance.

Woman who has all the three subordinations and four virtues would be a pious daughter, a nice and gentle wife and a kind mother.

In brief, being either male or female, as the basis, we have to cultivate ourselves following the way of humanity so that we may reach the truth, the goodness, the beauty and then we can take care of our family, our country and all humanity.

Ancient people valued very much the self-cultivation. They stated: from the King to the lay person, everyone has first to cultivate self before to do anything else like taking care of the family, governing the country and bringing peace to humanity, because if the base is wrong, we cannot take care of anything else.

We have discussed earlier that the man should fulfill the three main obligations and the five duties and the woman, the three subordinations and the four virtues, we would like to discuss another three principles:

- Minh Minh Đức (Brightening the conscience)
- Thân Dân (Loving all beings)
- Chí Ư Chí Thiện (Realizing the goodness)

1) Minh Minh Đức (Brightening the conscience).

Everyone has the Divine principle inside, which is the conscience. We have to brighten this Divine principle.

The book Đại Học (Great Learning) stated: “When we have determined our goals, we have to make it clear in our heart (e.g. follow the Divine principle). Then our heart would be calm and then be in peace. Peace would help us to contemplate, and reach the wisdom.”

It means we have to calm our mind in order to contemplate and find the truth. Talking about finding the truth, we have to analyze the matter, then to plan the way of action. By this way we would realize the Tao exactly like in the teaching of Vương Dương Minh. In other words, we contemplate all the complicated ideas, try to improve more and more until there is only the best virtue left inside.

2) Thân Dân (Loving all beings)

The great virtue of the sky and the earth is the love of life. Our conscience is a sparkle of God’s spirit, so we have to realize this great virtue. We have to love, to help all beings, to realize the Humaneness.

Brightening our conscience is to brighten our mind.

Loving all beings is to realize the Humaneness.

They complement and help each other to succeed.

Brightening the conscience is the study.

Loving all beings is the realization.

There should be combination between the study and the

realization in order to fulfill human duties.

3) **Chí Ứ Chí Thiện** (Realizing the goodness)

Brightening the conscience and loving all beings have the realization of the goodness as the means and the ultimate goal. That means we have to cultivate and to strengthen our mind to build up energy in order to study. And the study would have the purpose of realization of the goodness.

What is the realization of the goodness? It is the perfect wisdom. When we reach this principle, our heart will not be any more in turmoil, but calm and we will be able to understand thoroughly and to realize the humaneness.

In brief, shining the best virtue is to cultivate the mind. Loving all beings is the realization of Humaneness. Realization of the goodness needs determination so that the person would have enough strength to realize the humaneness.

“Mind, Humaneness, and Determination” are the three states of mind that any student should always try to reach.

To learn until we can control our selfishness, and reach the Divine principle and then we will live with ease without worries.

Confucius stated: “The virtuous man works for humanity without any personal interest, without any obligation or discrimination, but just following the Divine principle.”

The Supreme Being is our Master, our great gentle Father. He created us, granted us a sparkle of his sacred light as our conscience.

He taught: “After the creation of the universe, I divided my spirit to create all beings, materials, plants, insects, animals called living beings.”

As a part of all beings, we also inherit a sparkle of God’s spirit called conscience. Confucianism calls it divine destiny. In following this divine destiny in our life, we would reach the Tao.

All the duties of humans, although expressed differently under diverse moral lessons, are just to follow the Divine principle to fulfill the way of humanity in aspiring to become a perfect virtuous person ready to enter the gate of the Tao.

CHAPTER II

HIGHER CYCLE

Higher Cycle is the way for people with great determination to self cultivate in order to reach self-realization and then to save others. The New Codes of the GREAT WAY indicate that “Dignitaries from Priest up must be chosen among people who follow the Higher Cycle.”

The Supreme Being taught:

“I, out of great love and mercy, have founded the Third Salvation of the GREAT WAY based on love of life, with the purpose of raising the predestined spirits to higher dimensions avoiding reincarnation.”

Disciples who follow the Higher Cycle transcend the secular life, leading an extraordinary life, purely spiritual which may liberate them from re-incarnation, and be used as good example for humanity.

Regarding the religious teachings, the Supreme Being gives to humans of all spiritual levels universal philosophies embracing the principles of all three religions and five branches of the GREAT WAY.

Everyone can benefit from the teachings. For example, the scientists can correct their knowledge on God, and the virtuous people can get rid of superstition. The Supreme Being wants to remind people that they are all the children of God regardless of their race, skin color, and language. All religions, although having different rites, and structures, have the same Supreme Being and all teach people to do good and avoid evils.

This following Holy message explains the unity of religions:

“Formerly, people lacked transportation and therefore did not know each other, I then founded at different epochs and in different areas, five branches of the GREAT WAY: In present days, transportation has been improved, and people have come to know each other better. But people do not always live in harmony

because of the multiplicity of those religions. That is why I have decided to unite all of those religions into one to bring them to the primordial unity.”

Indeed, once people recognize each other as children of the same Father God, there will not be any more discrimination between races and religions.

The ultimate goal of Higher Cycle disciples is to find the true self inside in order to control their actions, because the true self is the sparkle of God’s spirit, or the Divine principle that humans have to realize.

How to find the true self? To answer to this question, we are going to discuss two chapters, enlightenment and saving others.

I. ENLIGHTENMENT

The sacred light of humans is given by God, stays inside of human body and is the true heart or true self (conscience). Humans should remember that the true self is in reality invisible and sacred. When the person is living a secular life, the physical body has many secular needs and therefore has many desires that stimulate the heart and generate many emotions.

The book “Records of Music” stated:

“When the person is calm, the true heart appears, when the person is active, he has many desires. When things happen, the physical body is aware and has emotions (either love or hatred) when the emotions manifest they cover the true heart. The physical body then acts according to the secular desires, which would lead to troubles.”

From the above, the true heart or the Divine principle is in the inactive state, but when the secular desires rise, they cover the true heart. Secular desires are innumerable, and emotions are unlimited. If we don’t stop, look inside of ourselves and control our desires, the true heart would never be found and we live totally following our secular desires, and will encounter sufferings.

Buddhist scriptures called true heart and secular desires respectively as the heart without beginning without end and the

heart with beginning and with end. Enlightenment is to cultivate the heart with beginning and with end, to find the true heart (without beginning and without end), and then to control all actions, to eliminate all vicious personalities, all confusion, all errors. Calming down, the heart will lead to enlightenment.

The technique of self-cultivation in order to reach enlightenment consists of three steps: restriction, meditation, and enlightenment.

Restriction is to calm down the physical body, the speech and the mind. Meditation is to calm down the mind in order to distinguish the true heart and the secular desires.

Enlightenment is to clarify all confusion. This is the technique to shine the inside to find the true heart.

A. RESTRICTION

According to Buddhism, there are many levels of restriction: five restrictions, eight restrictions, ten restrictions, two hundred fifty restrictions, eight thousand restrictions, forty thousand restrictions. Although so numerous, restrictions are oriented to control the physical body, the speech and the mind.

Following are the ten restrictions.

1) Three restrictions for the physical body

1. No killing
2. No stealing
3. No being obscene

2) Four restrictions for the speech

1. No lying
2. No exaggerating stories
3. No double meaning words
4. No evil words

3) Three restrictions for the mind

1. No greed
2. No anger
3. No confusion

We will not discuss all the ten restrictions in details because

the restrictions for the physical body and for the speech were described in previous chapters. We discuss only the restrictions of the mind.

NO GREED (restriction 8):

Greed is innumerable but may be summarized as six desires. This following table will present how six desires exist.

THE SIX SENSES

Six organs	Six matters	Six senses
Eyes	Color	Vision
Ears	Sound	Audition
Nose	Smell	Smelling
Tongue	Flavor	Taste
Body	Touch	Feeling
Mind	Thought	Thinking

THE SIX DESIRES

Senses	Matters	Six desires
Vision	Color	Desires of beauty
Audition	Sound	Desires of good sound
Smelling	Smell	Desires of good smell
Taste	Flavor	Desires of good flavor
Feeling	Touch	Desires of good feeling
Thinking	Thought	Desires of good thought

When a person gets in touch with the outside world, the six organs react with matters resulting in six senses. When the six senses get in touch with matters they generate the desires.

The desires are endless. When we get one, we want two, when we get two, we want four and so on. That’s why there was a saying “The greed is unfathomable.” The greed leads to the selfishness. People like to have all the wealth, honors of the world.

Human is a part of the universe and has to live with the universe. The common sense is to live in harmony with all

beings in the universe. But the selfishness makes people collect everything for themselves leading to their elimination from the evolvement and progression of all beings.

The Buddha considered life on this world as an immense suffering ocean. Indeed, if we have too many desires, we always plan to acquire all that we like, and it is already a suffering. Once acquired, we have to plan to enjoy, to keep them for ourselves, and have lots of worries, being afraid of losing them. The more we think about it, we would realize that the desire is the cause of suffering.

The true self is covered by secular desires. If we like to find it in order to be enlightened we have to return to our inside, transcend all physical desires, physical sufferings to reach the complete quietness inside.

Remember that the physical matters lead our knowledge to error as stated the Chapter 12 of the Tao Te Ching:

“The five colors blind the eyes.
The five sounds deafen the ears.
The five flavors dull the taste.
Running hunting madden the mind
Precious things lead people astray.”

Therefore the scholar, in order to avoid error, has to return to the inside, and contemplate on all matters.

The Supreme Being taught:

“When dishonesty and greed penetrate your heart, there is no room for virtue. When they penetrate your home, there can be no moral teachings. When they penetrate your country, there can be no honorable administration. When they penetrate the world, Genies and Saints cannot arise.”

How to avoid the greed?

Confucius taught:

“Control self in order to recover the civility.”
“Eyes should not look at inappropriate matters
Ears should not listen to inappropriate words
Tongue should not speak inappropriate words
Body should not do inappropriate action.”

The Buddha taught:

“Do not run after materials in order to distinguish the good from the bad” (to recognize the better).

Beside the above teachings, we have to determine to be self sufficient and to give to others.

a) To be self sufficient: Live a simple and joyful life by not desiring luxury, not doing bad thing to acquire wealth and honors. Our goal is to aspire to our liberation from luxurious life, from confusion in order to reach the truth. Our life should be simple, eat enough to survive, dress enough to be comfortable or in other words, live simply with nature without running after materials.

b) To give to others: There are two ways of giving. To give money and to give teaching. Depending on our capacity we may give foods, clothes, medicine to people to help. We may find opportunity to give teachings guiding people to do good and to avoid evils.

NO ANGER (restriction 9):

Not only do anger, hatred but other emotions such as joy, happiness, being scared, make the mind confused.

If we laugh too much we may tear exactly like when we cry. We should not have too many emotions.

The old saying stated: “Anger causes confusion.” A person needs a clear mind to distinguish the right from the wrong. If we lose our clear mind, we will not have appropriate actions.

In the field of self cultivation, people used to say “It take only an hour to burn all the woods that you have been saving for three years.” It means that we have acquired many good virtues after many years of laborious self-cultivation, and now we carelessly let our instant anger destroy all our hard work. What an unfair waste!

Anger comes from greed. To prevent anger, we have to avoid greed. When we want to acquire something, the greed pushes us to act. If we get what we want, we are joyful but are afraid of losing them and we have to try to keep. If we could not get them, we

become desperate and angry.

From the six desires to the seven emotions, our personality is exposed to many emotional states, one after the other, making the mind chaotic exactly like the waves rippling the surface of the ocean. In the community, many times our emotions change from joy to sadness, from anger to love, from hatred to fear. It is because we do not have the self-control and therefore could not control our emotions and our mind becomes chaotic.

According to the Tao, people have to follow the Divine principle in all actions in order to avoid reincarnation karma. However the six desires and the seven emotions have fooled the heart and covered the divine true self so that people are completely disoriented in life like a boat floating in the ocean without a compass.

Very often, people when disoriented, turn around to act just according to their secular desires. In this case, people would commit crimes.

How to get rid of anger?

People have to train self in order to digest insults without hatred, anger, or sadness etc...

The Bodhisattva digests insults with an empty and calm mind (without feeling perseverant or insulted.)

“The insults are rare.

The human heart is like water bubbles,

Therefore people should self cultivate soon to transcend sufferings.

