

## Taoism or Daoism

Taoism (or Daoism) refers to a variety of related philosophical and religious traditions that have influenced Eastern Asia for more than two millennia, and have had a notable influence on the western world particularly since the 19th century. The word 道, Tao (or Dao, depending on the romanization scheme), literally translates as "path" or "way" (of life), although in Chinese folk religion and philosophy it carries more abstract meanings. Taoist propriety and ethics emphasize the Three Jewels of the Tao: compassion, moderation, and humility, while Taoist thought generally focuses on nature, the relationship between humanity and the cosmos (天人相应), health and longevity, and wu wei (action through inaction), which is thought to produce harmony with the Universe.



Reverence for ancestor spirits and immortals is also common in popular Taoism. Organized Taoism distinguishes its ritual activity from that of the folk religion, which some professional Taoists (Daoshi) view as debased. Chinese alchemy (including Neidan), astrology, cuisine, several Chinese martial arts, Chinese traditional medicine, feng shui, immortality, and many styles of qigong breath training disciplines have been intertwined with Taoism throughout history.

There is debate over how, and whether, Taoism should be subdivided. Livia Kohn divided it into the following three categories:

- **Philosophical Taoism** (Daojia 道家) - A philosophical school based on the texts Dao De Jing (道德经) and Zhuangzi (庄子);
- **Religious Taoism** (Daojiao 道教) - A family of organized Chinese religious movements originating from the Celestial Masters movement during the late Han Dynasty and later including the "Orthodox" (Zhengyi 正一) and "Complete Reality" (Quanzhen 全真) sects, which claim lineages going back to Lao Zi (老子) or Zhang Daoling in the late Han Dynasty;
- **Folk Taoism** - The Chinese folk religion.

Taoism does not fall strictly under an umbrella or a definition of an organized religion like the Abrahamic traditions, nor can it purely be studied as the originator or a variant of Chinese folk religion, as much of the traditional religion is outside of the tenets and core teachings of Taoism. Many have sent wedding invitations for a Taoist wedding ceremony where the couple sits in the center of the Pa kua facing each other.

Robinet asserts that Taoism is better understood as a way of life than as a religion, and that its adherents do not approach or view Taoism the way non-Taoist historians have done. Henri Maspero noted that many scholarly works frame Taoism as a school of thought focused on the quest for immortality.

Taoism has never been a unified religion, but has rather consisted of numerous teachings based on various revelations. Therefore, different branches of Taoism often have very distinct beliefs. Nevertheless, there are certain core beliefs that nearly all the sects share.

### Principles

Taoist theology emphasizes various themes found in the Daodejing and Zhuangzi, such as naturalness, vitality, peace, "non-action" (wu wei, or 'effortless effort'), emptiness (refinement), detachment, flexibility, receptiveness, spontaneity, the relativism of human ways of life, ways of speaking and guiding behaviour.

### Tao

"Tao" literally means "the way," but can also be interpreted as road, channel, path, doctrine, or line. Wing-tsit Chan stated that Tao meant a system of morality to Confucianists, but the natural, eternal, spontaneous, indescribable way things began and pursued their course to Taoists. Hansen disagrees that these were separate meanings and attributes.



Cane asserts Tao can be roughly stated to be the flow of the universe, or the force behind the natural order, equating it with the influence that keeps the universe balanced and ordered. Martinson says that Tao is associated with nature, due to a belief that nature demonstrates the Tao. The flow of qi, as the essential energy of action and existence, is often compared to the universal order of Tao. Tao is compared to what it is not, which according to Keller is similar to the negative theology of Western scholars. It is often considered to be the source of both existence and non-existence. LaFargue asserts that Tao is rarely an object of worship, being treated more like the Indian concepts of atman and dharma.

