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The Religious Prism of South East - Asia

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Abstract : When two or more religious belief systems are combined into a new system, this is known as religious syncretism. It may also be defined as the incorporation of beliefs from unconnected traditions into a religious tradition. Polytheism and numerous religious affiliations, on the other hand, are seen as diametrically opposed to one another. These situations can arise for a variety of reasons, with the latter scenario occurring quite frequently in areas where multiple religious traditions coexist in close proximity to one another and are actively practised in the culture. It can also occur when a culture is conquered, with the conquerors bringing their religious beliefs with them but not succeeding in completely eradicating the old beliefs, and especially the old practises. Faiths' beliefs or histories may have syncretic components, however members of these so-labeled systems sometimes object to the label's use, particularly those who belong to "revealed" religious systems, such as Abrahamic religions, or any system that takes an exclusivist stance. Syncretism is viewed as a betrayal of the pure truth by some supporters of such beliefs. According to this logic, introducing a belief that is incompatible with the original religion corrupts it and renders it untrue altogether. Indeed, detractors of a certain syncretistic trend may occasionally use the term "syncretism" as a derogatory pejorative, meaning that individuals who attempt to adopt a new idea, belief, or practise into a religious system are really distorting the original faith by doing so. A fatal compromise of the integrity of the prevailing religion is, according to Keith Ferdinando, as a result of this development. Religions that are not exclusivist, on the other hand, are likely to feel free to absorb other traditions into their own systems of thought. Many traditional beliefs in East Asian civilizations have become entwined with Buddhism due to the assumption that Buddhism is compatible with local religions. The Three Teachings, or Triple Religion, which harmonizes Mahayana Buddhism with Confucian philosophy and elements of Taoism, and Shinbutsu-shg, which is a syncretism of Shinto and Buddhism, are two examples of notable concretizations of Buddhism with local beliefs. The Three Teachings, or Triple Religion, harmonizes Mahayana Buddhism with Confucian philosophy and elements of Taoism, and Shinbutsu-shg, which East Asian religious beliefs, practises, and identities (who, by any measure, constitute the majority of the world's Buddhists) frequently incorporate elements of other religious traditions, such as Confucianism, Chinese folk religion, Taoism, Shinto, and Korean shamanism, into their Buddhist beliefs, practises, and identities. Nichiren Shush priest Jimon Ogasawara advocated a fusion of Nichiren Buddhism and Shinto just before and during World War II, but his proposal was rejected. Over the millennia, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism in ancient India have undergone several transformations, integrating aspects from a wide range of varied religious traditions.

Key Words: 1. Hinduism 2. Buddhism 3. Confucianism 4. Taoism 5. Daoism.

Introduction: Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism are the four major religions of the Far East, with Buddhism being the most widespread. Let us first examine Taoism, which is sometimes referred to as Daoism in some circles.

When we turn back in time to old teachings, we can often uncover endless wisdom that is still relevant today. This is especially true in life. This collection of sayings from the great Lao Tzu demonstrates that some of the wisest things ever written or spoken were written or spoken hundreds of years before our time.

Lao Tzu was an ancient Chinese philosopher and writer who is widely regarded as the creator of the Tao Te Ching (a collection of sayings presenting the primary Taoist doctrines) and the founding father of Chinese Taoism. He lived in the third millennium BCE (a philosophy that advocates living a simple life.) Tzu, also known as Laozi, was a Chinese philosopher who lived in the 6th century BC and is widely regarded as a pivotal influence in Chinese civilization¹.

Despite the fact that nothing is known about his life, Lao Tzu's teachings have been passed down through the years and have affected a wide range of people from all walks of life and across all cultures. The timeless wisdom of Lao Tzu may teach us a great deal about life and how to maximize our Everyday Power.

Taoism (sometimes called Daoism) is a religion and philosophy that originated in ancient China and has had an impact on folklore and national belief systems. Taoism has been traced back to the philosopher Lao Tzu, who lived approximately 500 B.C.E. and is credited with writing the Tao Te Ching, the major text of the religion. Taoism maintains that humans and animals should live in harmony with the Tao, or the universe, and that this should be achieved through meditation. Taoists believe in spiritual immortality, which means that after death, the spirit of the body is reborn into the universe.²

'If you persist in trying to attain what is never attained (It is Tao's gift), if you persist in making effort to obtain what effort cannot get, if you persist in reasoning about what cannot be understood, you will be destroyed by the very thing you seek. To know when to stop, to know when you can get no further by your own action, this is the right beginning!'