Nothing is right or wrong.

Nothing is noble or vile.

In order to get rid of greed and anger, people have to rely on their true heart.”

(Buddhist book)

At our free time we must contemplate the following: “the common sense is that everyone wishes to have wealth, honor, happiness, we should wish the same for our enemies.” If we keep contemplating until the idea becomes spontaneous, we will love

our enemies exactly like ourselves. Of course, every disease has its own remedy. The remedy for hatred is love.

Virtuous person should look over his own mistakes but not others'. We should not mind others' mistake because it would lead to hatred. We may try our best to counsel. Our goal in life is to create harmony in the world using the Divine principle. To do so, we must start to create harmony in ourselves from our physical and spiritual body, our psychology, our way of living to our family, and then harmony in the community.

NO CONFUSION (restriction 10):

Do not be ignorant and confused. Everyone has a sparkle of God's sacred light and therefore should be spontaneously wise. Why are people confused?

Unfortunately, when the conscience is attracted by all secular desires of the physical body, it becomes stimulated and generates greed and anger which would trouble and cover the Divine principle (little sacred light). People are subsequently confused. In order to avoid confusion, people have to self-cultivate and become enlightened. Enlightenment will eliminate completely confusion.

How to reach enlightenment?

People have to learn, to contemplate on the truth, and realize the truth in their heart. They then become enlightened, and there will be no more darkness.

There are several techniques of learning:

a) Learning from books.

Choose religious scriptures, and books, read one page per day, contemplate on it in order to find the truth. Reading and contemplating should go together with studying in order to get good results. That's what people want to mean by saying "We must read scriptures to find the truth."

For example, if we just read without thinking, we would not remember anything but may misunderstand. Too much information leads to confusion. Or if we keep thinking too much

without reading to find information, we may also become confused.

Another reason we should not forget is that books can only record simple and limited ideas. In our study and cultivation we should use scriptures and books to stimulate our contemplation which is the only way to find the truth.

b) Learning from experiences.

Events happening around us everyday are very complicated. But everything has a cause. If we take time to observe and contemplate we would understand and may acquire some experiences. Moreover, we need to have concentration.

What is concentration?

When I am talking to you, I am aware of what I am talking.

This awareness is like the third person who witnesses what I am doing. While doing something, you think about something else, you are aware of what you are doing and thinking. This awareness is called mind. If you focus your mind to only one point, instead of letting it scattering, you concentrate.

This concentration is very strong and able to destroy evil thoughts and solve all difficulties of your daily life.

If we concentrate our mind, our thought would be very especially fixed and predominant, not disturbed by anything or any side thoughts.

Example: If you use a lens to concentrate the sun light to a point on a piece of paper, the paper can be burned. The concentration is very similar, if we concentrate our mind and our thoughts, we have enough power to succeed. Our mind is the spiritual power. Without it, we cannot do anything successfully.

Depending on the power of concentration, we can reach certain level of knowledge. With cultivation, we may transcend the confusion to reach the wisdom, to distinguish the Divine principle from human secular desires, to discover the cause of reincarnation and the way to immortality, to recognize the truth from the nonsense. This is the first step toward enlightenment.

The next step is to practice concentration, to reach wisdom, to realize the true-self, to eliminate all the evil, bad habits and thoughts in ourselves.

B. CONCENTRATION

If one cannot keep the true self calm and pure, s/he lets the human desires wandering to the material world, and is involved in vile desires and thoughts and then blames on the true self for being evil. It is a mistake.

In reality, the true self is miraculous. To our common knowledge, we may feel that the true self is like sometime existent, sometime inexistent, sometime appearing, sometime disappearing beyond our awareness.

Confucius said: “If we keep it, it’s still there. If we drop it, we lost it. It comes and goes without notice. We don’t know where it is.”

Lục Tượng Sơn, to his own observation and knowledge, had to lament: “Everything has a form except the conscience, but it can control human heart very much.”

Because of this special characteristic, the conscience is aware of everything, may be attracted by the five Skandhas (Ngũ uẩn, five constitutions of a person) and has inclination to materials with the six secular desires. Then, it is the beginning of evil heart. In order to restore the conscience, to bring it back to its original genuine status, we have to meditate.

WHAT IS MEDITATION?

Meditation is to keep the mind calm and then to concentrate.

- **Calming:** Calming is to be detached from all matters (causes, words and names) and from all thoughts.

- **Concentrating:** when the mind is detached from all matters, it will be closer and closer to the nothingness so that there is nothing left inside but the Divine principle.

In brief, meditation is the technique that leads the mind

into the extreme quietness without thought, without beginning, without end, without chaos, without confusion where the Divine principle of man becomes one with God and all things of the universe.

You may say that meditation is a technique that mandates the body and the mind to follow strict procedures that would purify the body and the mind to the absolute purity so that the person can become one with God, the Supreme omniscient, omnipotent, absolutely good, absolutely beautiful Being, or in other words, the little sacred light of human being would become one with the great sacred light of the Supreme Being, the creator.

Or you may say that meditation is a technique that can liberate humans from reincarnation or from influence of the worldly life to return to the spiritual Divine principle.

The goal of meditation is to transform the body and the mind from human secular desires to the Divine principle. It does not use the active thoughts but instead the quietness to reach the highest, deepest, lively miraculous status so that people may say that the Tao is the deepest psychology.

Bodhisattva Mā Minh said: “The jewel (true self or conscience) is although very pure and bright, but is covered by worldly dirt. If humans do not clean it, it will never become bright.”

He wanted to say that our conscience or true self is covered by secular desires, by romantic thoughts. We have to use the divine technique to clean it so that it may become completely bright. Meditation is the technique that can eliminate confusion, leading the conscience to the truth, its genuine natural status.

Following is the practice.

1. Preparation
2. Meditation
3. Exit from meditation

1) PREPARATION

Avoid perception of our six senses:

1. Stay away from colors that blind our eyes.
2. Stay away from sounds that deafen our ears.
3. Stay away from fragrance that seduces our smell.
4. Stay away from flavors that dull our taste.
5. Stay away from gentle caress that seduces our body, stay away from precious properties that madden our heart.
6. Stay away from vague romantic thoughts, complicated desires and just empty the mind of thought.

Because of the six organs, the body gets in touch with all stimulations that lead to either disgust if we don't like them, or desires if we like to acquire them. Before to meditate, try to avoid the stimulation from those six senses. The six senses may lead to either enlightenment or decadence, depending on whether or not we can control them.

2) MEDITATION

Notice the four conditions to learn:

- Position
- Harmonize the body
- Harmonize the breathing
- Harmonize the mind

1. Positioning.

Since antiquity, the most acceptable position is the lotus position, but if for any reason we cannot sit in this position, the cross leg or lying positions are also acceptable if they can maintain the spine straight to facilitate the Chi flow. Remember that the position should be naturally comfortable.

2. Harmonizing the body.

In any position, the body should be comfortable, not be disturbed (calm and quiet) and without compromise to the blood circulation. Clothes should not be tight. All muscles of the body and extremities should be relaxed and would not disturb the mind which will become calm, quiet, and empty, or in other words, return to its still origin.

3. Harmonizing the breathing.

Inspiration should be gentle and deep. Expiration should be slow and complete. The breathing is very important. We will discuss more later.

4. Harmonizing the mind.

We have to control our thought, our ambition in order to bring the mind to the nothingness. The mind should be quiet like water without waves, using the Divine principle to control the body.

In brief, body, breathing and mind although separated have one same action. One of them, the body for example, if being disturbed, may affect the others. Therefore, we have to harmonize all of them at the same time.

PRACTICE: According to meditation book, meditation consists of six techniques:

- Counting the breaths
- Concentrating on the breaths
- Stopping thinking
- Contemplating
- Returning to the origin
- Returning to the nothingness

1) Counting the breaths: When we count the breaths, the mind keeps concentrating on counting and will not wander.

2) Concentrating on the breaths: When we concentrate on the breaths, our mind will not wander.

3) Stopping thinking: The mind will be quiet, not remembering any matters around. This technique may cause drowsiness.

4) Contemplating: When we contemplate on the miraculous principle of the spirit and the universe, the mind would concentrate on our true self and eliminate all secular desires, bring the true self to its genuine natural status. We have to prevent the mind from being confused.

5) Returning to the origin: We will make all things to return

to their origin. Our six organs in returning to their still origins will not be in touch with the six matters and therefore, there will be no more perception, no more stimulation, no more desires.

6) Returning to the nothingness: Our mind returns to the quietness, the nothingness.

Tao Te Ching, Chapter 16 stated:

“When we reach the nothingness, we reach the ultimate goal of the quietness. If all things return to the quietness, we should keep them in this basic status, their original still status.”

This would make the person free and contented. The cultivation has the goal to reach enlightenment without worrying about changes of matters around.

If we have used our conscience as basis, we will not be afraid of being confused, but will reach the oneness. An old saying stated “The virtues have an origin, the study has a basis.” Cultivation needs the conscience, and the conscience needs the quietness.

Prevention of exaggeration:

Meditation is to be in the nothingness, the absolute nothingness. The nothingness is not like dry dead wood or rock because they are not the real nothingness but rather an exaggeration.

In contrary, if the heart is still attached with material desire, it would be not sufficient. We should avoid exaggeration and insufficiency in order to find the nothingness.

In brief, during meditation, we should keep the breathing regular, the body in comfort, and the mind clear. The body is always free from attachment. The heart is in peace and calm, whether we are walking, standing or sitting. Keep our attitude in harmony and calmness. It's the virtue of religious persons.

C. ENLIGHTENMENT

Enlightenment is the capability of wisdom. Intelligence is the knowledge of the visible world based on the study, while enlightenment is spontaneous knowledge. Intelligence is from outside, enlightenment is from inside. Combination of intelligence

and enlightenment leads to an absolute knowledge in both physical and spiritual points of view.

Lao Tse said:

“Both intelligence and enlightenment are capabilities of the mind, and are both miraculous. But enlightenment is the true origin of miracles.”

Enlightenment is understood as conscience, true virtue, intuition, Prajna. This knowledge is very deep and miraculous and originates from intelligence. The disciple should develop both intelligence and enlightenment in order to have a perfect knowledge. I-Ching said:

“Enlightenment is the knowledge of what was not studied, and intelligence is the accumulation of experiences.”

As the two kinds of knowledge are different, their development is also different.

Tao Te Ching Chapter 48 said:

“The study develops intelligence for the interest of the visible world, while the Tao decreases the study and the thinking to the nothingness in order reach perfect wisdom.”

Vương Dương Minh discussed about conscience as followed:

“The conscience is the sacred energy granted by God to everyone. It is the same in saints and in ordinary people. The difference is that it is well maintained and shining in saints and covered in ordinary people.”

Vương Dương Minh also said: “Even when a person is confused, his conscience is always there in his heart. The person just does not pay attention to it, and therefore is not aware of its presence, and thought that he does not have a conscience.”

The reason is that the conscience is deep inside the heart. The confusion is just affecting the thoughts of the visible world, and people do not return deep inside the heart to recognize and maintain the conscience.

Tao Te Ching, Chapter one stated:

“The quiet mind feels miracles.

The agitated mind gets only small scattered knowledge.”

According to Trang Tử, the disciple just needs to let go everything, all matters outside, all emotions, all reasoning, all gain and loss, all what are happening, all prejudice, all confusion, the true wisdom will come.

I-Ching stated: “without thoughts, without action, with silence, wisdom will come.”

Lao Tse said:

“Without leaving home, one knows everything in the world. Without looking at anything, one knows the Tao.”

This knowledge is the complete intuition either acquired or innate, subjective or objective, outside or inside. It's the perfect wisdom.

In brief, restriction, concentration, enlightenment are although separate steps but need to be practiced at the same time, especially concentration and enlightenment.

Concentration without enough enlightenment would lead to confusion. Enlightenment without enough concentration would lead to chaos. Enough concentration and enough enlightenment would lead to true wisdom.

What is the true wisdom?

True wisdom is the true knowledge of the self, not the visual perception but the spontaneous realization of the miraculous true self, in other words, the realization of the sacred light given by God.

Vương Dương Minh said: “The One is the maintenance of the Divine principle. All things of the universe are harmonized by this principle.”