### De (Te)

Tao is also associated with the complex concept of De (德) "power; virtue; integrity", that is, the active expression of Tao. De is the active living, or cultivation, of that "way"

### Wu wei

Wu wei (simplified Chinese: 无为; traditional Chinese: 無為; pinyin: wúwéi) is a central concept in Taoism. The literal meaning of wu wei is "without action". It is often expressed by the paradox wei wu wei, meaning "action without action" or "effortless doing". The practice and efficacy of wu wei are fundamental in Taoist thought, most prominently emphasized in Taoism. The goal of wu wei is alignment with Tao, revealing the soft and invisible power within all things. It is believed by Taoists that masters of wu wei can observe and follow this invisible potential, the innate in-action of the Way.

In ancient Taoist texts, wu wei is associated with water through its yielding nature. Water is soft and weak, but it can move earth and carve stone. Taoist philosophy proposes that the universe works harmoniously according to its own ways. When someone exerts his will against the world, he disrupts that harmony. Taoism does not identify man's will as the root problem. Rather, it asserts that man must place his will in harmony with the natural universe.

### P'u

P'u (simplified Chinese: 朴; traditional Chinese: 樸; pinyin: pǔ, pú; Wade-Giles: p'u; lit. "uncut wood") is translated "uncarved block", "unhewn log", or "simplicity". It is a metaphor for the state of wu wei (無為) and the principle of jian (儉). It represents a passive state of receptiveness. P'u is a symbol for a state of pure potential and perception without prejudice. In this state, Taoists believe everything is seen as it is, without preconceptions or illusion.

P'u is usually seen as keeping oneself in the primordial state of tao. It is believed to be the true nature of the mind, unburdened by knowledge or experiences. In the state of p'u, there is no right or wrong, beautiful or ugly. There is only pure experience, or awareness, free from learned labels and definitions. It is this state of being that is the goal of following wu wei.



### Spirituality

Taoists believe that man is a microcosm for the universe. The body ties directly into the Chinese five elements. The five organs correlate with the five elements, the five directions and the seasons. Akin to the Hermetic maxim of "as above, so below", Taoism posits that man may gain knowledge of the universe by understanding himself.

In Taoism, even beyond Chinese folk religion, various rituals, exercises, and substances are said to positively affect one's physical and mental health. They are also intended to align oneself spiritually with cosmic forces, or enable ecstatic spiritual journeys. These concepts seem basic to Taoism in its elite forms. Internal alchemy and various spiritual practices are used by some Taoists to improve health and extend life, theoretically even to the point of physical immortality.

## Ethics

The Three Jewels, or Three Treasures, (Chinese: 三寶; pinyin: sānbǎo; Wade-Giles: san-pao) are basic virtues in Taoism. The Three Jewels are compassion, moderation, and humility. They are also translated as kindness, simplicity (or the absence of excess), and modesty. Arthur Waley describes them as "The three rules that formed the practical, political side of the author's teaching". He correlated the Three Treasures with "abstention from aggressive war and capital punishment", "absolute simplicity of living", and "refusal to assert active authority".

## Sexuality

From a Western perspective, the Taoist view of sexuality is considerably more at ease. The body is not viewed as a dangerous source of evil temptation, but rather as a positive asset. Taoism rejects Western mind-body dualism; mind and body are not set in contrast or opposition with each other. Sex is treated as a vital component to romantic love, however Taoism emphasizes the need for self-control and moderation. Complete abstinence is frequently treated as equally dangerous as excessive sexual indulgence. The sexual vitality of men is portrayed as limited, while the sexual energy of women is viewed as boundless. Men are encouraged to control ejaculation to preserve this vital energy, but women are encouraged to reach orgasm without restriction. Taoists believe that a man may increase and nourish his own vitality by bringing a woman to orgasm, thereby "activating" her energy and attuning it with himself. This is considered to be of benefit to both partners.

The Chinese government prefers the celibate model of Buddhism for Taoist clergy; Quanzhen clergy take vows of celibacy, but Zhengyi clergy are often married, and often reside at home. They are called sanju Taoshi, or "Taoist priests who live at home." Numbering in the tens of thousands, the sanju Taoshi perform rituals for their local communities.

You may detect similarities with certain Hindu beliefs and practices here.