- Zhuangzi

It is believed that the Tao Te Ching, also known as "The Way and Its Power," is a compilation of poetry and sayings that dates back to the third and fourth centuries before the present that govern Taoist thought and action. The philosopher Lao Tzu is traditionally thought to be the creator of the work, but there is little proof that Lao Tzu ever lived or even existed. As opposed to this, the Tao Te Ching is a collection of older sayings from a variety of authors. Because of cultural and political considerations, the philosopher Lao Tzu is credited with the creation of this work. Lao Tzu is sometimes regarded as the embodiment of the Tao, or even as a god, and is accorded legendary status.

¹ Elizabeth Pollard; Clifford Rosenberg; Robert Tignor Worlds Together, 'Worlds Apart: A History of the World - From the Beginnings of Humankind to the Present'. W.W. Norton 2014.

² Woodhead, Partridge, & Kawanmi, Linda, Christopher, & Hiroko. 'Religions in the Modern World'. New York: Routledge. 2016.

The Tao (or Dao) is a difficult concept to define, however it is commonly referred to as the "way of the world." Taoism teaches that all living species should strive to live in harmony with the universe and the energy that exists within it in order to be happy. Ch'i, also known as qi, is the energy that permeates and guides everything in the universe. The Tao Te Ching and other Taoist works serve as manuals on how to behave and live spiritually in tune with this energy, and they are available online. Taoists, on the other hand, do not consider this energy to be a god. Rather, gods are a part of Taoist beliefs, and they are frequently introduced from the many cultures that once existed in the region that is now known as China.³ These gods, like all living things, are a part of the Tao, just as they are. Taoism is a religion with temples, monasteries, and priests that make offerings, meditate, and execute other rituals for the benefit of their respective communities and religions.

One of the core concepts of Taoism is the belief in the existence of opposing forces, often known as yin and yang. Each of these concepts represents a pair of complementary concepts such as light and dark, hot and cold and action and inaction that work together to form a universal whole. The concepts of yin and yang demonstrate that everything in the cosmos is interconnected and that nothing makes sense in isolation.

'Why is the Tao so valuable? Because it is everywhere, and everyone can use it. This is why those who seek will find, and those who reform will be forgiven; Why the good will be rewarded, And the thief who is cunning will escape'.

- Laozi

Taoism first gained widespread attention in the seventh century C.E. when it was adopted as the religion of the Tang dynasty. In the next centuries, it coexisted with Buddhism and Confucianism on the Chinese mainland (another philosophical religion). Taoism, Confucianism, and other religions, on the other hand, were outlawed once the Communist Party seized power in 1959. As a result, the practise of Taoism in China has dwindled significantly. Taiwan has a large number of modern Taoists, despite the fact that recent reforms in China have boosted the number of Chinese Taoists.

When used in Chinese culture, the term "Taoism" refers to both a philosophical system and a collection of spiritual beliefs. It also refers to a complicated ritual hierarchy and a monastic organisation. In spite of the fact that textbooks frequently distinguish between "religious" and "philosophical" Taoism, this distinction is arbitrary and represents no more than the distinction that can be found in all religions between the practises of a faith and the theological and philosophical ideas that encompass those practises.⁴

Because some forms of Westernized Taoist philosophy introduce unconvincing new age and other faith elements to Taoism while removing much of its religious content, the distinction between Chinese Taoism and Westernized Taoism may be more useful. For example, few Western 'Taoists' include Taoist gods and goddesses, liturgy, worship, or specifically religious meditative practises in their religious life.

Even though Taoism is generally taught as an atheist or agnostic philosophy in the West, Taoism continues to function as a religious tradition in China and Taiwan, rather than as an abstract philosophy of life, as is usually the case.

³ Creel, Herrlee Glessner. 'What Is Taoism? And Other Studies in Chinese Cultural History'. University of Chicago Press. 1970.

⁴"Taiwan 2017 International Religious Freedom Report". American Institute on Taiwan. US Federal Government. 29 May 2018.