There is a saying about this: “the understanding of the One is the understanding of everything. Not understanding the One is not understanding anything.”

One can reach enlightenment when there is not any thought inside that separates the person from the Tao. This is the result of all the work of returning to the inside to understand the self.

The Diamond Sutra said: “whatever is visible is faked.

Whatever is invisible is the Buddha nature.”

The Tiêu Diêu book explained it as followed:

“The enlightened person is in peace in all situations whether or not mocked by people.”

“The nothingness is everywhere.

So is the Tao deep and high,

One just needs to take it easy.

Enjoying the nature and beautiful flowers.”

Chu Hôi Am used the respect as the basis. He said: “Keep concentrating on the word respect, one will understand the Tao.”

The respect is used to maintain our attitude and personality. When the person is serious, the cultivation would be fruitful. When one concentrates on respect, he would not break the principle. If we used respect as the basis, we would recognize the reason of our mistake and would correct it. With time we would become perfect.

He also added: “Respect is not stopping all thought but concentrating and paying attention to what we are doing. It is not shutting our eyes, our ears and to be insensitive to everything.”

Respect is to concentrate on the body and the mind. He used the word contemplation for the cultivation.

Let’s observe the Divine principle: Action cannot be calm. Calmness cannot be together with action. Calmness is nurture. Action is observation.

They should be the basis of each other so that there will be no interruption.

Calmness is not like insensitive, inert matter. There is an action in calmness. Calmness is not to get rid of everything, to sit still and to do nothing. Calmness is to respect the no-action. Then when the action arrives, the person would have a clear mind on everything.

(Trần Trọng Kim - Confucianism)

Conclusion: The Middle Way Book, Chapter 22 said:

“Only can the Holy person know his true self, and therefore he knows everybody, everything and all the mechanism of the

creation. In helping the nurture of the creation, he is part of the Trio “God-Earth-Man.”

II. SAVING HUMANITY

We have discussed the procedure of enlightenment which is the self- cultivation. Now we have to save humanity in order to fulfill the duty of a virtuous person. The procedure for enlightenment helps develop the virtues Mercy, Universal Love and Justice. Now we have to use those virtues to save humanity.

The Universal Love is applied to humanity, all living beings and to our own body as well. Justice is applied equally to all living beings and everything in the universe because we and them have the same constituents.

Service to humanity is based on Mercy, Universal Love and Justice but not for our own interests. The Buddhas of the past had vowed to “save all living beings.” If we cannot save all, at least we have to save as many as we can.

Doing good, avoiding evil are so immense and unpredictable. We have to follow the words of Buddha:

“Don’t do evil. Do good things. Keep the mind calm and pure.”

For the disciples of the GREAT WAY, the Supreme Being has opened the way “Universal Salvation” for us to cultivate self and to save others. The two words “Universal Salvation” are reflected in the expression “ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỒ ĐỘ” (*The Third Universal Salvation of The Great Way*).

The Universal Salvation consists of two ways: Exoteric and Esoteric.

Exoteric practice:

We use all audio-visual ways to awaken people, guide them to the Tao, such as rites, altar, prayers, using literature to explain the religious teachings, using love to help people to become good persons. The Buddha recommended donations of either money, counsels, or teachings to save living beings.

Esoteric practice:

This practice does not use visible way but instead realize the virtues in ourselves to set example of self cultivation for others to follow. This is a “*Way of teaching without words.*”

We have to realize our own virtues before to teach others, otherwise, our words can only reflect the shadow but not the truth.

Saving others.

The Sacerdotal Council builds the Holy See and temples to venerate Superior Spirits, and sends dignitaries to teach disciples, to help them to understand and to realize the Tao. This is also a way of saving beings.

Why do we have to serve humanity?

All living beings have the same Master, the Supreme Being, belong to the same family, and have the same goal to be unified with the Supreme Being. They live together and depend on each other realizing an endless Karma cycle.

From the beginning, each person is born with a karma, then in life, human beings depend on each other for living, and create karma dependence from life to life. Human beings should not live a seclusive life by themselves but have to serve humanity in order to pay off all karma debt so that they may be liberated from reincarnation cycle.

Serving humanity is not giving a favor but is a duty. Therefore, there is no need for gratitude from other for the service. The result of the service is to be presented to the Supreme Being, and to be offered to all beings to maintain the progression of all beings.

We should understand that the Supreme Being arranges everything in the universe as stated in the Kinh Thi: “The Supreme Being is absolutely great, absolutely immense, shining the universe and watching all lives.”

Therefore, do not think that the Supreme Being ignores the service we are doing.

Besides, the disciples have to pay attention to “Challenges.” Challenges are the way to test the progression of human beings exactly like a student who needs to have a test to prove his/her capability or a virtuous person who needs to have challenges to

test his/her virtues and talents. The old saying mentioned about challenges as followed: “Without challenges, one can not realize the Tao.” Or the challenges are increased with the advance of our cultivation. People used to lament about challenges, about the fact that people who do good deeds often receive bad mishaps.

We should know that bad disasters are just a part of the challenges. We should be patient. Perseverance would lead to succeed.

CONCLUSION

The Supreme Being uses the name “CAO ĐÀI TIÊN ÔNG ĐẠI BỒ TÁT MA HA TÁT” to found “ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỔ ĐỘ.” This name denotes the return of the three main religions to their primordial unity.

The practice of the Tao follows the steps of the five branches of the Tao from the way of Humanity at the beginning, then progressively to the way of Genies or Angels, the way of Saints, the way of Immortals and the way of Buddhas.

The teaching of the “Three main Religions” and of the “Five branches” of the Tao has been spread all over the world since antiquity and practiced by all races. Nowadays, the communication between the five continents becomes easy and people of the world are living together like in one family, the Supreme Being brings all religions together into one universal philosophy for everyone. The scientists have to reorganize their faith, the religionists have to get rid of the superstition, and together they will try to practice this universal philosophy to realize the harmony between people.

Peace for humanity is in the daily prayer of the disciples of the GREAT WAY.

The Supreme Being is the founder of this novel religion. He establishes the Sacerdotal Council that includes the Octagonal Palace, the Heavenly Union Palace and the Nine Sphere Palace. Each Palace has its own duty as discussed in Chapter III Part I of this book. The Sacerdotal Council has the role to guide and save

humanity.

The disciples will follow the Lower and Higher Cycles.

Disciple of the Lower Cycle practices the way of humanity fulfilling the duties of humans. Disciple of the Higher Cycle cultivates self to realize self and then to save humanity.

The ways of practice of these two Lower and Higher Cycles are different but implement the same Divine principle that helps them to fulfill the duties of humans and to realize self.

The goal of the GREAT WAY is to help humans to recognize the Divine principle and the human desires, then to get rid of human desires in order to live according to the Divine principle to finally reach enlightenment.

The disciples should avoid secular greed and also the desires of performing miracles. They should live a simple and pure life, transcending the selfishness, being sincere, modest, aspiring to the Taoist enlightenment and the Buddhist liberation.

Finished at the Tayninh Holy See.

The 1st month of the Year Giáp Thìn (1964)

Tiếp Pháp TRƯỜNG VĂN TRÀNG

Appendix I

THE THREE GEMS

BECOME ONE

INTRODUCTION

By Honorable HUỆ LƯƠNG TRẦN VĂN QUẾ

Since the old times, the self-cultivation consists of practicing the faith and achieving charity activities. During the times of cultivation and serving humanity, one may encounter many challenges; if one have books and scriptures to read to develop one's knowledge, the cultivation would be faster. This would be useful when we have to run against the time especially when death is always unpredictable in this life.

“ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỔ ĐỘ” is a novel religion that was founded not more than a half of a century and consists of two phases. The first several decades were the phase of services to humanity, and the religion used all efforts to convert people, to build diverse necessary structures. The next phase was for esoteric cultivation, i.e. meditation.

For that reason, CAODAI books and abundant scriptures were not widely published, and because of wars and of separation between disciples, the holy teachings were partly lost and partly scattered everywhere.

Fortunately, the book “GIÁO LÝ ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỔ ĐỘ” compiled by the Tiếp Pháp Trương Văn Trảng is published as the guiding light shining the way for disciples.

The Tiếp Pháp has realized the principle “Study to teach” and become a teacher for CAODAI disciples. Without exaggeration, he, as one of the twelve zodiac dignitaries, has offered the readers many rare precious informations not only about the three religions, but also about all other religions.

I therefore respectfully introduce this precious book.

Saigon, June 28, 1964

HUỆ LƯƠNG

APPENDIX I

THE THREE GEMS BECOME ONE

The three gems are **Tinh** (Physical body) **Khí** (Chi, Vital energy) **Thần** (Spirit). The blessed person may cultivate self, follow the teaching of a master, and may unify the three gems creating the second body called “Chơn Thần” (true spirit). Before discussing the procedure of self-cultivation we will discuss about the constitution of the human body.

Famous Chinese Confucian Chu Hối Am (1130-1200) of the Tống dynasty said:

“In the universe there are Lý¹ (Divine principle) and Khí (Physical energy). Lý is the Tao, the spiritual energy, the origin of everything, Khí is the physical energy for the creation of the physical world. Humans and everything inherit Lý under the form of conscience, and Khí under the form of physical body.” (*Confucianism - Trần Trọng Kim*).

According to this opinion, human conscience corresponds to the Lý (Divine principle) of the universe. In the nothingness dimension, it has no name, and invisible. In the universe, it is called “Lý Thiên Nhiên,” natural principle or Tai-Chi (The Monad). In humans, it is called Divine destiny, Divine principle, Conscience, or The Tao.

The Middle Way Book stated: “Divine destiny is the Divine principle or the conscience, or the Tao.” Remember that Divine destiny, Divine principle, Conscience or Tao are just different names of one principle.

Human body, beside the physical body created by our parent, has another constituent, essence of the universe. Human body has therefore three constituents, the physical body, the personality and the spirit, which are considered by Taoism as the three gems:

1. Tinh is the physical body (1st body)

¹ The Lý (Divine principle) is the conscience in human which is called the spirit of God as said the Supreme Being “I divided my spirit to create ten thousand things.”

2. Khí (Chi) is the breath circulating in the physical body (2nd body).

3. Thần (spirit) or the conscience of the physical body (3rd body).

In brief, the human body has all the miracles of the universe (Monad, Yin Yang, the five elements) that was reflected in Confucian book as “Human is the manifestation of the universe, the result of the interaction between Yin and Yang, the center of all spirits, and the essence of the five elements.”

Human beings are at the top of all living beings so that if they determine with sincerity to cultivate themselves they may reach enlightenment during their life.

The procedure to reach enlightenment is an internal cultivation. It is taught by the Supreme Being or by Superior Spirits. Therefore, before performing this procedure, the disciple has to fulfill the self-cultivation and the service to humanity and thereafter becomes sensitive to the Supreme Being or Superior Spirits to receive their teachings.

This procedure is therefore reserved to blessed people with great determination.

Before discussing about the procedure of the self-cultivation, we like to discuss about the faith, which is considered as the guiding light to shine the way for people.

I. FAITH

Scholars have to avoid superstition. Some people like to reach enlightenment fast to see miracles, and imagine that they can see Immortals and Buddhas. Some people listen to hoaxes and then have inappropriate ideas, words, and actions.

Buddhist scriptures stated: “Do not believe in visible manifestations of Buddha. It’s the false doctrine.”

In contrary: “If you realize the visible as none, you reach the Buddha’s nature.”

The Gautama Sakya Muni taught: “Do not believe anyone, you have to shine the way by yourself.”

He also taught: “Do not believe anything that you are not sure as the truth even if it is said by a person or a book.”

You have to understand that virtues are most important in life. You must study, practice and experience before you believe. Exactly like in the study of music one needs to have a competent musician as teacher. Similarly, the procedure for enlightenment should be taught by a true Master such as Immortals, Buddhas, or the Supreme Being.

II. NURTURING THE PHYSICAL ENERGY

Nurturing the physical energy is to nurture the essence of the body.

TINH is the physical energy, the vital energy of every being. In plants, it is the energy for the growth of buds, leaves and flowers. In animals, it is the energy for reproduction. In human beings beside the reproduction, it is also a fluid energy that can become vapor (breath) vital for the health and the mind.