## Scripture

### Tao Te Ching

The Tao Te Ching, or Daodejing, is widely regarded to be the most influential Taoist text. It is a foundational scripture of central importance in Taoism purportedly written by Lao Tzu sometime in the 3rd or 4th centuries BC. However, the precise date that it was written is still the subject of debate: there are those who put it anywhere from the 6th century BC to the 3rd century BC. It has been used as a ritual text throughout the history of religious Taoism.

Taoist commentators have deeply considered the opening lines of the Tao Te Ching. They are widely discussed in both academic and mainstream literature. A common interpretation is similar to Korzybski's observation that "the map is not the territory". The opening lines, with literal and common translation, are:

道可道，非常道。 [Tao (way or path) can be said, not usual way]  
"The Way that can be described is not the true Way."  
名可名，非常名。 (names can be named, not usual names)  
"The Name that can be named is not the constant Name."

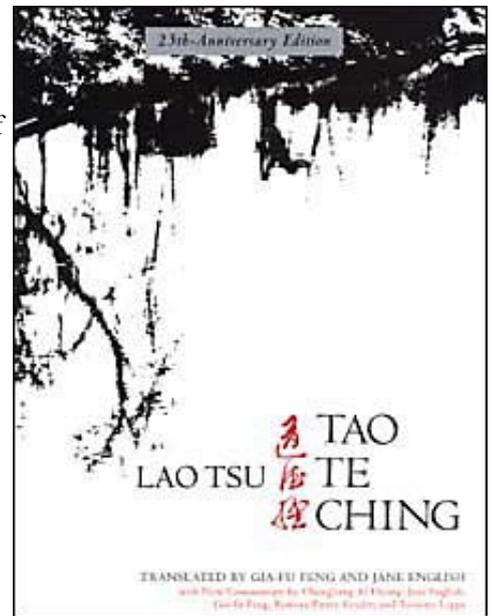


Tao literally means "path" or "way" and can figuratively mean "essential nature", "destiny", "principle", or "true path". The philosophical and religious "Tao" is infinite, without limitation. One view states that the paradoxical opening is intended to prepare the reader for teachings about the unteachable Tao. Tao is believed to be transcendent, indistinct and without form. Hence, it cannot be named or categorized. Even the word

"Tao" can be considered a dangerous temptation to make Tao a limiting "name".

The Tao Te Ching is not thematically ordered. However, the main themes of the text are repeatedly expressed using variant formulations, often with only a slight difference. The leading themes revolve around the nature of Tao and how to attain it. Tao is said to be unnameable and accomplishing great things through small means.

There is significant debate regarding which English translation of the Tao Te Ching is preferred, and which particular translation methodology is best. Discussions and disputes about various translations of the Tao Te Ching can become acrimonious, involving deeply entrenched views. Ancient commentaries on the book are important in their own right.



The Heshang Gong commentary was most likely written in the second century AD, and as perhaps the oldest commentary, contains the edition of the Tao Te Ching that was transmitted to the present day. Other important commentaries include the Xiang'er, one of the most important texts from the Way of the Celestial Masters, and Wang Bi's commentary.

### Zhuangzi

The Zhuangzi (莊子) is traditionally attributed to a Taoist sage of the same name, but this has recently been disputed in western academia. Zhuangzi also appears as a character in the book's narrative. The Zhuangzi contains prose, poetry, humour and disputation. The book often is seen as complex and paradoxical as the arguments and subjects of discussion are not those common to classical Western philosophy, such as the doctrine of Name Rectification (Zhengming) and correctly making "this/not-this" distinctions (shi/fei). This also shows influence by Mohist doctrines. Among the cast of characters in the Zhuangzi's stories is Laozi of the Tao Te Ching, as well as Confucius.



### Daozang

The Daozang (道藏, Treasury of Tao) is sometimes referred to as the Taoist canon was originally compiled during the Jin, Tang, and Song dynasties. The version surviving today was published during the Ming dynasty. The Ming Daozang includes almost 1500 texts. Following the example of the Buddhist Tripitaka, it is divided into three dong (洞, "caves", "grottoes"). They are arranged from "highest" to "lowest":

The Zhen ("real" or "truth"真) grotto. Includes the Shangqing texts.

The Xuan ("mystery"玄) grotto. Includes the Lingbao scriptures.

