

## A Look At The History Of Taoism And What Is Is

Tao which is actually pronounced as "dow" is translated to mean the way or path in English. Tao in reality is not so easily definable. Tao is the power of the universe that encompasses and moves through all things, both living and non living. The Tao stands for balance and shows the harmony of opposite sides, such as light and dark, love and hate, male and female.

The founder of Taoism is believed by many to be Lao-Tse (604-531 BCE), a contemporary of Confucius. (Alternative spellings: Lao Tze, Lao Tsu, Lao Tzu, Laozi, Laotze, etc.). He was searching for a way that would avoid the constant feudal warfare and other conflicts that disrupted society during his lifetime. The result was his book: Tao-te-Ching (a.k.a. Daodejing). Others believe that he is a mythical character.

Taoism began as a mixture of psychology and philosophy but eventually evolved into a religious faith in 440 CE when it was adopted by China as a state religion. Taoism, along with Buddhism and Confucianism, became one of the three great religions of China. China's support for Taoism stopped with the end of the Ch'ing Dynasty in 1911. Religious freedom became even further restricted after the Communist Party's victory and takeover in 1949. Much of the Taoist heritage was lost in the Cultural Revolution that occurred from 1966 to 1976.

Tao is the first-cause of the universe. It is a force that flows through all life.

"The Tao surrounds everyone and therefore everyone must listen to find enlightenment."

Each believer's goal is to harmonize themselves with the Tao. Taoism has provided an alternative to the Confucian tradition in China. The two traditions have coexisted in the country, region, and generally within the same individual. The priesthood views their many gods as manifestations of the one Dao, "which could not be represented as an image or a particular thing." The concept of a personified deity is foreign to them, as is the concept of the creation of the universe. Thus, they do not pray as Christians do; there is no God to hear the prayers or to act upon them. They seek answers to life's problems through inner meditation and outer observation.

Some of the basic tenets of Taoism are the following:

?Time is cyclical, not linear as in Western thinking.

?Taoists strongly promote health and vitality.

?Five main organs and orifices of the body correspond to the five parts of the sky: water, fire, wood, metal and earth.

?Each person must nurture the Ch'i (air, breath) that has been given to them.

?Development of virtue is one's chief task. The Three Jewels to be sought are compassion, moderation and humility.

?Taoists follow the art of "wu wei," which is to let nature take its course. For example, one should allow a river to flow towards the sea unimpeded; do not erect a dam which would interfere with its natural flow.

?One should plan in advance and consider carefully each action before making it.

A Taoists is kind to other individuals, in part because such an action tends to be reciprocated.

Taoists believe that "people are compassionate by nature...left to their own devices they will show this compassion without expecting a reward."

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### About the Author

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<http://www.emerald-energies.com>