

ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỲ PHỔ ĐỘ

CAO DAI,
OUT OF MANY, ONE
A RELIGION OF UNITY

Toàn Tập

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I, your Master, am you, you are Me.

Message from Cao Dai (God) - 1926

CaoDai without being CaoDai is the true CaoDai.

Ly Thai Bach's spirit - 1974

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PREFACE

Since ancient times, the human race has employed every imaginable means and scheme to compete, to fight, and even to destroy one another in order to attain the basic necessities of life in the struggle for survival. Modern times have brought humanity the convenience and the luxury of a material life, along with the advancement and sophistication of tools of war. But this progress in materialism and militarism has not been accompanied by a maturation of spirituality. And man has not hesitated to employ his sophisticated weapons to satisfy his inherent greed in the quest for wealth and power. All over the world, we continue to see killing and destruction in the fight for power and fame, land and money, and flesh and food. Humankind has come to recognize that their own destruction is inevitable if they do not exercise the power to rectify deeds in accord with conscience. That power can be found nowhere but in spirituality. Over the past four thousand years, various religious establishments have been founded in different areas of the world to teach humankind to love one another, to do right, and to avoid evil. At about 2,500 B.C.,

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob taught Judaism in the Middle East; Hinduism was founded in India; and King Phuc Hy developed in China "Yi King" or "I Ching" (the philosophy of transformations), which constituted the principles of Confucianism. About two thousand years later, in India, the Gautama Buddha, or Sakya Muni, founded Buddhism; in China, Lao Tse founded Taoism and Confucius Confucianism; and in the Middle East, Yeshua (Jesus) Christ founded Christianity. Because of lack of means of travel, however, these revelatory religions were initially received only regionally.

Despite scientific breakthroughs which have brought the world closer, humankind strayed from the source of power found in religion and has become enmeshed in materialism. Original philosophic and spiritual teachings of various religions were gradually modified in adaptation to the desires and convenience of the disciples. People in search of the true way became therefore disconcerted and confused as to the real essence of religion, and as to which religion is the "correct" one. With that manner of thinking, they may resolve themselves to living day by day waiting for God to come and save humankind, without knowing when, where and how God would come.

The authors consider themselves blessed to have experienced a unique religion that God has founded through direct spiritual contact. This new religion is CaoDai, which is the essence of the major religions (including Confucianism, Christianity,

Taoism and Buddhism) and which teaches the principle that ALL RELIGIONS ARE ONE. The authors humbly wish to introduce to the readers through this text the general teachings of this novel Way, which the authors have found most important and necessary for spiritual development in a time when humankind still immerses itself in the materialism of modern times and is in need of spiritual deliverance. This text, because of its limited size, cannot reflect all the profundity and ramifications of this path. For further inquiries or comments, please contact:

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FOREWORD

In the earliest days of humankind's existence on earth, there was still direct contact with the Creator. The Creator spoke in ways and symbologies relevant to each culture, for each tribe had their own land and ways different from the other; the Magnanimous Force we know as God loved not one more than the other and was pleased with all who still wished to communicate directly, answering each in their own tongue. But humanity's numbers were yet few, spread sparsely, and isolated from one another. Glorious cultures, and religions, all springing from God who had created them, developed everywhere independently.

As time passed, humans more and more forgot how to communicate directly with God even though they still held dear their religions, which had each sprung directly from God, the Creator of All.

Then when different tribes began to encounter one another upon the Earth they were mystified and did not understand why these others were so different from them; they appeared and acted differently, worshipped differently, and surely, each

to the other thought, must revere a different God! Because humankind did not understand one another they had fear, and as children who are afraid and away from the guidance of a parent will become bullies, so these human beings because of their fear displayed ungodly arrogance and created friction and war. They did not recognize each other as children of the same Creator. Even though there were further revelations from God to those who could still hear ("There is no God but God" - Islam; "Love thy neighbor as thyself" - Christianity), rather than embracing diversity people still preferred to resist the differences between themselves and continued to make war with one another. Separations became more and more minute, until even a single principle was allowed to separate the mightiest of sects.