'Different Chinese philosophers, writing probably in 5-4 centuries B.C., presented some major ideas and a way of life that are nowadays known under the name of Taoism, the way of correspondence between man and the tendency or the course of natural world'.

- Alan Watts

Taoists worship a diverse range of deities and goddesses, each with its own unique characteristics. Taoism is practised through the establishment of temples, monasteries, and priests, as well as the performance of rituals and ceremonies. Individual understanding and practise are just as critical to the survival of Taoism as they are to the survival of any other religion.

Taoism, with its rich palette of liturgy and ritual, contributes to making the Tao more tangible to human beings, while also giving a mechanism by which humanity might align itself more closely with the Tao in order to provide better lives for all people everywhere.

This has resulted in Taoism's theological elements borrowing heavily from other Chinese religious traditions (as well as many local cults), and as a result, the Tao has come to incorporate an extremely broad range of culture and belief under its wing.⁵

The Taoist framework has a number of traditions that equip priests with the tools they need to execute the typical functions of any religion. These functions include worship, healing, exorcism, interceding on behalf of the departed, purification, divination, and other similar activities.

Numerous rituals performed in Taoist temples are meant to govern the contact between mankind and the world of gods and spirits, and to organise that interaction as well as those occurring within the spirit realm in accordance with the Taoist philosophy.

Taoism as a religious practise is divided into two primary traditions. A distinct hierarchical and well-organized structure underpins each of the religions, which has its own headquarters as well as rules, standards, ordination rituals, and registration procedures.

'It is better to do one's own duty, however defective it may be, than to follow the duty of another, however well one may perform it. He who does his duty as his own nature reveals it, never sins.' – Lao Tzu

Taiwan is the home of the heavenly masters (Tianshi or Zhengyi) - Temple Daoism, which originated in China. Beijing is the home of the monastic branch of the Complete Perfection School (Quanzhen), which has its headquarters there.

It is the Complete Perfection School that ordains people and establishes monastic communities to serve as a focal point for Taoist practise and ceremony.

In Daoist monasteries, a basic, ascetic way of life is the rule rather than the exception. Those in charge of spiritual practise are led by an abbot, who is in charge of personnel management (assisted by an overseer and several scribes), and the provost, who is in charge of administration (assisted by a superintendent, treasurer, cellarer, and several vergers and chefs). The abbot is in charge of spiritual practise, and the

⁵Pregadio, Fabrizio, ed. The Encyclopedia of Taoism. 2 volume set. London: Routledge. 2008.

meditation master is in charge of spiritual practise (assisted by an ordination master, manager of offerings, and several overseers).⁶

The time schedule is quite rigid: a normal day begins at 3:00 a.m. and finishes at 9:00 p.m. A typical day begins at 3:00 a.m. and concludes at 9:00 p.m. A typical day comprises of numerous periods of sitting meditation and devotion as well as meal preparation and work, which may include—like in Chan Buddhism—work in the gardens and fields as well. Everyone is kept busy at all times, and all motions during the day are precisely prescribed and must be carried out with the greatest possible precision. When it comes to meditation, sleep periods, and meals, complete quiet is expected, and even when words are used, they should be utilized with care and caution. Daoists, on the other hand, adhere to the natural cycles of the seasons and frequently avoid the use of artificial lights, resulting in significantly shorter winter days than summer days, allowing for more extensive repose throughout the darker portions of the year.⁷

Taoist priests go through extensive and severe training in order to gain the requisite abilities. They must study music, liturgy, and ritual, as well as meditation and other physical disciplines; they must also learn Taoist theology and the spiritual hierarchy of the Taoist deities; and they must learn Taoist philosophy and theology of the Taoist deities. During this instruction, students are expected to live very well.

Taoist specialists think that they can travel in spirit to higher realms of being, in a similar fashion to how Shamans believe they can go out of the body to higher realms of being.

Using ritual, meditation, and visualization, the Taoist traveler embarks on such voyages in order to detach themselves from this world and become unified with the energy flows of the universe. The adventures bring them closer and closer to the Tao, until they finally reach it.