Taoist literature stated:

“Do not labor the physical body, do not disturb the physical energy.”

Or, “to nurture the physical energy, it’s important to eliminate sexual desire, and in order to do so, we have to prevent lustful thought.”

Buddha Sakya Muni gave the following spiritual message:

- (1) The great Tao is wordless.
- (2) The mind realization may shake the universe.
- (3) Pay attention to the creation mechanism.
- (4) The back and forth movement would be permanent.

Explanation:

1. The practitioner must keep the body, the speech and the mind calm like in meditation.

2. The mind and spirit may become one (oneness between fire and water or Yang and Yin) realizing powerful energy in the universe.

3. One must pay attention to the progress of the creation in order to cultivate Tinh (physical energy) to transform it into Chi (vital energy).

4. Physical energy when it moves in (backward movement) may open the Nê Hoàn Cung (crown chakra) or if it moves out (forward movement) of the body, may form another human body, a permanent result.

III. BRINGING UP THE KHÍ (Chi, vital energy)

In human body, the Khí (Chi) may be pure or impure, docile or stubborn so that the disciple has to tame it. We follow the conception of Mạnh Tử to discuss about the Chí (spirit) and the Khí (Chi, Prajna).

Remember Chí and the Divine principle or conscience are just the same one, but the Divine principle uses the emptiness or quietness to cultivate and the Khí uses active way to regularize the Khí or breath.

What is Khí ? (Chi, Prajna or vital energy)

Khí is the product used for the creation and nurture of the universe. It circulates all over in the universe. Where ever it resides, there is the creation of all beings in which, the Khí circulates and maintains life.

If we ask what the Khí is, even Mạnh Tử would say “It’s difficult to say.” However, he reluctantly explained: “the Khí is extremely great, extremely powerful. If human beings maintain it well, it may fill up the whole universe.”

In the book *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo (The True Teaching of the Higher Cycle)* the Khi is explained as followed:

“The Khí enters from the universe into the human body at birth. When the embryo begins to form, there is a part of the

sacred energy (Monad) in the abdomen.

When the baby is born, although all the sense organs have not fully developed, the other internal organs have existed. The Khí comes from Khiếu Huyền Quan (Crown Chakra) to the Heart.

The Khí is also distributed through the nervous system to circulate in the body. From the heart, the Khí commands all activities of internal organs. From the Huyền Quan Khiếu, the Khí maintains life of all organs and also constitutes the powerful energy of human beings. It collects energy from the sun, assimilates it and circulates in the body. It is the Divine principle from God, which, in humans, becomes the conscience called Post-Creation Divine principle.

The Khí or the Divine principle of the universe from the Supreme Being, is of Yang property. When it becomes the Divine principle of human beings, it is called Post-Creation Divine principle (conscience) and has Yin property. The Divine principle of God is extremely pure and its vibration is boundless.

In order to tune to it and to receive it, the mediums have to cultivate self to be as pure as God (or unified with God) and then to be able to communicate with Superior Spirits.”

Chí and Khí correspond respectively to Spirits and “the second body, phách.” Chí (spirit) and the physical body are connected to each other by the Khí. The three parts constitute the whole body with life.

Mạnh Tử said: “The Chí is the commander of the Khí when the Chí comes to human body, the Khí follows. Human beings must maintain the Chí and not harm the Khí .”

(It means that the Chí is the commander. The Khí must follow the commander. In order to nurture the Khí, humans have to maintain the Chí. The Chí stays at one place while the Khí circulates everywhere in the body. The disciples must maintain the Chí and not harm the Khí)

Why? Because the Chí and the Khí are related to each other and they stimulate each other. When a person trips or runs

fast, the action resulting from Khí has stimulated the Chí in the heart.

The wise man is better than others because he nurtures well his Khí .

How to nurture the Khí ?

Trình Hạo said: “The disciple keeps concentrate to reach the oneness, the heart is calm and the Khí will come.”

Mạnh Tử said: “Take it easy and follow the Divine principle, and the Khí will come.”

The Khí may be pure or impure, docile or stubborn.

Example: An intelligent person understands everything because his Khí is pure, but when he performs, not everything is right because his Khí is not docile. Some person is careful, trustful, because his Khí is docile but he could not understand all the reasons because his Khí is not pure.

Purity or impurity, docility or stubbornness are related to the Divine destiny. If we cultivate ourselves, our conscience (Divine principle) is well nurtured, our Khí will be pure and docile. (*Trần Trọng Kim, Confucianism*)

We understand that the Khí and the conscience always follow each other, and nurturing the conscience is also the nurturing of the Khí .

The disciple, while taking it easy in meditation until reaching the oneness, has already nurtured the Khí. With time, he will feel the result as the Khí will develop. Mạnh Tử said: “The Khí develops naturally, we should not force it. The mind keeps being calm, not paying attention to it.”

Mạnh Tử gave the example of the Tống’s person who grew rice. He wanted to speed up the growth; he stretched the rice plant up and ended up killing the plant.

Nurturing the Khí is like growing the rice plant. Growing the rice plant is to weed and fertilize and let the plant grow naturally. We don’t have to stretch up the plant like the Tống’s person.

Nurturing the Khí is the same. The disciple has just to

cultivate self, to do well and avoid evils, taking it easy to nurture our personality without trying to force the Khí, and then the Khí will develop.

In brief, nurturing the Khí will develop the Khí all over the body as vital energy; and this vital energy, the Post-Creation energy will become one with the Pre-Creation energy of the universe.

Mạnh Tử said: “Whoever reaches this level has a strong personality. The wealth would not lead to lustfulness; the poverty would not change the person’s personality.”

This strong personality will help to self-control, and conquer all material seduction, fulfilling our duties in life.

IV. BECOMING ONE WITH GOD

The Spirit is the conscience energy in the body. When human being are born, the physical body seduces the spirit into secular material desires, the conscience energy then can distinguish between beautiful and ugly, advantageous and disadvantageous, good and bad, and stimulate human beings to acquire what is good to satisfy the physical body. This would be the chaos that will harm the conscience (true Self) and the Khí .

If the spirit has calmed down, the Khí becomes tamed, the physical body, the vital energy (Khí) and the spirit become one creating thus the “Second body” called “true Spirit.”

The Supreme Being taught:

“When the physical body, the vital energy and the spirit return to their primordial unity (become one), the person becomes enlightened.”

Holy message:

“Since the Tao was closed, there has been a lack of the spirit in the miraculous mechanism of enlightenment. With this Third Salvation, I will allow the Thần (spirit) to be unified with the Tinh (physical matter) and the Khí (personality or emotions), leading to a unification of the three elements, which is itself the miraculous mechanism of the enlightenment. Remember to explain this to

disciples.”

Holy message of year Mậu Thìn (1928).

“What is the true Spirit?”

The true spirit forms your second body. It is the Khí which surrounds your body like a mold. Its center is the brain, the gate by where your second body enters or gets out is the fontanelle on top of the head which is watched and protected by the Hộ Pháp. With meditation, there is unification of the Tinh and the Khí and the Thần leading to enlightenment.”

The Master explained¹:

“Everyone on this earth has two bodies: The earthly one is called the physical; the sacred body, the spiritual. The spiritual body is formed from the earthly body and therefore may be visible or invisible. This miraculous spiritual body is formed from Tinh, Khí and Thần by spiritual self-cultivation. This spiritual body is lighter than air.

When it leaves the physical body, it retains the impression of physicality as if it were molded in the body. You cannot become fully enlightened and return to Nirvana if you have Tinh and Khí but not Thần.

You cannot make a spiritual body for the return to Nirvana if you have Thần but not Tinh or Khí. For the spiritual body to be created and enlightenment to occur, one must have all three elements: Tinh, Khí and Thần united.

We may understand that the cultivation should consist not only realizing the true self but also following full vegetarian diet and detachment from lustfulness. In contrary, diet with meat would make the second body impure and therefore endanger life. Tinh and Khí are all materials and will interact with cosmic ether where there is electricity.

To reach the universe, the soul must be pure, advanced and therefore lighter than atmospheric air. It must also be as genuinely good as the Saints, Immortals and Buddhas in order to

1 Holy message of July 17, 1926. (The eighth day of the sixth month of the year Bính Dần.)

reach those levels.

A pure Thần is produced by a pure body. Meat-eating creates difficulties for one practicing meditation, inasmuch as it prevents the practitioner from effectively resolving complications which arise from meditation. Even if you have no such complications, an impure physical body will create an impure spiritual body, which can conduct electricity well. As a result, it will then be struck by lightning and be destroyed in the atmosphere.

Even if the impure spiritual body is wise and remains on the earth to avoid the lightning, it will remain as an Earthly Immortal and never proceed to Buddhahood.”

According to the above Holy message, the meditation includes not only the purification of the heart in order to find the true self, but also the vegetarian diet and the sex restriction. Without vegetarian diet, the yogi would have an impure body that would be easily struck by lightning when the spiritual body gets out to the atmosphere. The yogi should pay attention to this issue.

Holy message of January 2, 1928.

“This spiritual body is your second body. It is very difficult for the spirit of a human being to transcend the physical body. The spirits of Saints, Immortals, and Buddhas are very marvelous and immortal. The spirit of an enlightened person may transcend the body and even travel in the universe. Only may the spirit approach Me.”

In brief, the self-cultivation must be taught by Superior Spirits or by the Supreme Being. Ordinary person would have difficulty to teach each other. For example, playing music or driving a car should be taught by special teachers such as expert musician or experienced driver respectively.

In order to receive teaching from the Supreme Being, the disciple must be perfectly sincere, perfectly good, completely virtuous and serving well humanity with his impartial heart. This

would touch the Supreme Being.

The old saying stated: “The extreme piety would touch God and God would bless.” To reach this goal, the disciple must have an invincible faith in God. This faith would improve the knowledge and lead to the confidence and help avoid discouragement.

Holy message of April 21, 1926.

“Moreover, the Holy Doctrine has been, through centuries, more and more denatured by the people responsible for spreading it. I am so broken-hearted to see that human beings, for the last ten thousand years, have sinned and subsequently suffered life after life in Hell.

I have now firmly resolved to come Myself to save you and not to leave anymore the Holy Doctrine in human hands.”

According to this teaching, we don't have to worry, have the peaceful mind to cultivate self until enlightenment, to be patient for receiving the blessing from Supreme Being. This is the difference between literal knowledge and theology.

Literal knowledge needs just the intelligence but the study of the Tao needs a firm faith beside the intelligence.

The faith is like a spiritual light which shines the way and constitutes the spiritual power to encourage the disciple to cultivate self and to help others to reach enlightenment as well.

This Chapter on enlightenment is discussed based on teachings from books in order to guide people in the cultivation. It is not from our experience.

Appendix II

**ESSENCE OF BUDDHISM,
TAOISM and
CONFUCIANISM**

ASPIRATION

Sincere gratitude to enlightened Masters who gave the teachings on the three religions and to our elders who laboriously explained, translated original teaching making scriptures for us to study and to make this summary of the “TEACHINGS OF THE THREE RELIGIONS.”

“OUR COMMITMENT TO THE FOUNDERS OF THE THREE RELIGIONS”

Compiled by

The Tiép Pháp TRƯỜNG VĂN TRÀNG

Respectfully dedicated

**SUMMARY OF
BUDDHISM, TAOISM
AND NHO GIÁO (Confucianism)**

The principle of ĐÀI ĐẠO TAM KỲ PHỔ ĐỘ is to bring the three religions (Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism) back to their primordial unity.

This appendix is to complement the book “ĐÀI ĐẠO GIÁO LÝ” and to help the readers to understand the teachings of Buddhism, Taoism, and Nho Giáo.

1. Summary of Nho Giáo (Confucianism)
2. Summary of Taoism
3. Summary of Buddhism

**SUMMARY OF NHO GIÁO
(Confucianism)**

I. ORIGIN OF NHO GIÁO

In China, the command in the family is from the father.

Following this family principle, the country is governed by a King and the whole China by an Emperor.

In ancient China, there were five successive Emperors: Phục Hi, Thần Nông, Huỳnh Đế, Đường Nghiêu, Ngu Thuấn, who were enlightened and able to see events in the spiritual world.