Then in the last century of the Second Millennium, as the bodies of the eight million victims of the first World War were still decomposing, a testimonial to the Great Evil of war, God spoke to an unrenowned esoterist practicing his self-cultivation at a far corner of the Earth, also in an as-yet unrenowned place we call Vietnam today.

Precisely it was on the island of Phu Quoc, south of the mainland of Cambodia. There, Ngo Van Chieu received messages directly from God relating to a great Reconciliation which must take place between all religions. Ngo worshipped and vowed to obey God, Whom he knew as Cao Dai (literally, Abode on High). He asked if he might have permission to worship God in a representation he could

view. God replied that a human form is too limiting to represent the essence of universality that God embodies, and that the Eye is more apt, as it is the symbol for Universal and Individual Consciousness. So the All-Seeing Eye of God, or Thien Nhan (Divine Eye) became the symbol for Cao Dai, for God and the ensuing religion, which is called CaoDai or CaoDaism. God said:

*The Eye represents the heart
From which twin pure lights beam.
Light and Spirit are One,
God is the Spirit's gleam.*

As one who still hears the Original Call, I welcome the reader to this text.

Ngasha Beck
Editor for English version

CHAPTER 1

CAODAI, THE MESSAGE

What is CaoDai?

CaoDai is a unique religion originating in Southeast Asia, which recognizes God as Source of the Universe and all souls, origin of all religions, Who manifested differently in different epochs and is called by myriad Names. CaoDai is a universal religion, which considers all religions One. It teaches human beings, who all have sprung from the same Source, to live in harmony, love, justice and peace; to enjoy universal sisterhood and brotherhood; and to cultivate themselves to seek and be reunited with God in their hearts.

CaoDai propounds that God has come and expressed Himself in a new Way, Dai Dao Tam Ky Pho Do (The Third Revelation Of The Great Way), or the CaoDai religion, in 1926 in Vietnam. "CaoDai" literally means high palace or Supreme Palace or Abode on High where God reigns). Figuratively, the phrase Cao Dai (two words) is used as God's symbolic name, and CaoDai (one word) as the path being

taught. The philosophy of CaoDai is the oneness between the Supreme Being and universe including humanity and religions.

What is the goal of CaoDai?

The immediate goal of CaoDai is to show human beings that all religions have indeed one same origin and one same principle, which is love and justice. If human beings would stop discriminating against each other because of difference in religions and treat each other with true love and justice (Do unto others as you would have them do unto you), there would soon be unity of all religions with religious understanding and tolerance, and subsequently harmony between humanity and peace on earth. The ultimate goal of CaoDai is to bring to the individual teachings of self-purification both physical and spiritual, and of self-cultivation by meditation with the goal of the attainment of peace within. Physical purification consists of eating sane foods (being vegetarian is considered as one way of bodily purification) without influences of substances such as alcohol, cigarettes, opium, drugs, et cetera. Spiritual purification consists of practicing compassion, love, and altruism, in eliminating greed, hatred, jealousy, and anger toward others. Once progressively purified physically and spiritually, one will become closer to and unified with the Supreme Being, and have absolute peace within.

Is there a universal religion?

Yes, there is. CaoDai is a universal religion. Cao Dai (two words) is a name that the Supreme Being has used through divine messages. CaoDai is a universal religion with the principle that all religions are one and of one origin. There are other religions that adhere to this fundamental principle as well and with whom CaoDai finds easy alliance, such as the Baha'i, the Theosophy, and The Oomoto Foundation (Japan).

How can there be one universal religion, while current religions are so outwardly different?