It is concerned with human society and the social obligations of its members; Daoism, on the other hand, is concerned with nature and everything that is natural and spontaneous in human experience; and both are concerned with human society and the social obligations of their members. One tradition is "within society," while the other is "outside society," and the two traditions work together to balance and complement one another. Despite the fact that it is largely correct in terms of orthodox Han Confucianism, it fails to recognize certain aspects of Confucian thought, such as the speculations on the Yijing that are recognized as Confucian Classics and the prophetic occult commentary (chanwei) on the classics. If you have this point of view, the social philosophy of the Daoist scholars as well as political parts of the Daoist religion are both completely neglected when it comes to Daoism.⁸ As a result, Chinese Buddhism has never been considered to be a Sinicized version of Indian religion, but rather as a branch on the tree of Chinese faiths that blossomed under Indian influence while keeping the vast majority of its fundamental Chinese qualities.

The ties between Taoism and Buddhism are complex, since they affected each other in numerous ways while also fighting for influence. ... The confluence of Chinese Buddhism and Taoism has also resulted in several Buddhist deities being incorporated into the Taoist pantheon, and vice versa.

When Buddhism first appeared in China (65 CE), it was in a Daoist milieu, at the court of a member of the imperial family who was well-known for his commitment to the teachings of Huang-Lao. He was a

⁶ Graham, Angus. *Disputers of the Tao*. Open Court. 1989.

⁷ Chad Hansen. "Taoism". *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Metaphysics Research Lab, CSLI, Stanford University. Archived from the original on 24 June 2013. Retrieved 1 October 2008. Accessed on 15th August 2021.

⁸ Robinet, Isabelle. 'Taoism: Growth of a Religion'. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 1992.

member of the imperial family who was well-known for his devotion to the theories of Huang-Lao.⁹ It was believed that Indian religion was a foreign version of Daoism by the early converts; the specific Buddhist books chosen to be translated during the Han dynasty indicate the Daoist emphasis with rules of behaviour and meditation techniques that characterized the early converts' thinking. In order to avoid confusion, early translators used Daoist vocabulary in place of Buddhist technical phrases to avoid misunderstandings. The Buddha's attainment of enlightenment (bodhi) was thus described as having "obtained the Dao"; the Buddhist saints (arhat) were described as having become perfected Immortals (zhenren); and the term "non-action" (wuwei) was used to characterize the state of nirvana (the Buddhist state of bliss). It was in the year 166 CE when the Emperor of Han gave a simultaneous sacrifice to both Laozi and the Buddha. The sacrifice was accepted by both gods. During this historical period, for the first time, a reference was made to Laozi, who had disappeared into the west and had later become known as the Buddha. With a long and distinguished history, this idea continues to hold up in the modern world.¹⁰ Buddhists were widely held to believe that Buddhism was a degraded form of the Chinese religion of Daoism, developed by Laozi in order to moderate the aggressive natures and harsh habits of the "western barbarians," and as such, Buddhism was unfit for consumption by the Chinese people. It was even alleged that Laozi had a plot to kill foreigners by forcing Buddhist monks to live celibate lives in one form or another, according to one interpretation. Originally authored in 300 CE by the Daoist scholar Wang Fou, the *Huahujing* (Classic of the Conversion of the Barbarians) has been amended and expanded through the ages in order to incorporate new developments in the ongoing discussion of Daoism. In spite of the fact that there is no evidence that the earliest Daoist organisation, literature, or ceremonies were influenced by Buddhism in any way, by the 4th century, there was a distinct Buddhist influence on the literary form of Daoist scriptures as well as on the philosophical expression of the most eminent Daoist teachers.

In spite of the fact that the process of contact was reciprocal, Daoism contributed to the expanding of thought that occurred as a result of foreign religious influence, and Buddhism contributed to the process of "Daoicization" that occurred as a result of its adaptation to local conditions. While Buddhism has had a significant impact on both Daoism and popular religion in China, its influence on the development of concepts of the afterlife has been particularly noticeable. Buddhist beliefs about purgatory, in particular, have had a particularly profound impact on not only Daoism but also on Chinese popular religion in general.¹¹ To a greater extent, the ultimate synthesis of Daoism and Buddhism was achieved in the Chan (Japanese Zen) school (from the 7th century onwards), into which were combined all of the contradictions of the old Daoist mystics, which was then realized in the Chan tradition (from the 7th century onward). It is possible to draw parallels between the objective of attaining enlightenment in a single lifetime, rather than at the end of an infinite number of subsequent existences, and the ardent Daoist's desire for immortality as the culmination of his current existence.