One day, during a promenade along the river Hạ, Phục Hi saw an animal that had a horse body and a dragon head with dots on the back. Based on the position of the dots, Phục Hi established the Eight Trigrams to explain the evolution of the universe, the principle of which was used to teach human beings.

Nho Giáo was then established thanks to the reality of human community in one part, and to the miraculous principle of the universe in the other part. The miraculous principle of the universe is to do good and to avoid evil. Ancient people used Nho

Giáo to help humanity.

In the book *Nho Giáo*, Trần Trọng Kim explained the character “Nho” as followed: character “Nho” was formed by putting together the two characters Nhon and Nhu. Nhon means human, Nhu means the needs.

The character “Nho” therefore means that the scholar who understands the principle of the universe should serve the needs of humanity. *Nho Giáo* helped Chinese to live in harmony and to establish the Chinese firm moral foundation.

At the Châu Dynasty, at the time of King Linh Vương, around 551 BC, a holy man named Khâu Trọng Ni (Confucius) was born. He improved *Nho Giáo* into a well classified doctrine which was then named as Confucianism.

Following is the brief biography of Confucius.

II. BIOGRAPHY OF CONFUCIUS

He was from country Lỗ of China, born on 551 BC. His father was Thúc Lương Ngột, his mother was Nhan Thị. His name is Khâu Trọng Ni. His father died when he was three. He got married at age of 19.

Regarding education, he was interested in rites and music. He studied at Minh Đường School at Lạc Ấp where Châu Công stored the classic literatures. These classic literatures including scriptures, laws, antique precious symbols and materials helped him to develop his knowledge and later to have more and more students.

He followed *Nho* teaching. With the intention of spreading the *Nho* teaching to help humanity, he traveled all over the country, using the life of officer to realize the virtuous principles. He was unsuccessful and disappointed. At age of 68, he stayed home concentrating on the teaching of his students and writing books.

His personality is modest, solemn, and respectful. His attitudes (walking, standing, sitting, and lying) are righteous and

leisurely, and he was always joyful. He was respectful toward officers and King. In temples, he was sincere and respectful. He was extremely cautious in dealing with life of people.

He liked to study and to contemplate on old examples to find the truth. He stated: “Be quiet, and contemplate to get knowledge, study without being bored, teach people without tiredness, those are the three things I like to do.”

For his whole life, he just liked to study the principles of virtues. He said: “My only worries are: no improvement of virtues, no clear explanation of what we learned, no practicing righteousness, no improvement of the bad.”

The death of Confucius

One day, Confucius got up early, wandered in his garden, he sang:

“Should the Thái mountain fall?

Should the beam of the house (representing the philosopher) be destroyed?

Should the philosopher be in danger?”

His student Tử Cống, in hearing the song, came to visit him. Confucius told him about the dream that announced his coming death. He then became ill and passed away seven days later at age of 72. He was buried at Khổng forest, Khúc Phụ City, province Sơn Đông. His students cried tragically and mourned for three years.

In brief, Confucius is a holy philosopher venerated not only by Oriental but also by Western people.

Dr. Chavanne commented on him as followed: “China is the real China country because it has a very delicate, meticulous, classical principle used as the rule for people to follow. All the laws, administration, rites, culture of the country were not based on blessings from any spirit, but on this principle inherited since the antiquity. This principle remained the same through times although the practice and application may be modified.

Confucius was the clear example of this principle. He

believed on those classical principles, especially on the rites established by ancient holy persons which were extremely good and that we just need to follow and apply in order to have a good peaceful life. His life and teaching were an example of realization of the principle and morality of ancient people.”

III. CONFUCIUS' TEACHINGS

Confucius believed in God and Spirits. If human beings studied and followed the doctrine, they may become a holy man and after the death may return to the Supreme Being.

He believed that in the nothingness, the Monad (Tai Chi) divided into Yin and Yang which evolved into the universe with all beings. Human beings, as a part of all beings, are created by the Tao and will live according to the Tao. Who lives close to the Tao, will be joyful, happy. So human beings should use the Divine principle as the basis for life in order to help the Supreme Being in the creation and the nurture of the universe.

The management of the family and community is based on the harmony of the universe, the great protecting the small, and the small following the great. Great and small all live together in harmony and peace.

That is the essence of Confucianism.

As education, Confucius adjusted the procedures of ancient holy Kings according to current situations. According to the book *Trung Dung*, Confucius related the stories of Kings Nghiêu and Thuần who followed the examples of King Văn and King Võ, who observed the evolvement of the universe, and adjusted life according to climate of the earth.

In brief, Confucius believed that the Divine principle is the creation and the nurture. Who follows the Divine principle should serve and nurture living beings and learn the four virtues Humaneness, Righteousness, Civility, and Knowledge.

HUMANENESS, RIGHTEOUSNESS, CIVILITY, AND KNOWLEDGE

The sky represents the Divine principle and has four virtues: Genuineness, Goodness, Profit, and Purity, which were used by Confucius as the basis to teach the four great virtues of humans such as Humaneness, Righteousness, Civility, and Knowledge.

Another conception was the duality. The duality of the sky is Yin and Yang; the duality of the earth is Hardness and Gentleness; the duality of human is Humaneness and Righteousness. If people wish to follow the Divine principle of God, they have to perform Humaneness and Righteousness.

1) What is Humaneness?

Humans inherit a part of God's sacred energy known as conscience. The conscience is genuinely good. When it is active, the conscience gives humans wisdom and clarity. This active status of conscience is called Humaneness. We may say that the Humaneness represents the Divine principle to realize the Tao of Humanity. If we analyze the virtue Nhân (Humaneness) we may see two points of view.

From the internal point of view, we are dealing with our own conscience and body.

From the external point of view, we are dealing with all beings around.

- Internally, in order to realize the Humaneness, the disciple should keep the conscience pure, not attached to secular greed, let the conscience develop naturally, use all effort to develop morality. In other words, the Humaneness is to realize the Divine principle in our practical life.

- Externally, the action of the natural conscience is genuinely good and manifests as love to all beings.

Humaneness and Love are always go together.

Mạnh Tử said: "When a baby falls in to a well, everybody is touched. This sympathy is the genuine Love of Humaneness."

This is only an example, but the practice of Humaneness is immense.

2) What is Righteousness?

Righteousness is the right action according to the Divine principle. Internally, Righteousness is a way to preserve the Humaneness to keep the conscience right and to help develop the Humaneness naturally.

Externally, Righteousness is an action to realize the Humaneness. For example, when a baby falls into a well, everybody is touched. Saving the baby is the action to realize the Humaneness because of the true love but not because of the intention to get attention from the baby's parents.

We may say that the Righteousness is the external (practical) manifestation of the Humaneness.

3) What is Civility?

The Civility is the Chinese synonym of the principle. In the realization of the Humaneness, the Civility is used as a ruler to measure human attitudes and actions. Humans are always busy with foods, sexual life, and afraid of poverty and death, Civility is used to prevent bad emotions, bad action and to help humans to follow the Divine principle.

Another factor of Civility is respect. Initially, Civility is used in the rites to worship spirits, or in other words, there should be respect to move the spirit. Later, Civility is applied in the community and used as the principle to deal with people. In the relationship between people, etiquette helps to establish appropriate order, to assure harmony and love in family and community.

Civility should have some formality. For example, we have to manifest our respect to our elder by removing our hat and by bowing our head.

4) What is Wisdom?

Wisdom is the mind energy that helps a person to understand matters, to distinguish good from bad, right from wrong. Confucius considered Wisdom as a priority in the realization of Humaneness, because Wisdom would help us to avoid bad and wrong and to do good and right. Therefore, the old saying stated “Wisdom, Humaneness, Courage are the three main qualities of humans of which Wisdom was more important than Humaneness and Courage.”

How to get Wisdom?

From the physical point of view, we have to study extensively, think deeply, discuss intensively to find clarity, and then to perform until the end result.

From the spiritual point of view, we have to be quiet, contemplate deeply, limit human greed, and allow the Divine principle to blossom naturally. In this quietness, the conscience will appear to synchronize with the universe to understand everything. Wisdom and conscience will make up the power of understanding thoroughly both physical and spiritual worlds.

In brief, Confucius taught people to nurture our conscience, and to use all our effort to realize the Humaneness.

In comparing Confucianism and Taoism, their principle and purpose are the same. The only difference is the way of cultivation and practice.

For example, Taoism uses the quietness and the nothingness as the basis of cultivation. The Taoist has to be detached from all secular matters, becomes one with the nothingness to find the natural peace. In contrary, Confucianism pays attention to human life, to follow the Divine principle and avoid personal greed to realize the Humaneness in daily life. Whoever follows the Divine principle is good; whoever does not is evil.

Later, people harmonize those two teachings to create another way of cultivation.

IV. CONFUCIAN SCRIPTURES

A. NGŨ KINH (*Five Classics*)

Before, although the Nho teaching had the Five Classics such as Dịch (I-Ching), Thi (Book of Documents), Thơ (Classic of Poetry), Lễ (Rites), Nhạc (Book of Music) they were not organized and difficult to understand. Later, Confucius improved them by classifying, explaining them, and wrote another book called Kinh Xuân Thu (Spring and Autumn Annals). Theoretically, there supposed to be six but the Rites and the Book of Music were then put together and they ended up to be five.

Following are the details:

I-CHING

It was a book for divination (telling the future) but contained a deep philosophy explaining the principle of creation and the evolvement of the universe and of all beings, guiding people to adjust their life according to the evolvement of the universe.

The most difficult matter is to adjust our life according to natural situation as a saying stated “Adjustment of life is so great!”

Why?

Because according to the evolvement of Yin and Yang energy, the universe evolves in cycles from day to night and back to day, from Spring to Summer, to Autumn, to Winter and then back to Spring again. Day and night, four seasons follow each other constantly. Humans grow from young to old and then die. Others are born and follow the same path. Plants evolve in the same way. They grow, bloom and bear fruits, with seeds formation. Seeds fall on ground and grow into other plants. As time is changing constantly, humans should not mind and should adjust with the changing.

Kinh THI (*Book of Documents*)

The Book of Documents recorded songs, folklores from antiquity to the Châu dynasty (King Bình Dương).

The essence of the book is “No evil thought.” Humans are genuinely calm, which is the natural personality inherited from God. This personality gets in touch with the surrounding and becomes active which is the status of human desires. Human desires lead to active thoughts then speech. Speech that is not completely spoken out will become laments under the form of songs, folklores.

Kinh THO: Book of Poetry (*Classic of Poetry*)

Book of Poetry recorded examples, teachings of Kings for officers, fathers for children, from the times of King Nghiêu and Thuần to the time of Tây Châu dynasty.

Book of Poetry discussed mainly about the heart. This principle was transmitted from King Nghiêu to King Thuần, from King Thuần to King Hạ Võ as followed: “Human heart is dangerous, Divine heart is delicate.”

Why are there two kinds of heart?

Human heart is often attracted by materials with secular greed. The desire of materials is so intense that it could cover the divine heart, which becomes therefore delicate and invisible.

Learning from Book of Poetry is to keep the heart right not attached with personal greed.

Kinh LỄ (*Rites*)

Kinh Lễ recorded rites, which are used as etiquette for nurturing the personality, avoiding greed, maintaining appropriate order in family and community. The main essence of Kinh Lễ is respect. There should be respect in everything, because respect is the basis of rites.

Book Thiên Nhạc Ký said: “In the universe, all beings are all different under innumerable forms but in order. Holy persons based on this order to establish etiquette.”

The universe evolves constantly, the creation and evolution need harmony. Holy persons based on this harmony to create music. Whoever studies rites should respect, whoever studies music should harmonize.

Kinh XUÂN THU (*Spring and Autumn Annals*)

Confucius wrote Spring and Autumn Annals. He recorded the stories of country Lỗ from the time of King Lỗ Ân Công until the time of King Lỗ Ai Công. He also recorded the stories of the Châu dynasty and satellite states. He wrote this book to defend moral rules with his comments. He praised all good deeds and blamed all bad deeds. His comments were so important that people compared his compliment as a gift from the King and his blame as an execution by the King.

B. TỬ THƠ

(Four Compilations)

Four Compilations (books) were done after the death of Confucius by his seventy-two students who were later scattered everywhere to teach people by their own ways.