It is simply the truth being seen from different angles. Indeed, CaoDai Holy messages from the Supreme Being have stated: *"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 Tao: Confucianism, Shintoism, Christianity, Taoism, and Buddhism, each based on the customs of the respective race. In present days, transportation has been improved, and people have come to know each other better, but do not live in harmony because of the very multiplicity of those religions. That's why I have deigned to unite all of those religions into one to bring them back to the primordial unity."*

In which ways are different religions really**one?**

Love and Justice are always principles in any religion. Justice essentially means "Do to others what you want others to do to you; don't do to others what you don't want others to do to you." Also as part of the understanding of all religions, everyone is considered to have a spirit, which is part of the Supreme Being's spirit. This spirit is called by various names by the different religions. It is called microcosm by Zoroastrianism, true self by Hinduism, Buddha's heart by Buddhism, God's heart by Taoism, soul by Christianity, Naf-matmainnah by Islam... Additionally, the goal of every religion is to guide humans to cultivate the true self, the goodness, the stillness within, in order that the human spirit may become one or unite with the Supreme Being's spirit. In other words, esoteric practice in the various forms of meditation, prayer, purification and supplication which bring one close to God, would lead human beings to the same ultimate goal which is self-realization and reunification with God.

Dai Dao Tam Ky Pho Do, The Third Revelation of The Tao, The Great Way.

Dai Dao Tam Ky Pho Do means The Third Revelation of the Tao, the Great Way, otherwise known as CaoDai.

Cao Dai or The Supreme Being has communicated with human beings since the beginning of time, and the will of The Supreme Being has thereby been

revealed to us many times. The history of religion can be divided into three major periods of revelation. In the first two, select individuals received God's instruction and served suffering humanity by founding and developing Confucianism, Shintoism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Taoism and Buddhism. In the first revelatory era, Nhien Dang Co Phat (Dipankara Buddha), Thai Thuong Dao Quan (previous incarnation - or life - of Lao Tse), Moses, and King Phuc Hi respectively founded Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, and Humanism to bring to man God's teachings. In the second revelatory era, Sakya Muni, Lao Tse, Jesus Christ, Mohammed, Khuong Thai Cong, and Confucius respectively founded Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, Islam, Shintoism, and Confucianism. In their pristine forms, the revelations given by these human messengers were Truth, but because of human frailty and ambitions of disciples, the messages were not correctly followed. Moreover, these messages were somewhat time- and culture-bound, being particularly applicable to the people of the area where the founders lived. The effect of the revelations given during these two periods gave only a partial picture of God's will. Therefore, Cao Dai (God) deigned to grant a third revelation to the world through this unique integrative religion we call CaoDai or Dai Dao Tam Ky Pho Do (The Third Revelation of the Tao) which teaches the unity of all religions and a path of self-cultivation leading to reunification with The Supreme Being.

What is spiritism?

Spiritism or spiritualism involves receiving communication from the spiritual realm. This is often achieved by means of a device. In traditional CaoDai, the most common device is a "Ngoc co" or "basket with beak". Two mediums hold the underside of the basket, to which a writing instrument is attached. After much spiritual preparation and a ritual prayer, they open to spirit which guides their hands to move the basket and allows the writing instrument at the end of the "beak" to write. An interpreter who also attends, reads the writing. One example is the instructions received for mediums in 1926:

It is very difficult for the spirit of a human being to get out of the physical body. When one purifies oneself well, one may become enlightened and then may get out of the body and travel the universe. When the "basket with beak" is utilized in spiritualism, if the person is unconscious their spirit will leave the physical body, hear My instructions, and have their body do the writing of the messages. If the interpreter reads incorrectly, the medium's spirit will not agree with the interpretation... they will be obliged to write again.

In the other form of contact known as automatic writing, or inspired writing, I will come to you and make your spirit unstable for awhile and during that time your spirit will come to listen to Me. Your hand will obey and write. In such a case, I cooperate with you so that you will reach a Universal knowledge. Before the session one must purify mind and body - do not omit purification or you risk

failure. To practice well, one should keep mind pure, not encumbered by everyday living matters; and keep the hands cleansed and deodorized. Deep meditation will allow one's spirit to get out of the body and communicate with Me.

The mediums should be chosen for their advanced spirit so the session will be fruitful. They should practice vegetarianism, and train themselves toward being completely balanced (as good as saints and enlightened spirits) to be able to properly achieve the session and transmit the teachings; they are considered as My assistants in the propagation of the Way.