The simplest approach to begin cultivating culture with Daoist overtones is to begin with yourself. The following are three easy steps to learning Daoism:

- Don't get too caught up in the implications of the Dao (it comes from behind).

⁹ Meister, Chad; Copan, Paul, eds. *The Routledge companion to philosophy of religion*. London: Routledge. 2010.

¹⁰ Pregadio, Fabrizio, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*. 2 volume set. London: Routledge. 2008.

¹¹ Wu, Nengchang (2014). "Religion and Society. A Summary of French Studies on Chinese Religion". *Review of Religion and Chinese Society*. 1: 104–127. doi:10.1163/22143955-04102008. Archived from the original on 27 August 2017. Accessed on 16th August. 2021.

- Daoism is a philosophy that is thoughtful. Daoism is more than just "thinking" or "believing." It is action. As a system of values, feelings, and applications that serves and lives in one's environment, Daoism must be kept hidden and unspoken.
- Accepting Daoism is the only way to come to know it. Live life to the fullest and discover yourself. Your surroundings changes frequently, but it remains the same throughout your life. Instead of attempting to resolve the different issues in your life, you should learn to accept your surroundings.

This means that living a life of service and living according to one's own nature, as well as living in harmony with the rest of creation, are central to the Taoist belief system. Conflicts are accepted by Taoists as a natural aspect of life's existence, according to the tradition. It is believed in Taoism that things have meaning only because their opposites exist, and that this is due to the concept of dualism. In Chinese philosophy, this is known as the yin and yang principle, which refers to two forces that appear to be diametrically opposed but that are actually complementary.

Despite the fact that Taoism comprises a large number of deities, the Tao is not a deity and is not worshipped in this capacity. In all of creation, it is the supreme principle, and everything that exists and occurs is unified under the Tao. Besides this, Taoism encourages the pursuit of spiritual immortality and the pursuit of virtue without regard for one's own interests. The Taoist tradition also includes a wide range of ceremonies, activities, and religious beliefs.

In the same way as yoga, Hinduism, and Buddhism incorporate the practise of meditation and chanting, Taoism may do so as well. Taoists also engage in feng shui (the technique of arranging objects in a way that is harmonious with the surroundings), as well as fortune-telling practises.

Taoism and Confucianism

"Those who know do not say; those who say do not know." -Lao-tzu

"The superior men are sparing in their words and profuse in their deeds." -Confucius

During ancient China's philosophical development, the 6th century B.C.E. was a truly remarkable period. In that period, it is believed that the two most influential spiritual gurus from China, Confucius and Lao-tzu, lived and preached their respective teachings. Taoism and Confucianism, the ideologies that they followed, thrived side by side in dynasty China for more than 2,500 years, garnering limitless numbers of adherents during the era of the Chinese Empire. The attraction that both the Eastern and Western worlds have for these two great men and the beliefs that they developed continues to be strong today.

Taoism is attributed to Lao-tzu, who is known as either "Old Master" or "Old Boy." He is considered to be the founder of the religion. There is very little information about his life; it is possible that he did not even exist. According to legend, when Lao-tzu was born about 604 B.C.E., he emerged from the womb as an old man with white hair and a great deal of wisdom. His career progressed to include a position as the head librarian of the Imperial Archives. After becoming disillusioned with society's lack of goodness, Lao-tzu made the decision to abandon his home in Luoyang and spend the rest of his life in silence and seclusion someplace beyond the Great Wall of China, likely near Tibet. As he went through the city gates for the final time, the gatekeeper urged Lao-tzu to jot down his final thoughts before he left the country. The "Old Master" accepted and returned three days later with a little book in his possession. Lao-tzu then

abandoned civilisation, never to be seen again. His writings were given the title Tao Te Ching, and they quickly rose to prominence as the most important literature of Taoism.¹²

It is believed by practitioners of Taoism that the entire cosmos and everything within it is animated by a mystical, unknowable energy known as the Tao. The Tao, which literally translates as "The Way," has a wide range of interpretations. It is the name that best describes the ultimate reality of the universe. Taoism also explains the forces that drive the universe and the wonder of human nature, according to some scholars. Taoists believe that everything, despite its appearances, is actually one. It is only when people forget that they are all one in the Tao that they form their opinions of good and evil, or true and false. As a result, it is the goal of Taoists to recall, and if they have forgotten, to remember the oneness of all things. While followers may be tempted to think that the Tao is simple to understand, Lao-tzu cautions them: "the Tao that may be expressed is not the actual Tao."