The Shen ("divine"神) grotto. Includes texts predating the Maoshan (茅山) revelations.

Daoshi generally do not consult published versions of the Daozang, but individually choose, or inherit, texts included in the Daozang. These texts have been passed down for generations from teacher to student.

The Shangqing school has a tradition of approaching Taoism through scriptural study. It is believed that by reciting certain texts often enough one will be rewarded with immortality.

### Other Texts

While the Tao Te Ching is most famous, there are many other important texts in traditional Taoism. Taishang Ganying Pian ("Treatise of the Exalted One on Response and Retribution") discusses sin and ethics, and has become a popular morality tract in the last few centuries. It asserts that those in harmony with Tao will live long and fruitful lives. The wicked, and their descendants, will suffer and have shortened lives. Both the Tai Ping Jing ("Scripture on Great Peace") and the Bao Pu Zi ("Book of the Master Who Keeps to Simplicity") contain early alchemical formulas that early Taoists believed could lead to immortality.

Additionally, the Huainanzi is a compilation of the writing of eight scholars from Han dynasty that blends Daoist, Confucianist, and Legalist concepts, including theories such as Yin-Yang and the Five Phases. Patron Liu An (c. 180 - 122 BCE) was ruler of the state of Huainan and the grandson of the founder of the Han dynasty whose discourse at his

court favoured Taoist thought and who brought philosophers, poets and masters of esoteric practices to his court. This resulted in the *Huainanzi*.

### History

Some forms of Taoism may be traced to prehistoric folk religions in China that later coalesced into a Taoist tradition. Laozi is traditionally regarded as the founder of Taoism and is closely associated in this context with "original", or "primordial", Taoism. Laozi received imperial recognition as a divinity in the mid second century BC. Taoism gained official status in China during the Tang Dynasty, whose emperors claimed Laozi as their relative. Several Song emperors, most notably Huizong, were active in promoting Taoism, collecting Taoist texts and publishing editions of the *Daozang*. Aspects of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism were consciously synthesized in the Neo-Confucian school, which eventually became Imperial orthodoxy for state bureaucratic purposes. The Qing Dynasty, however, much favoured Confucian classics and rejected Taoist works. During the eighteenth century, the imperial library was constituted, but excluded virtually all Taoist books. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Taoism had fallen so much from favor, that only one complete copy of the *Daozang* still remained, at the White Cloud Monastery in Beijing. Taoism is one of five religions recognised by the PRC, and regulates its activities through a state bureaucracy (the China Taoist Association).

### Adherents

The number of Taoists is difficult to estimate, due to a variety of factors including defining Taoism. The number of people practicing Chinese folk religion is estimated to be just under four hundred million. Most Chinese people and many others have been influenced in some way by Taoist tradition. Estimates for the number of Taoists worldwide range from twenty to over fifty million.

Taoism as with other religions in China have been oppressed and discouraged during the Cultural Revolution, thus the number of Taoists today greatly declined from the pre-Communist China.

Recently, there have been some efforts to revive the practice of Taoist religion. In 1956, the Chinese Taoist Association was formed, and received official approval in 1957. It was disbanded during the Cultural Revolution under Mao, but reestablished in 1980. The headquarters of the Association are at Baiyun guan, or White Cloud Temple, of the Longmen branch of Quanzhen.

Geographically, Taoism flourishes best in regions populated by Chinese people: mainland China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, and various Chinese diaspora communities. Taoist literature and art has influenced the cultures of Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. Organized Taoism seems not to have attracted a large non-Chinese following, except in Korea (e.g. see Kouk Sun Do) and Vietnam, until modern times. In Taiwan 7.5 million people (33% of the population) identify themselves as Taoists. In Singapore, 8.5% of the population identify themselves as Taoist. There are also small numbers of Taoists in the Western world.



### Practices

At certain dates, food may be set out as a sacrifice to the spirits of the deceased and/or the gods, such as during the Qingming Festival. This may include slaughtered animals, such as pigs and ducks, or fruit. Another form of sacrifice involves the burning of Joss paper, Joss sticks, or Hell Bank Notes, on the assumption that images thus consumed by the fire will reappear—not as a mere image, but as the actual item in the spirit world, making them available for revered ancestors and departed loved ones. At other points, a vegan diet or full fast may be observed.