Spiritual contact cannot be taken lightly. In the reception of waves by the spirit, each person has their own waves which may interfere but subsequently make their spirit write; these writings may not be correct. One should take caution in setting up sessions and in recognizing the authenticity of the writings.

The principle of CaoDai

The CaoDai principle is "Although created by the Supreme Being at different times and places, all religions are one." This concept of oneness is reflected in the Supreme Being's messages:

"After creating the universe, I divided My spirit and with it made all creatures, plants and materials. Everything in this universe comes from My spirit, and therefore has a life. Where there is life, there is Myself even in materials and plants. I am each of you and you are Me." While the Supreme Being shares His spirit among the myriad creatures, physically, all materials, plants,

animals, and human beings have also the same basic constituent: the atom. In other words, ten thousand things in this universe have the same spiritual and physical constitution. Indeed, all creatures are composed of two parts: physical body which is perishable after death and an invisible part which includes both spirit and soul. The spirit is a part of the Supreme Being's spirit and has the role of guiding the physical body to the practice of good. The soul or perispirit, being the source of feelings and personality, could lead the physical body to either good actions or evil deeds.

Based on Karmic law which holds that future lives or incarnations depend on present deeds, and that all spirits evolve out of a material world and progressively attain higher or lower levels at each incarnation. To be able to go back to one's origin, which is the Supreme Being, one has to transcend this cycle by physical and spiritual cultivation. CaoDai teachings consist of helping humanity self-cultivate in many points of view.

1 - From a moral point of view, CaoDai reminds a person of his duties toward self, the family, the society (a broader family), and humanity (the universal family).

2 - From a philosophical point of view, CaoDai preaches renouncement of honors, riches and luxury; in other words, emancipation from servitude to materialism to attain spirituality and peace.

3 - From the spiritual point of view, it recognizes the existence of the spirit and the soul, their

survival beyond that of the physical body, and enjoins self-cultivation and a return to The All That Is.

4 - From the initiates' point of view, by uniting Humanism, Christianity, Taoism, and Buddhism, CaoDai provides teachings which encompass all stages of a person's physical, emotional, and spiritual development. It assists the person through a progressive process of spiritual evolution. At a stage where one is still attached to many secular obligations such as toward husband or wife, parents, children, brothers and sisters, and humanity, CaoDai with its humanistic teaching can guide one through all activities of one's life. Later, whenever one wishes to find peace of mind and to be united with the Almighty deep in one's heart, CaoDai will provide guidance in self-cultivation with meditation.

CHAPTER 2

CAODAI, ITS CONCEPTS

Reason for the founding of CaoDai:

Each time that human beings suffered when societies became chaotic, a religion was founded. For millenia, human beings have been blessed by having many forms of religion such as Hinduism, Judaism, Zoroasterianism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Christianity, Islam, et cetera. One always observes one same truth through religions, even when they are so physically different and founded at different times and places.

The truth is the existence of a Creator of all the universe and living beings, the existence of the Supreme Being who reigns in everyone's heart. Religions have called this Supreme Being by different names: Macrocosm by Hinduism, Yahweh by Judaism, Ahura Mazda by Zoroasterianism, Tao by Taoism, Monad by Confucianism, Allah by Islam, or simply "God" by a myriad of English-speaking religious persons.

Then with time, the truth gets corrupted and

diluted. Human beings have a tendency toward materialism. They discriminate against each other because of physical differences between religions; they fight, and kill each other under the form of religious wars; the relationship between parents and children, husband and wife, brothers and sisters, friends, becomes controlled by material desires and money. Universal philosophies such as Baha'i, Theosophy, and Oomoto Foundation were created, trying to connect the Eastern and Western religions.

In 1926 the Supreme Being founded CaoDai in Vietnam to show people that all religions are indeed of one same origin. In 1926, the Supreme Being gave the following message:

Nhien Dang Co Phat (an old time Buddha) is Me,

Sakya Muni is Me,

Thai Thuong Nguon Thi (an old time Immortal) is Me,

Who is Cao Dai.