Over time, a Taoist religion developed that differed from the philosophy of Taoism that we have just explained in this article. While religious Taoism had some of the same beliefs as Buddhism, it also advocated for the worship of a large number of gods and ancestors, a tradition that originated during the Shang dynasty and continued till the present. Other religious rituals included the cultivation of physical energy, known as "chi," the development of a system of morals, and the employment of alchemy in an attempt to achieve immortality through the process of transmutation. China adopted Taoism as its official state religion in 440 C.E., and the folk religion has been popular ever since. It is still practised in some parts of China today.¹³

Confucius, a politician, singer, and philosopher, was responsible for the development of the second major driving philosophy of dynastic China. Confucius, who was born in 551 BCE, journeyed around China, first as a government official and later as a political counsellor to the kings of the Chou dynasty, before finally settling in Beijing. Confucius retired from politics to educate a small number of students in his later years. Following Confucius' death in 479 BCE, his ethical and moral teachings were recorded by his disciples, who compiled them into the Lun-yü, or Analects, which are still in existence today. Today, many of his witty sayings are still remembered and used. "It's just as difficult to be poor without whining as it is to be affluent without becoming haughty," says the author.¹⁴

The purpose of Confucianism was to teach people how to be human. According to Confucius, each individual should act with virtue in all social concerns, including family, community, state, and kingdom, in order to maintain order and unity in the society and the state. "Jen" is the term used to describe man's virtue in all of its manifestations. In some ways, "Jen" is comparable to the Tao in that it is all-encompassing and incapable of being described. There were numerous rites in Confucian ceremonies that were based on the Five Classics, particularly the I Ching, or Book of Changes. It was necessary to follow tight and exact procedures for birth, marriage, and death in order to survive. As an example, according to Confucian burial ritual, a willow branch is always carried behind the body of the deceased, signifying the person's spirit.

The Analects, on the other hand, continue to be by far the most prominent component of Confucianism: "In the same way that failing to teach a man who can be taught wastes his life, failing to teach a man who cannot be taught wastes his words. The enlightened will not be defeated by either men or words." For

¹² Robinet, Isabelle *Taoism: Growth of a Religion*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 1992.

¹³ Yao, Xin Zhong. *An Introduction to Confucianism*. Cambridge University Press. 2000.

¹⁴ Ibid.

more than two thousand years, beginning with the Han dynasty in 202 BCE and ending with dynastic power in 1911, Confucianism served as the social philosophy of China, thanks to quotations like this.¹⁵

Buddhism and Taoism

Buddhism and Taoism are closely connected faiths that share a number of ideas and practises, such as the belief in reincarnation and the extensive use of meditation in both religions. Buddhism and Taoism are also closely linked religions that share a number of ideas and practises. Taoism and Buddhism are often confused as being synonymous, and in fact, the first Taoists to hear about Buddhist teachings coming out of India concluded that the Buddha must have been a reincarnation of Lao Tzu, the alleged founder of Taoism in China in the 6th Century BCE and author of the Tao Te Ching, one of the two central Taoist scriptures (The other is the much older I Ching).

The two religions differ in a number of significant ways, including the normally cheery tone of Chinese religions and the melancholy conclusions reached by Buddha on his journey toward enlightenment in the 5th Century BCE. For starters, the fundamental Taoist belief that life is good and can be improved by following the Tao or Way of nature, which provides us with the ultimate example of how to live organically and peacefully, is contrasted with the Western belief that life is bad and can be improved by following the Tao or Way of nature. Dukkha is a term used by Buddhists to describe life's suffering, which they believe is a result of the existence of evil. Every emotion, from the deepest anguish and pain to the smallest frustrations and discontent that we all experience on a daily basis, is possible for us to experience.