Among his students, Tăng Tử, Tử Tư, and Mạnh Tử had the most credits in compiling the Books Luận Ngữ (Analects), Đại Học (Great Learning) and Trung Dung (Doctrine of the Mean). Those three books, together with the book Mạnh Tử were called Tử Thơ (Four Compilations).

Book ĐẠI HỌC (Great Learning) was the book for advanced people including “The three great ways for universal relationship” and “The eight performances for life.”

1) The three ways for universal relationship are Minh Minh Đức, Thân Dân and Chi Ứ Chí Thiện.

- *Minh Minh Đức* (Brightening The Conscience).

Everyone inherits a sparkle of God’s sacred energy,

which is the conscience. The Conscience is clear and sincere, and is the Divine principle in our body. In the midst of secular life, the Conscience, initially divine, is attracted and stimulated by materials and becomes human and therefore covered and immersed in the darkness.

Minh Minh Đức is to break the veil of darkness to brighten the Conscience so that it may restore its own divine potential.

- *Thân Dân*: Become popular with people, close to people in order to love and help them.

- *Chỉ Ư Chí Thiện*: Ultimate purpose of our action is to reach the best quality of a person.

To practice those three great ways is to cultivate self to the perfection in order to serve people.

2) The eight performances in life are:

1. Perfect knowledge of everything around.
2. Understand self.
3. Sincerity.
4. Honesty.
5. Self-cultivation.
6. Family control.
7. Administration of country.
8. Pacification of the world.

In the old time in order to bring peace to the world, one has to administer well the country. To administer well the country, one has to control the family. To control the family, one has to cultivate self. To cultivate self, one has to be honest. To be honest, one has to be sincere. To be sincere, one has to know self. To know self, one has to understand all things around.

In brief, following the book of Đại Học, one has to follow those eight performances. The sage of the old times appreciated the self-cultivation. From a layperson to a King, everyone has to cultivate the self first before to do anything.

Without self-cultivation, one would fail in the control of

family, the administration of country and the pacification of the world. Exactly like in the plant, if the roots are not good, the plant could not bloom and have fruits.

Book TRUNG DUNG (*Book of Midway*) **Doctrine of the Mean.**

When Tăng Tử died, he was succeeded by Khổng Cấp also known as Tử Tư who compiled the Book Trung Dung.

Trung is not inclined to any side. **Dung** is not moving.

Trung is the honesty principle of humanity. *Dung* is the ruler to distinguish good from evil.

The Book Trung Dung stated that the Tao is from God, and cannot change. Its manifestation is in humans and not separated from humans. To perform Trung, the sage has to nurture the self, cultivate the self to reach the perfection.

The cultivation has two parts, the Tao of God and the Tao of humanity. To accomplish both kinds of cultivation one has to be sincere.

What is sincerity in the Tao of God?

There are two aspects: Permanent internal status and boundless external space. Thanks to sincerity, the manifestation of the Tao of God is extremely clear and bright.

Regarding the Tao of humanity, humans should realize their sincerity to reach the same status as the Tao of God. How to realize sincerity?

We have to realize sincerity by ourselves by correcting our own bad attitudes, bad personalities preventing self from being greedy, keeping the heart and mind calm and quiet.

An old saying stated: “Sincerity comes from no desires.” When we love sincerity, we become wise. Why? Because we inherit a sparkle of sacred energy from God that resides deep in our heart. If the heart is not covered, this sparkle of sacred energy (or Conscience) will appear and we become wise, understanding everything in the universe. Then we should reach the extreme

sincerity.

In the world, only the person with extreme sincerity can realize his true self (*or Conscience*). Once understanding self, the person can understand others, then understand everything. Then the person can nurture the universe, in co-operating with God.

He then may be classified in the rank God-Earth-Man. (Chapter 22)

Besides, the person with extreme sincerity may foresee the future. He may recognize the good omen when the country is going to prosper, the strange omen when the country is going to fall. He may use different ways of divination using “Cỏ Thi” (grass Thi) or “Turtle shell” or recognizing some abnormal movements of his own extremities.

Once he can divine the future whether good or bad, he may be considered as a genie. (*Chapter 24*)

Book LUẬN NGŨ (*Analects*)

Tăng Tử, a student of Confucius, recorded all the words of Confucius in a compilation called Analects. Through this compilation we can understand Confucius' personality, attitudes such as gentleness, modesty, brightness. Chapter Hương Đăng recorded his personality and attitudes during the time he met Hương Đăng, or during his daily activities, during ceremonies, or when he met with the King. They all reflected the attitudes of a Holy Master.

Book MẠNH TỬ (*Mencius*)

Mencius was enlightened. He wrote the Book Mencius in which seven chapters discussed about politics.

1)- Study about Conscience

Mencius was a follower of the Doctrine of the Mean and believed human conscience as a divine sparkle.

The Conscience consists of many virtues such as humaneness, righteousness, civility, wisdom that were discussed in the Book

of Great Learning and that were the basis of human personalities.

Human beings all have love, righteousness, respect, argument corresponding to the basic four virtues so that human beings feel natural and easy to do good deeds for humanity (like water always running down to lower area). But in many instances, because of many secular desires, the divine conscience becomes human greed and humans want only to satisfy their own selves.

Mencius encouraged people to maintain the divine conscience, to control the self and prevent it from covering the divine conscience and then they would act like a good person.

Divine conscience is the true self of a person (human conscience).

Mencius stated: “Knowing all about the conscience is knowing the Divine principle and subsequently knowing God. Cultivating the Divine conscience is serving or worshipping God.”

2)- Maintenance of the Conscience

Humans are at the highest spiritual level of all beings thanks to their conscience. Basing on conscience of a person, we may recognize him/her as a good or bad person. The conscience is therefore extremely precious. Mencius stated “Virtuous man is recognized thanks to his conscience maintenance.”

Maintenance of the conscience is not enough. We need to cultivate the conscience making it purer and purer. The best way is to cut down material desires on wealth, honor, beauty, and bodily satisfaction.

3)- Nurturing the Khí (vital energy).

Conscience is the Divine principle that God granted to humans.

Mencius said: “Humans are different from animals thanks to the presence of conscience; the laypersons lose it, the virtuous persons maintain it.”

But the conscience, in order to be maintained, needs to have KHÍ nurturing.

We need determination to nurture the Khí. Determination here is to actively cultivate the conscience. We must understand

that maintaining the conscience is passive or just being calm and quiet. But nurturing Khí needs an active conscience (determination) as the commander.

Mencius stated “Khí is very powerful and immense. If well nurtured, it may fill the whole universe.”

If a person has fully maintained and nurtured the Khí, he/she may become one with God and the universe.

Mencius had clarified Confucianism to the point that the conscience becomes one with God and the universe.

V. EVOLUTION OF CONFUCIANISM

Since the time of King Nhân Tông of the Tống dynasty, Confucianism has become well known, thanks to famous Confucians such as Chu Đôn Di, Trương Tải, Trình Hạo, Trình Di, Lục Cửu Uyên etc..., who had developed Confucianism to its best.

Initially, Confucianism was devoted solely to the way of humanity, but later at the Tống dynasty, famous Confucians by studying Taoism and Buddhism, used the principles “True Self” and “Nothingness” to complement the Tai Chi (Monad), Yin Yang principles, making Confucianism a doctrine not only for secular life but also for spiritual life like Taoism and Buddhism.

In brief, Confucianism is the basic doctrine for the tradition and morality of China. Although being through many up and downs, Confucianism made China a strong country with high morality.

SUMMARY OF TAOISM¹

Lão Quân was the founder of Taoism. We summarize his biography and his teachings to praise all his work for humanity.

BIOGRAPHY OF LÃO QUÂN

According to China history, Lao Tse was from country Sở, province Khố, village Lê. His name was Lý Nhĩ, with special title Bá Dương.

His nick name was Đam. He worked in the library of the king of the Châu dynasty. He was born about 604 BC, and lived a secluded life with no secular contact so that no clear information on him was accurately recorded.

Living in a chaotic time of China, he believed that his doctrine “Vô Vi” (No Action) would be impossible to be known (spread), he then left the country riding on his blue buffalo to the West. This trip was called later “Lao Tse’s journey to the West.”

It was recorded that during this trip, Lao Tse stopped at Hàm cốc frontier pass where Doãn Hi was the pass keeper. Doãn Hi asked him to stay to teach him the Tao. After finishing the book Tao Te Ching, he left and there was no more information on him thereafter.

His successors were Văn Tử, Thi Tử, Trang Tử and Liệt Tử. Trang Tử was the most outstanding and was the author of the book Nam Hoa Kinh that clarified more Taoism.

We may say that all the doctrine of Taoism was from the two books Tao Te Ching and Nam Hoa Kinh.

What were the Tao Te Ching and Nam Hoa Kinh teaching about?

Nam Hoa Kinh book promoted and clarified Taoism. In Tao Te Ching, Lao Tse only discussed about the Tao, the origin of the

¹ Sermon at the Tayninh Holy See on the 15th day of the second month of the year Giáp Thìn on the anniversary of Lao Tse.

universe. He believed that all beings of the universe would have the Tao inside and should live according to the Tao. Based on this principle, he established a way of living for humanity.

To understand the teaching of Taoism, we have to understand the Tao in the universe and the Tao in human beings, and then, we may establish our own way of life.

THE TAO OF THE UNIVERSE

What is the Tao?

The Tao is the unnamed that existed before the Creation of the universe.

Lao Tse described this unnamed as followed:

“Something formed from the Chaos
 Born before Heaven
 In the silence and the void
 Standing alone and unchanging,
 Ever present and in motion.
 Perhaps it is the mother of ten thousand things.
 I do not know its name
 Call it Tao, for lack of better word.”

(Tao Te Ching, Chapter 25)

Indeed, the Tao is not only unnamed, but has no form, no color, or otherwise said, the Tao is the “Nothingness.” He was afraid that people would misunderstand the Tao as empty, he said that the Tao seems manifest but also seems un-manifest.

He described the Tao as followed:

“Look, it cannot be seen - it is beyond form.
 Listen, it cannot be heard - it is beyond sound.
 Grasp, it cannot be held - it is intangible.
 These three are indefinable.
 They are joined in one.
 From above it is not bright.
 From below it is not dark.

Like an unbroken thread beyond description.
 It turns to be the nothingness.
 The form of the formless,
 The image of the imageless.
 It is called indefinable and beyond imagination
 Stand before it, and there is no beginning,
 Follow it and there is no end.”

(Tao Te Ching, Chapter 14)

In brief, the Tao is unnamed, without form, without color, without sound, seems manifest or seems un-manifest: It is secret and miraculous principle of the creator's machine that determines the creator, creates and nurtures the universe and ten thousand things.

What is Virtue?

The Tao creates the universe and ten thousand things. But the virtue nurtures all beings giving them an enjoyable peaceful and happy life.

What is Virtue?

Tao Te Ching said: “Virtue is empty but always close to the Tao.” Or in clearer words, the Tao is empty and silent, but holds the power of creation and nurture. When the creation and the nurture are realized, it becomes the Virtue.

We may say that the Tao is the invisible body and the Virtue is the manifestation of the Tao.

To distinguish the Tao from the Virtue, Tao Te Ching, Chapter 51 said :

“All things arise from Tao
 By Virtue, they are nurtured
 Developed, educated
 Sheltered, comforted
 Grown, and protected.”

Regarding to the evolvement of the Tao, Lao Tse said:

“The Tao begot one (the unnamed creates the Tai-chi,

Monad)

One begot two (the Monad creates Yin and Yang)

Two begot three (Yin and Yang create harmony)

Three begot the ten thousand things (Yin and Yang and their harmony create the ten thousand things)

The ten thousand things carry Yin and embrace Yang. They achieve harmony by combining these forces¹.”

Regarding humans, we all have The Tao in our body under the form of Yin, Yang and their harmony.

The disciples must recognize the miracle of the natural way of universe, research and realize the natural Tao in ourselves.

THE NATURAL VIRTUES IN HUMAN BEINGS

The natural virtues in human beings are the same as the natural virtues in the universe and manifest under three states. The natural virtues of the universe are beyond form beyond sound and intangible. The natural virtues in human beings are Yin, Yang and Harmony.

Although being three, they are never separated. Three are one and one is three, they are together in the physical body like vital energy, which is never seen, never heard and never tangible. It is miraculous.