Also on particular holidays, street parades take place. These are lively affairs which invariably involve firecrackers and flower-covered floats broadcasting traditional music. They also variously include lion dances and dragon dances; human-occupied puppets (often of the "Seventh Lord" and "Eighth Lord"); tongji (童乩 "spirit-medium; shaman") who cut their skin with knives; Bajiajiang, which are Kungfu-practicing honour guards in demonic makeup; and palanquins carrying god-images. The various participants are not considered performers, but rather possessed by the gods and spirits in question.

Fortune-telling including astrology, I Ching, and other forms of divination has long been considered a traditional Taoist pursuit. Mediumship is also widely encountered in some sects. There is an academic and social distinction between martial forms of mediumship (such as tongji) and the spirit-writing that is typically practiced through

planchette writing.

Many Taoists also participate in the study, analysis and writing of books. Taoists of this type tend to be civil servants, elderly retirees, or in modern times, university faculty. While there is considerable overlap with religious Taoism, there are often important divergences in interpretation. For example, Wang Bi, one of the most influential philosophical commentators on the Laozi (and Yijing), was a Confucian.

A number of martial arts traditions, particularly T'ai Chi Ch'uan, Bagua Zhang, Wing Chun, Won Yuen Yat Hey Jueng, Bak Mei Pai, Bok Fou Pai, Yaw Gong Moon and Xing Yi Quan, embody Taoist principles to a greater or lesser extent, and some practitioners consider their art to be a means of practicing Taoism.

## Taoist symbols and images

The Taijitu ("yin and yang") symbol 太極圖 as well as the Ba gua 八卦 ("Eight Trigrams") are associated with Taoist symbolism. While almost all Taoist organizations make use of the yin and yang symbol, one could also call it Confucian, Neo-Confucian or pan-Chinese. The yin and yang make a backwards "S" shape, with yin (black or red) on bottom. One is likely to see this symbol as decorations on Taoist organization flags and logos, temple floors, or stitched into clerical robes. According to Song Dynasty sources, it originated around the 10th century. Previously, yin and yang were symbolized by a tiger and dragon.

Taoist temples may fly square or triangular flags. They typically feature mystical writing or diagrams and are intended to fulfill various functions including providing guidance for the spirits of the dead, to bring good fortune, increase life span, etc. Other flags and banners may be those of the gods or immortals themselves.

A zigzag with seven stars is sometimes displayed, representing the Big Dipper (or the "Bushel", the Chinese equivalent). In the Shang dynasty the Big Dipper was considered a deity, while during the Han dynasty, it was considered a qi path of the circumpolar god, Taiyi.

Taoist temples in southern China and Taiwan may often be identified by their roofs, which feature Chinese dragons and phoenixes made from multi-coloured ceramic tiles. They also stand for the harmony of yin and yang (with the phoenix being yin). A related symbol is the flaming pearl which may be seen on such roofs between two dragons, as well as on the hairpin of a Celestial Master. In general though, Chinese Taoist architecture has no universal features that distinguish it from other structures.

## I Ching (The Book of Changes)

You are unlikely to study Taoism without coming across references to The Book of Changes and associated Eight Trigrams. It is most likely you may become interested in both and study them also.

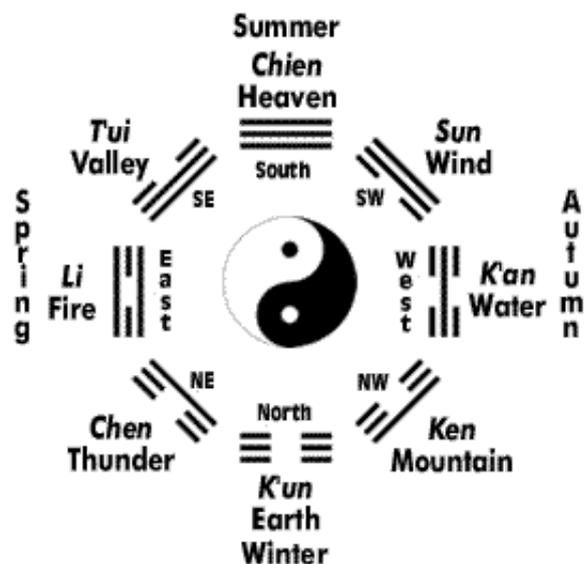
The I Ching is a book of traditional wisdom and guidance, although many use it in association with trigrams to try and predict the future. This book is available with dual English and Chinese text from any good bookshop in Hong Kong.