The variance in attitude between the two religions results in a divergence in goals between the two religions. Taoists strive to live in harmony with the Tao and have good rebirths in future lives; however, in some cases, the goal is to achieve immortality, which can range from literal physical immortality to heavenly immortality; this involves remaining immobile for approximately ten years with the goal of merging the body and spirit into a "body of light" in a manner that bears no resemblance to the incarnation of the body. The ultimate goal of a Buddhist is to be freed from the cycle of rebirth (Samsara) through the dissolution of the five aggregates that make up the ever-changing and impermanent spirit, which is constantly reborn into either different human bodies or into Heavenly, Hellish, or Animal realms depending on the consequences of one's Karma or actions in the previous life. It is possible to free the mind from the illusion of being a separate, independent ego by dissolving the five aggregates, which can be accomplished by Awakening or by becoming a Buddha (an awakened being). Even while this is typically seen as being beyond human comprehension, it can be taken as a state of Non-dualism in which individual egos do not exist, which means that the mind and the body are no longer separated.

At the end of the day, the most significant distinction between Taoism and Buddhism can be summarized as follows: Embracing nature's way of life is the objective of Taoism, but escaping from suffering is the goal of Buddhism. Taoism and Buddhism are two different religions. It could be argued that mankind's failure to live in accordance with the way of nature has been the source of much suffering throughout history; the valuable lessons of the natural world provide us with an excellent example of how both Buddhists and Taoists can embrace a healthier way of living, regardless of whether we follow the Tao or the Buddha's teachings.

Central beliefs of hinduism, buddhism, confucianism & daoism

¹⁵Fingarette, Herbert 'Confucius: The Secular as Sacred'. New York: Harper. 1972.

Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism are eastern faiths and philosophies that have been practised by millions of people for thousands of years in various parts of the world. While Hinduism is concentrated on a supreme entity, Buddhism and Confucianism are centred on the teachings of a man, and Daoism is centred on an idea, the religions have a lot in common with one another. Each one promotes moral behaviour, charitable giving, and reverence for the natural world.

Religion of Hindus: Hindus believe that there is a one supreme uniting power that is responsible for the creation, protection, and preservation of all that exists. Many gods and deities exist within the Hindu religion, although they are all distinct aspects of the same being, according to Hindu tradition. A person cannot become a Hindu if they were not born into the religion. In order to achieve the ultimate reward, which is union with the supreme deity, a person must live a decent life and practise kindness and generosity. When one dies, what happens to one's soul, or the essence of one's being, is determined by how one lives. Bad deeds committed in one lifetime are punished in the following existence. The soul is reborn as many times as necessary until all negative karma has been cleared away and it can be joined with the highest entity.

Buddhism: Buddhism is more of a life philosophy than it is a religious belief system, according to scholars. There is no god to be worshipped in this world. Buddhists, on the other hand, are concerned with achieving inner peace. Buddhism was founded by Siddhartha Gautama, an Indian prince, with the goal of teaching enlightenment. Moral behaviour, thinking before acting, weighing repercussions, and having a better understanding of life are all taught by the Buddhist philosophy. Every person experience pain, according to Buddha, and we generate our own suffering. We should cease doing things that make us suffer and follow an enlightened path in order to put an end to our suffering, according to Buddha's teachings.

Confucianism: It is founded on the teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius. Confucianism is a religious movement. Confucianism, like Buddhism, is based on the practise of following teachings rather than on the worship of a god. In accordance with the teachings, all humans are fundamentally good, and this goodness must be demonstrated toward one's fellow beings. Among the key characteristics of a decent person are politeness, virtue, righteousness, appropriateness, and moral wisdom. During the process of giving birth to their offspring, elders and ancestors should be treated with reverence. Education and learning are very highly respected in the society at large.