Thanks to them, human beings can live. Otherwise, human beings die. Lao Tse said:

“When ten thousand things have this One, they live and reproduce. If not, they will die.”

This is also applied for human beings. Life and death are the most important concerns, so what is the solution? The solution is the self-cultivation.

Followed is the method of cultivation.

METHOD OF CULTIVATION

The natural virtues in humans are Yin, Yang and Harmony.

1 Tao Te Ching, Chapter 42.

They are vital energies in human body, which are never seen, never heard and intangible. In order to cultivate them, we have to use “Vô Vi” (Wu Wei, Non-action).

What is Wu Wei?

Wu Wei is not to react to external situations but to return to the spiritual inside, search and realize the miraculous principle of internal life.

Tao Te Ching, Chapter 48 said:

“In the pursuit of the Tao, every day
 Something is dropped,
 Less and less is done
 Until non-action is achieved.
 When nothing is done, nothing is left undone.”

Non action is not inanimate like dry wood or rock but to keep ourselves spontaneous like a newborn baby before it learns to smile.

Therefore there was a saying:

“The Tao is non-action, but none is not done.”

Why? Because, the disciple has to do and to care things that haven't happened.

Example: We know that evil acts would lead to misfortune. If we avoid evil acts, we have done things that haven't happened. And when things haven't happened, nothing would bother us.

The Tao principle is in super natural spirit. To reach the Tao, we have to transcend all prejudice, arguments, emotions, theories, etc... until reaching our genuine, spontaneous consciousness.

We also know that everything has two aspects invisible spirit and visible physical body. According to Lao Tse, the invisible part is more useful than the visible one.

Example:

“Thirty spokes share the wheel's hub; it is the center hole that makes it useful.

Shape clay into the vessel; it is the space within that makes it useful.”

Human body is the same. The invisible spirit is used to embrace the Tao. The visible physical body is used to realize the Tao. The disciple needs to keep the empty heart to nurture the Tao. To keep the heart empty, we have to be calm and pure.

According to Trang Tử, in order to be calm and pure, we have to forget, forget all external events, forget all internal thoughts, forget all the past, all the present, all prejudice. At that time the heart will become empty. In our empty heart, the sacred light will appear to control our life. Therefore, the cultivation of disciples must be based on the calm and pure status.

1) No desire

No desire of materials is a way of cultivation. Trang Tử said: “The control of desire may maintain our conscience.”

Tao Te Ching, Chapter 12 stated:

“The five colors blind the eye.

The five tones deafen the ear.

The five flavors dull the taste.

Racing and hunting madden the mind.

Precious things lead one astray.

Therefore the sage is guided

By what he feels and not by what he sees.”

In other words, if people are attracted by outside events, the heart would be fooled. Lao Tse also stated: “No misfortune is greater than not being self-contented, no mistake is greater than the desire.”

Lao Tse asked: “Fame and body, money and body, which one is more precious?” People would know the answer.

2) No striving

Virtues are the spiritual power. Virtuous people do not strive against others, against situations. Without striving is without mistake. Lao Tse stated:

“The highest good is like water.

Water gives life to ten thousand things and does not strive.

It flows in places men reject and so is like the Tao¹.”

In comparing the gentleness and hardness, Lao Tse said:

“A man is born gentle and weak,
At his death, he is hard and stiff.
Green plants are tender,
At their death they are withered and dry².”

So said, hardness and strength are the status of death, gentleness and weakness are the status of life. Or in other words, gentleness and weakness win over hardness and strength or “No striving would win.”

Indeed, if we don’t strive, no people would strive against us.

3) Intuition

Knowledge and mind work according to natural principle. We just need to return to our inside, without the need to go out to learn. While keeping our heart calm and pure, the non-action Tao will move with the sky, the universe and ten thousand things.

Tao Te Ching, Chapter 47 stated: “Without going outside, you may know the whole world. Without looking through the window, you may see the ways of heaven.”

Lao Tse also said: “The more you travel, the less you know. The sage knows without traveling and succeeds without working.”

Taoism pays attention to intuition of the super natural spirit without the meticulous knowledge of the mind.

Lao Tse mentioned about “Huyền Đồng” (become one with the Tao) to clarify the intuition. Tao Te Ching, Chapter 56 stated:

“Those who know do not talk.
Those who talk do not know.
Keep your mouth closed.
Guard your sense.
Temper your sharpness.
Drop discrimination.

1 Ibid, Ch. 8

2 Ibid, Ch. 76.

Become one with light and with the dust of the earth.

This is primal union, becoming one with the Tao.”

That is the use of the natural intuition, to sense all virtues, to understand the principle of all beings, without digging in meticulous details of ten thousand things.

CULTIVATION OF VIRTUES

Virtue is energy from the heart.

When it is calm it is called the heart (conscience)

When it manifests it is called Virtue.

In other words, Virtues are beautiful and good principles that naturally exist in our heart or that have been acquired and mastered by ourselves. In appropriate situations they will manifest as good attitudes.

In Confucianism, the cultivation of virtues is to follow the five duties (Humaneness, Righteousness, Civility, Knowledge, Trust) in dealing with self and others. Taoism suggested people to return to their spiritual inside to find virtues.

It stated: “Virtuous person’s heart is spontaneous like a newborn infant before it learns to smile.” Or “Virtuous person becomes simple. In order to be simple, we have to be pure and calm.”

Tao Te Ching, Chapter 16 stated:

“Empty yourself of everything,

Your mind will rest in peace.

The ten thousand things rise and fall,

While we watch them return.

They grow and flourish and

Then return to the source.

Return to the source is stillness

Which is the way of nature.

The way of nature is unchanging.

Knowing constancy is insight.

Not knowing constancy leads to disaster.”

Lao Tse said:

“The ancient masters were subtle, miraculous, profound,
The depth of their knowledge is unfathomable.

Because it is unfathomable, all we can do is describe their
appearance.

Watchful, like men crossing a winter stream.

Alert, like men aware of danger.

Solemn, like welcoming guests.

Yielding, like ice about to melt.

Simple, like uncarved blocks of wood.

Hollow, like caves.

Opaque, like a muddy pond.

Who can wait quietly while the mud settles?

Observers of the Tao do not seek fulfillment.

Not seeking fulfillment, they are not swayed by desire for
change¹.”

Tao Te Ching, Chapter 20 stated:

“Virtuous persons are like newborn baby.

Their appearance is dotted, simple.”

...“People are merry like enjoying feast

Like mounting the stage in Spring

But I am alone silent, like a newborn baby

Before it learns to smile.

I am alone, without place to go...

I am different. I return to the nature (nurturing) mother.”

It is like living with the nature Tao.

Realizing the purity and stillness, our heart will return to the
Wu Wei, the unnamed, and our appearance will be simple and
spontaneous like a newborn baby.

NURTURING

A proverb stated: “*Pure spirit in a healthy body.*”

¹ Ibid, Ch.15

Nurturing is therefore as important as spiritual cultivation.

Nurturing is to live a life in harmony with natural principle with a healthy body and a calm mind. Tao Te Ching, Chapter 10 stated:

“Can you live with body and soul in one,
Without separation?
Can you breathe gently like a newborn baby?
Can you clean your heart without stain?”

Lao Tse posed these three questions without giving the answers because people have different bodies, they have to choose their own way of living and of cultivation.

In esoteric practice, based on this statement, people created different way of spiritual cultivation.

“Can you breathe gently like a newborn baby?”

They divided the breathing into two stages:

- *First*, harmonizing the breathing and,
- *Second*, stopping the breathing.

Stopping the breathing is not to breathe by airway but by internal organs. There were experiences from Fakirs who can breathe internally and become immortal. We should not foolishly imitate without proper guide because of many risks endangering life.

About nurturing, Huýnh Đé scripture stated:

“With quietness, and nothingness,
We may control our Khí (breathing)
Our mind would be stable.
Peace will come.”

The practice of this nurturing would give a healthy body, a clear and pure soul, and the oneness of the body and soul, making a miraculous body.

BEHAVING

There are three treasures in behaving.

Loving, being sufficient, no striving, or yielding to people (no daring to be ahead of others).

1) Love

Love is to be gentle, loving, and helping all beings. It has the same meaning as “Mercy” of Buddhism and “Loving humanity” of Confucianism.

Taoism stated:

“The sky and the earth and me were born together. All ten thousand things and me have the same constituent.”

The disciple should be one with the sky, the earth and all beings and keeping ourselves happy and peaceful according to the principle of nature.

Lao Tse said: “We should love people whether they are bad or good to us.”

2) Being sufficient

People struggles for materials. We struggle for nothing.

People struggle for honor, power and wealth. We are trying to be sufficient.

People struggle for credits and profits. We retire into the Wu Wei (the nothingness).

Lao Tse said: “In the struggle for life, who knows to be sufficient may avoid insult, who know to stay out of the fight may not be harmed. If we know to be sufficient, we are in peace with the Tao.”

3) No striving with people

Lao Tse said: (Tao Te Ching, chapter 73)

“Nature has always a mystic power.

The Tao does not strive, and yet it overcomes.

It does not speak, and yet it is answered.

It does not ask and yet is supplied with all its needs.

It seems at ease, and yet things happen as planned.

So Taoists live according to the nature.

No strive and be calm and pure.”

Lao Tse said: “The sage’s personality is like water, when barred it stays on the mountain, when stricken (splashed) it may

hit his forehead, it may become square, round or change shape.

The sage is soft but not weak, strong but not hard, like water. Under heaven, nothing is softer than water but it may overcome the hard. Water does not strive but is not coward.”

Tao Te Ching chapter 78 stated:

“Under heaven, nothing is softer and yielding than water. Yet for attacking the solid and strong, nothing is better. The weak can overcome the strong; the supple can overcome the stiff.”

According to Trang Tử, the virtuous person is called True Master. The True Master does not discriminate people, does not despise poor people, is not arrogant when being in high position, not ashamed when being in low position, not joyful when going out, not sad when returning home, not fiery when exercising, not arrogant when succeeding.

In brief, the True Master is one with the nothingness. Or in other words, the sage does not strive against people, and therefore nobody is striving against him. He keeps being one with the Tao, being an example for people. Not striving, he is outside of all ten thousand things, and as the end result, ten thousand things come to him.

In summary, the doctrine of Lao Tse used the unnamed as principle and Wu Wei as practice.

Although the doctrine is subtle, but difficult to be popular. Because it is difficult to discuss about the nothingness, the disciple can only return to his inside, contemplate on the Wu Wei and then may realize it.

Lao Tse used the Tao not only for self-cultivation but also for morality. In morality, he said “No striving against people uses the virtue against enemy.” His goal is to keep his heart calm and pure to cultivate his divine conscience to reach Wisdom.

His doctrine is contrary with Confucius’ doctrine.

Taoism believed that the Wu Wei has already included the love and righteousness of Confucius. Wu Wei is the status of nothingness. When in action, it becomes love and righteousness.

The doctrine “Love and righteousness” concerns about physical appearance which is visible matter. Visible matter then has a shadow. Under its shadow, bad people may use this label to cheat people.

Lao Tse therefore said: “Give up kindness, renounce morality, and men will rediscover filial piety and love.” (Tao Te Ching Chapter 19)

Lao Tse lived a secluded life, away from secular life. His life explained partly his doctrine “Wu Wei.”

Taoism is one of the three religions and has an important place in the self- cultivation of CaoDai disciple.

Respectfully,

The 15th day of the 2nd month of the year Giáp Thìn.

Tiếp Pháp TRƯỜNG VĂN TRÀNG

SUMMARY OF BUDDHISM¹

A. BIOGRAPHY OF THE BUDDHA

The Buddha Sakya Muni was the prince Siddhartha. The meaning of Siddhartha is pleasant as one's wish.

He got married to princess Yosadhara at age of seventeen. They lived happily in extreme luxury in the royal palace. All their five senses and desires were totally satisfied. The historian called it the time of complete external satisfaction.

B. LEAVING HOME

Although living in an extreme physical satisfaction, the mind of the prince was never settled. Was it because of his Buddha or Immortal spiritual root deep inside of him that urged him to leave this material satisfaction for finding a way to save humanity?

After traveling through the four gates of the royal palace, he had witnessed suffering scenarios of humans such as senility, illness, and death, he determined to leave the family.