## Eight Trigrams

Trigrams are one of the earliest ways of writing, and consist of lines and spaces. The Eight Trigrams are also known as The Eight Gates to the Greater World. They have general meanings plus a whole host of specialised meaning depending upon how you are using them. We recommend this website for further reading:

<http://www.egreenway.com/taichichuan/trigram.htm>

Boring is merely a matter of perspective.  
It's a matter of pacing yourself for the distance.



Taoism is a practice geared for your entire life. You don't run full speed expecting to find all the mysteries of life in the first few days. Taoism teaches a person to pace their exploration, discovery and wandering to cover the path of an entire life time. So many get excited when first learning

## 嬰兒現形圖

他日雲飛方見真人朝上帝

游氣今已化飛龍  
覺現神通不可窮  
一朝跳出珠光外  
清身直到紫微宮

去癡癡之妄  
早破破之迷  
悟其悟之真  
悟其悟之真  
悟其悟之真  
悟其悟之真

氣穴注名無妄族  
廣也於寂寂寂空  
英問空中陳氏子  
龜云是你主人翁



行水世丹  
推境守神  
精神者亦  
念氣在茲

此時丹焚更須意母情嬰兒

Taoism, only to then lose focus over time. They put all their energy into focus of achieving the results they desire in the now: seemingly in the fewest possible actions.

The key to a long term Taoist practice is not about focus, it's about living. People want short cuts.

Taoism does teach many short cuts... but the short cuts aren't ones of time, they are of perception. Taoism provides the tools of acceptance so it's possible to settle down and enjoy the run.

Taoism shows a person to take care of mind, body and spirit so it's possible to run the distance. Taoism teaches to drop expectations so a practitioner can have patience to complete life: to discover it's about yourself rather than answers. Taoism also teaches that you will embrace many practices over time, to match shifting needs.

Taoism is never boring, it's your life. It's just a question on how we choose to jog through that life.

### The Third Eye

is a natural part of every person, but it's a "meta" organ. In other words: it consists of all the senses and mind working together as a larger more powerful sensory organ. The Third Eye is a very clever bit of natural evolution: a meta organ designed to sense, connect to patterns and then relay that data back in overlays of information on top of your other senses.

Once opened it's a very powerful ability, powerful enough that it literally can drive people insane if not understood, accepted or developed correctly. Also due to lack of understanding more people than not mislabel, run away from the ability or take it to strange descriptions... which further muck and murk the waters of what the Third Eye truly is.

The Third Eye as a sense can be used in many different ways. It opens up our senses to patterns around us. It's used by seers to make connections and answer questions. It's used by energy workers to feel the energy and then manipulate that energy. It's part of empathy where a person can touch and feel the emotions of others. Many other applications exist for how people have used the Third Eye.

The above section is adapted largely from Casey Kochme's excellent Taoist website, which is very worth visiting: <http://www.personal tao.com/index.htm>



### Relations with other religions and philosophies

Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism are one, a painting in the litang style portraying three men laughing by a river stream, 12th century, Song Dynasty.

The terms Tao and De are religious and philosophical terms shared between Taoism and Confucianism. The authorship of the Tao Te Ching is assigned to Laozi, who is traditionally held to have been a teacher of Confucius. However, some scholars believe the Tao Te Ching arose as a reaction to Confucianism. Zhuangzi, reacting to the Confucian-Mohist ethical disputes in his "history of thought", casts Laozi as a prior step to the Mohists by name and the Confucians by implication.