Daoism: Daoism, often known as Taoism, is a Chinese philosophy that was founded by Lao Tzu approximately 500 B.C. The concept of balance is essential to Daoist philosophy. A person should aspire to be one with Dao, living a modest life in accordance with nature, and strive to be one with the universe. Dao is not a person or entity, but rather a notion that is neither good nor bad. It is responsible for the creation of the universe, yet it makes no attempt to meddle with or govern it. Compassion for other people's lives, moderation in one's lifestyle, and humility are all characteristics that may lead you to the Dao. Being free of cravings and believing in the equality of man and nature may assist one in living a tranquil and happy life, according to some experts. It is founded on the teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius. Confucianism is a religious movement. Confucianism, like Buddhism, is based on the practise of following teachings rather than on the worship of a god. In accordance with the teachings, all humans are fundamentally good, and this goodness must be demonstrated toward one's fellow beings. Among the key characteristics of a decent person are politeness, virtue, righteousness, appropriateness, and moral wisdom. During the process of giving birth to their offspring, elders and ancestors should be treated with reverence. Education and learning are very highly respected in the society at large.

Conclusion:In fact, Hinduism predates Buddhism by two millennia and serves as the foundation upon which Buddhism was built. Buddhists believe that Buddha was born a Hindu, and that the religion that he founded was, in many ways, a revolutionary movement within the Hindu religion. As a result, despite their differences, the two religions have a great deal in common in terms of concepts. Some of them are as old as the Vedas, despite the fact that Buddhists do not regard the Vedas as being of any significance. The Vedas are considered to be the foundational scriptures of Hinduism.

However, despite the fact that the fundamental writings of Hinduism, the Vedas, were written thousands of years before the Buddha was born, both Hinduism and Buddhism have a common religious lineage. Prior to the development of any religion in India, Brahmanism was the predominant religious affiliation, and it is from this that both religions derive their origins. Despite the close relationship between the growth of both religions, there are a number of significant discrepancies in fundamental beliefs between Hinduism and Buddhism, which contrast with the intellectual commonalities between the two religions.

According to Hinduism, there are four reasons in life: karma (fulfilment of desire and satisfaction), artha (prosperity), dharma (performing your mission), and moksha (liberation from suffering) (attaining enlightenment). For Buddhists, the only goal is to achieve enlightenment, not just for one's own benefit, but for the benefit of all sentient beings on the planet.

Confucius, on the other hand, produced what would become one of China's most significant moral theories about 2,500 years ago, and it is still in use today. As a concern for social harmony, Confucius devised his theory of 'Jen' and 'Li,' which he considered to be the two most important parts of the development of virtue in Confucian morality. Confucius believed that these two concepts were the most important parts of the development of virtue in Confucian morality. Jen is a term that relates to humanity, or human-heartedness, and it refers to the ability to demonstrate empathy, compassion, benevolence, and concern for those around oneself. In the context of Jen's correct manifestation, Li refers to ritual or etiquette, and was the organizing of the world in such a way as to allow for the proper manifestation of Jen. Confucius felt that individuals in positions of authority had a responsibility to develop both Jen and Li, and that those in positions of subordination had a responsibility to accept the justice of the hierarchy. Those in positions of authority were also the most responsible and caring, and it was only right to defer to their authority.

Within a few decades of Confucius' death, his philosophy had risen to become the dominant moral philosophy in China, benefiting from imperial patronage and expanding to incorporate a variety of interpretations of his teachings. As a Confucian who lived between 372-289 B.C., Mencius used Confucian teachings to advocate for an idealized view of the world, interpreting them in his own way. As a believer in the intrinsic worth of all individuals, Mencius claimed that it was essential for rulers to act with compassion and charity toward all people. It was in the 11th century that the teachings of Mencius were embraced, and it was further backed by schools of thought common in Daoism and Buddhism, which argued for the cultivation of the virtuous self and the value of compassion, as well as the teachings of Confucius.

Daoism was founded at the same time that Confucius was living, and it is considered to be an alternative school of thought in many respects to Confucianism. To the contrary of Confucianism's benign patriarchy (which they believed was beneficial), the Daoists advocated for a just society of equals who lived in harmony and harmony with the natural world. Following the Daoist Culture Centre's interpretation of the doctrine, the establishment of societal hierarchies and the pursuit of personal power and fortune were immoral, and thus caused individuals to be alienated from the proper way of life. Simple living was regarded as beneficial, and individuals were expected to respect one another calmly and on an equal

footing.¹⁶ Confucianism's conservative idea of the inherent justice of imperial rule was challenged by Daoism, which offered an alternative. Rebellions against the government were frequently justified by Daoist morality, but only when done in self-defense.

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