Then, one night, he left home with the servant Xa Nặc for the forest. He sent all his belongings, the horse with the servant Xa Nặc back to his father, then started his journey finding the truth.

From being a prince, he became a monk extremely brave, extremely determined, with extreme mercy. He was wandering everywhere, talking to various famous monks but could not find any way to liberate humans from sufferings. He then lived an ascetic life together with five other monks.

Alas! After six long years of torturing self, trying to control the physical body, he became emaciated and fainted in many occasions without even finding any solution. He was convinced

¹ Sermon given by The Tiếp Pháp TRƯỜNG VĂN TRĂNG at the Tayninh Thiên Lâm Tự on the anniversary of the Buddha, the 14th day of the 4th month of the year Giáp Thìn (May 25, 1964)

that this ascetic life was not the solution. He went to the river Ni Liên to wash himself and recovered self after being fed with milk and honey by two young herd-girls. He decided to follow the middle way not being in the extreme, neither too much of physical satisfaction nor ascetism.

C. ENLIGHTENMENT

He sat meditating under the shade of the Bodhi tree vowing not to leave the place until he can find the truth. The great vow gave him energy to conquer all seductions and finally he became enlightened.

Phổ Diệu Scripture recorded that during meditation he went through four stages:

1. Calming the mind.
2. Concentration.
3. Mind silent and in peace, reaching Wisdom.
4. Mind extremely in peace without being attached with emotions.

He remembered all the past lives fulfilling filial piety, love, mercy, righteousness, civility, impartiality, sainthood.

He had performed six kinds of actions:

1. Giving.
2. Self-restriction (following precepts).
3. Tolerating insult.
4. Progress to Wisdom.
5. Helping people.
6. Saving living beings.

There was no wasting time.

According to Sanskrit Scripture, he went through many stages.

- Bodhisattva knowing all his past lives.
- Complete elimination of evil thoughts.
- Detached from all life attachments (*twelve links of cause and effect*) which imprison people in the life-death cycle.

- Finding the four noble truths to solve all sufferings.

In summary, the life of the Buddha consists of three periods:

- First twenty-nine years living a luxury life at the royal palace, enjoying all external physical satisfaction. This was also the time when he experienced the relationship between the physical body and the universe.
- Six years of ascetic life in the forest returning to his inside, contemplating on the miraculous nature.
- Forty-five years of teaching. Passed away at age of eighty, reaching the Nirvana.

D. TEACHINGS

The first sermon was about the four noble truths which are Dukkha (sufferings), origin of Dukkha, cessation of Dukkha, and the path leading to the cessation of Dukkha.

1) Dukkha

Living being are continuously suffering. There are essentially eight kinds of sufferings:

1. Birth.
2. Growing old.
3. Illness.
4. Dying.
5. Being together with what we dislike.
6. Being separated from what we like.
7. Not getting what we desire.
8. Being together with what we don't want.

In summary, suffering is to live in the five skandha aggregates.

2) Origin of Dukkha

The origin of suffering is the greed, greed of life, greed of satisfaction, greed of wealth; and greed leads to reincarnation.

Why? The greed of life is to maintain the physical body.

After death, this greed¹ urges people to create another physical body in order to enjoy satisfaction. The greed leads also to anger and delusion. Together greed, anger, and delusion are the origin of reincarnation.

3) Cessation of Dukkha

To stop suffering, we have to eliminate the greed. The mind will become calm, silent, in peace. We will find the Buddha inside ourselves.

4) Path leading to cessation of Dukkha

There are eight paths (noble eightfold path)

1. Right view.
2. Right intention.
3. Right speech.
4. Right action.
5. Right livelihood.
6. Right effort.
7. Right mindfulness.
8. Right concentration.

Among those eight paths, two most important are Right view and Right concentration. Right view leads to the realization of the Buddhahood which needs also the Right concentration.

Indeed, everything in life is not true. They are all formed by karma. When there is no more karma, they will not exist anymore. Buddhist scripture called this delusion, which is the basis of the Buddhist principles: “impermanence and non-existence.”

Therefore, the disciple should look at the reality to find the truth behind this delusion. Buddhist scripture stated that the appearance of all things is just the delusion, and if we base on the delusion to act, we would generate karma, which is the cause of reincarnation.

We should transcend all delusion to realize the truth, and

¹ To eliminate the greed is not to destroy the self, but in contrary, one has to nurture the physical body to have a good health in order to cultivate self until fulfillment.

subsequently to reach the Wisdom. Wisdom is the Buddha, and delusion is humans.

IMPERMANENCE AND NON-EXISTENCE

The following story of King Di Lan Da¹ (Memandra) demonstrates the impermanence and the non-existence.

King Memandra asked Na Tiên:

- Dear monk, what is your name?
- I am called Na Tiên. My parents gave me that name.
- Who is Na Tiên? Your head, your body, your extremities are Na Tiên?
- Dear King, they are not.
- Suffering, joy, goodness, evilness, physical beauty are Na Tiên?
- Dear King, they are not.

So, what is Na Tiên?

Then, Na Tiên asked the King:

- What is a carriage? Wheels, frame, axis, seats, are they carriage?
- No, they are not.
- The noises, the silence, are they carriage?
- No, they are not.
- Dear King, people assemble things together to construct what they call carriage. Similarly, the head, the body, the extremities, the breath together made a human, who is only an individual. In reality, carriage or Na Tiên are empty words. Therefore, everything in this world is impermanent, and non-existent. They are just delusion.

People misunderstand and think that the delusion is the truth and base on it to act. Those actions keep people reincarnating forever.

¹ Nguyễn Đăng Thục, book *Triết Học Đông Phương*

The Buddha Sakya Muni stated that he tried to find remedy for the humans' diseases, not to discuss anything else.

WHAT ARE THE DISEASES OF HUMANS?

The diseases of humans are the reincarnation in the "Live-Death" cycle which is secondary to the twelve links of cause and effect such as:

1. Delusion, ignorance.
2. Action => consciousness
3. Mind and matter
4. Sense gates
5. Contact
6. Feelings
7. Craving
8. Clinging
9. Becoming
10. Having, owning
11. Birth
12. Aging, dying

If we count backward from Aging, Dying to Ignorance we still realize that the cause of reincarnation is Ignorance.

In order to eliminate Ignorance, we have to use the right view to realize the Wisdom, like using the light to shine the darkness. The more light we have the more we can eliminate the darkness, exactly like the statement: "Ignorance is humans. Wisdom is the Buddha."

But ignorance is only one of the twelve links. In order to completely eliminate ignorance, we have to pay attention to the other links and to use all Noble Eightfold Paths.

That is the essential Buddhist Dharma. The Buddha based on the level of people to teach, therefore, in forty five years of teachings, he left innumerable teachings to the world.

SUMMARY

The Supreme Being brings the three religions back to their primordial unity and unifies the five branches of the GREAT WAY creating then a novel religion called “ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỔ ĐỘ” in which the Buddhist Dharma has an important supernatural place in the self-cultivation.

The word supernatural implies the profound and miraculous Dharma. To realize this Dharma, we have to transcend the external delusion of the universe and the internal delusion inside ourselves. The disciple should realize the nothingness in order to eliminate the ignorance. If we reach the nothingness, our mind becomes clear, bright and calm, and will be able to realize the innate true self granted by God.

Moreover, this true self is the Divine principle inside ourselves that leads us back to the Supreme Being, becoming one with God and the universe, understanding all ten thousand things.

People may ask how we can bring the three religions back to their primordial unity while each of the religions has its own law and teaching.

We like to explain as followed:

All three religions use the mind (spirit) as the basis for cultivation. To cultivate the spirit, one has to return to the principle “Non-Action” (Wu-wei).

Confucianism taught: “No thought, no action, silence, lead to Wisdom.” Book Analects mentioned Confucius’ four “No’s”: *“No thought, No extreme, No stubbornness, No self.”*

Lao Tse promoted a secluded life in practicing the principle Wu-Wei. Tao Te Ching taught: *“Practice non-action, work without doing, taste the tasteless.”*

Taoist holy person practiced: *“No credit, no self, no name.”*

The Buddha Sakya Muni left the royal palace, to live an ascetic life in the woods to practice the principle Wu-Wei.

The Prajna Paramita stated: *“No matter, no shape, no non-existence, no self, no permanence, no Dharma, no struggle, no*

concentration, etc...”

In summary, the three religions all based on the principle Wu-Wei to transcend the dirty, selfish physical body. This is where the three religions meet. An old saying stated: “Unity in diversity.”

At the Tống dynasty of China, Confucians said to each other that they should go through the doors of Buddhism and Taoism before reading Confucian books.

In Vietnam, all Đinh, Lê, Lý, Trần dynasties used the three religions as the basis of education. In community, people worshipped ancestors, recited Buddhist prayers and believed in reincarnation.

It is clear that since ancient times, the three religions returned to their primordial unity. Now the fact that the Supreme Being created “ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỶ PHỔ ĐỘ” in using all the teachings of the three religions brings a new fresh profound vitality in the faith that would inspire us to realize this Dharma with all our hearts.

Why didn’t the Supreme Being just create a separate faith with its own teaching (different from previous faiths)? The Supreme Being just wanted to remind people that the three religions although having different appearances and names, all believed in the Supreme Being, the master of all universe.

It is also a way to show to human beings that they are although different in appearance such as colors of skin, hairs, and languages, they are all children of the same Creator.

Being children of the same Father, they should love each other. “PEACE FOR HUMANITY” is the daily prayer of all CAODAI disciples.

Respectfully,

THE END



Holy message
(Thi văn dạy Đạo)

“The Tao is high and deep! The Tao is high and deep!
Yet “high” is inadequate! Yet “deep” is inadequate!
Because even the commanding heights can be scaled,
And even the profound depths can be plumbed.
The limits of height and depth are to be found in the
human heart.”

Acknowledgement

Esteemed dignitaries, CaoDai organizations, friends, fellow brothers and sisters,

On behalf of the Research Department of the Representative Organization of the CaoDai Overseas, I would like to thank you for your kind contribution, especially your financial support, that help us fulfill our mission of publication of CaoDai books. With your support, we were able to publish the English version of the book “Giáo Lý”, tenets of CaoDaism, compiled by the Honorable Tiệp Pháp Trương Văn Tràng.

I would like to express our sincere gratitude to Brother Hiền Tài Bùi Đắc Hùm, MD. and Sister Bùi Đặng Cẩm Hồng, MD. for their meticulous work in the translation of the book, and particularly to Professor Janet Hoskins, Professor of Anthropology and Religion of the USC, who has graciously edited the translation. The book will be useful to all persons in their searching for harmony and peace.

May you and your family be showered with many blessings from the Supreme Being, the Mother Goddess, and the Superior Spirits on your journey to serve humanity.

The Research Department

Director

Hiền Tài NGUYỄN TRUNG ĐẠO

Contact Information

* CONTACT WITH THE TRANSLATORS:

Hiền Tài HÙM ĐẮC BÙI, MD. and
Sister CẨM HỒNG ĐẶNG BÙI, MD.

Phone: (909) 534-0145

Email: hongbui24568@gmail.com

* * *

* FOR BOOK ORDERING, PLEASE CONTACT:

Hiền Tài NGUYỄN ĐĂNG KHÍCH
(The Research Department)

Phone: (408) 926-9186

Email: tn_ndk@yahoo.com

DONATION

DONATION FOR CAODAI BOOK PUBLICATION
(English and Vietnamese)

Please make Check /Money Order payable to:

Cơ Quan Đại Diện Cao Đài Hải Ngoại

In the memo section, please note:

“For book publication”

Please send to:

**The Representative Organization
of The CaoDai Overseas**

2049 State Ave, Harvey, LA.70058 (USA)

Book **GIÁO LÝ**

by The Tiếp Pháp **TRƯỜNG VĂN TRÀNG**

Translated into English

First Edition in USA - 2015

**THE TEACHINGS
OF THE GREAT WAY**

FREE BOOK

Published by

The Research Department of
**THE REPRESENTATIVE ORGANIZATION
OF THE CAODAI OVERSEAS**
(Cơ Quan Đại Diện Cao Đài Hải Ngoại)
2049 State Ave, Harvey, LA. 70058, USA