Early Taoist texts reject the basic assumptions of Confucianism which relied on rituals and order, in favour of the examples of "wild" nature and individualism. Historical Taoists challenged conventional morality, while Confucians considered society debased and in need of strong ethical guidance.

The entry of Buddhism into China was marked by interaction and syncretism, with Taoism in particular. Originally seen as a kind of "foreign Taoism", Buddhism's scriptures were translated into Chinese using the Taoist vocabulary. Chan Buddhism was particularly modified by Taoism, integrating distrust of scripture, text and even language, as well as the Taoist views of embracing "this life", dedicated practice and the "every-moment". Taoism incorporated Buddhist elements during the Tang period, such as monasteries, vegetarianism, prohibition of alcohol, the doctrine of emptiness, and collecting scripture in tripartite organisation. During the same time, Chan Buddhism grew to become the largest sect in Chinese Buddhism. Christine Mollier concluded that a number of Buddhist sutras found in medieval East Asia and Central Asia adopted many materials from earlier Taoist scriptures.

Ideological and political rivals for centuries, Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism deeply influenced one another. They also share some similar values, with all three embracing a humanist philosophy emphasizing moral behaviour and human perfection. In time, most Chinese people identified to some extent with all three traditions simultaneously. This became institutionalised when aspects of the three schools were synthesised in the Neo-Confucian school.

The extent, or not, of Taoist influence on Western philosophy is controversial, but some scholars see Heraclitus, with his distinctive philosophy of 'change' as reflecting the influence of Taoism, and there is even a small group of scholars who see Taoist influence in the philosophy of Plato and Socrates. Hegel and Schopenhauer both wrote of Taoism.

## Summary

The lines drawn to define customary practice between Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism as largely those made by scholars, devoted practitioners, and outside observers. The reality that I have experienced personally over the 7-years I have lived in Southeast China, is that ordinary people everywhere practice "Folk Taoism" during the course of their daily lives. Most notable for Western observers would be Qingming Festival, where ancestors are honoured and remembered. They are not worshipped. You can read more about these practices in my missives: [Qingming](#) and [Village Life in Guangdong](#)

Ordinary Chinese people may also perform their own version of the circumflex when visiting a temple or shrine, being: to bow three times with hands set in the pray position. This is most often accompanied by holding Joss Sticks, and after bowing, placing these before the shrine. On other occasions a pendant may be kissed, or a wish sent. This is definitely not in the Western religious sense, but more like asking an Angel for help.

A Chinese person would never think to ask for help on a personal matter, or for a good harvest. They may wish for this, but do not expect any divine intervention - simply because it doesn't work that way.

Most memorable amongst Taoist thinkers is a Buddhist named Cheung Du. Chinese buddhists do not smoke, drink alcohol, or eat meat. Cheung Du did, and sometimes visited a local Taoist temple for retreat. This crossover is not unique, to the point that most ordinary Chinese do not even know what faith they follow, they simply follow their traditional values and respect their ancestors. That simple.

Ultimately all these theosophical viewpoints and the Hindu religion, can all trace their roots back to the intriguing Bon Culture of the high plateau.

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**Pronunciation and Writing:**

Please remember that Romanisation of Chinese characters is not easy, and with Taoism in particular it becomes most complex because many words written in English that the world at large understands - are in fact based on Traditional Chinese characters from Hong Kong or Taiwan - and even Korea or Vietnam! Mainland Cantonese Romanisation is not the same, and then there is also the mainstream Mandarin version. Therefore you should accept that: Cheung Zi is Hong Kong spelling; Zheng Zhi is Mainland Cantonese ('e' being pronounced 'u' almost); and Zhang Zi is Mandarin. Zhuang Zi is Taiwan spelling in English - - - and they all write both characters as one word in English. Whichever one you personally prefer, the Chinese characters remains the same.

You could say this is one aspect of the many facets of ways of life in modern Southeast Asia?

**Tao Directory - Taoism and the Taoist Arts**

Welcome to Tao Directory, where you'll find links to everything related to Taoism and the Taoist Arts. A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single click...

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