In founding CaoDai, the Supreme Being teaches man to realize that all religions have one same origin, and not to discriminate against each other but to love each other as brother and sister, to cultivate self to find God in one's heart.

How was CaoDai founded?

The philosophy and moral code of the Cao-Daists developed from unification of the most influential school of thought of the day in Vietnam: Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, and Confucianism. It was in 1920, six years before the official founding of

the CaoDai religion that Cao Dai the Supreme Being revealed to Ngo Van Chieu, the then governor of Phu Quoc, a beautiful island in the gulf of Siam. Ngo was leading a life of seclusion and wisdom. With the assistance of a mediumistic form of worship, he maintained contact with the spiritual realm. An apparition which revealed an identity of "Cao Dai" appeared. From the beginning, the name Cao Dai, which literally means high abode, or roofless tower, was given as a symbolic name of the Supreme Being. The Supreme Being informed Ngo that all the world's religions should return to the One from which they originally sprang. This message was to be delivered to the world. Ngo asked CaoDai for permission to worship Him under a tangible form. He then had a vision of the All-Seeing Eye and was subsequently ordered to use it as the symbol of Cao Dai. Ngo returned to Saigon in 1924. To those interested in self-cultivation, he taught the philosophy and esoteric practice he had learned from Cao Dai during his stay in Phu Quoc.

In mid 1925, totally separated from Ngo Van Chieu, three minor civil officials in Saigon - Cao Quynh Cu, Pham Cong Tac, and Cao Hoai Sang - were together practicing spiritism. One spirit contacted was singled out for His wonderful virtues and outstanding knowledge. He introduced Himself as AAA. (AAA are the first three letters of the Vietnamese alphabet). As the session continued, under AAA's advice, they replaced their rudimentary method of communication with a tool for writing

called Ngoc co (basket with beak). On Christmas eve of 1925, AAA finally revealed that He was the Supreme Being, coming under the name of Cao Dai, to teach the Way. He said:

Rejoice this day, it is the anniversary of My coming to the West to teach the Way (God came to the Middle East in the form of Yeshua - Jesus - Christ to found Christianity). This house will be filled with blessings. You will see more miracles which will lead you to further belief. For some time, I have used the symbol AAA to lead you to religious life. You soon are to found a unique religion under My instructions.

From that day, CaoDai religion began as an organized form of worship.

During the same period, one evening, Mr. Le Van Trung, a former elected official to the Colonial Council of Cochinchina, happened to be present at a session of spiritism. There, the spirit of Ly Thai Bach, a great Chinese scholar under the T'ang Dynasty, revealed the spiritual origin of Trung (who is the incarnation of the spirit of the Immortal named Ly Thiet Quai) and enjoined him to accept his future religious mission. From that day, Trung, who was an opium addict, ceased to smoke without the slightest withdrawal symptom. He also abstained from alcohol and meat. Later, under Cao Dai's order, Cao Quynh Cu and Pham Cong Tac invited Trung to join in the worshipping of Cao Dai. The group grew steadily to include Cu, Tac, Sang, Dieu, Duc, Hau, Trung. At the end of 1925, Cao Dai dispatched them to meet with Ngo Van Chieu. During the ensuing session, Cao Dai

commanded that a unique religion be founded for all of humanity. Soon by dint of their selflessness and dedication, and the virtues of their teachings, these pioneers succeeded in building a considerable following. And at the beginning of 1926, CaoDai began to establish an ecclesiastic hierarchy. At this point, Ngo, who preferred his solitary, meditative life of esoteric practice, renounced the title of Giao Tong (leader of the executive body), and retired from the organization. He then continued to teach esoteric CaoDai to anyone interested in self-cultivation for self-realization. By the order of Cao Dai, Le Van Trung was appointed acting Giao Tong. On September 28, 1926, the religious leaders delivered an official declaration of the founding of CaoDai. This form of CaoDai has as its main activity exoteric practice which, in a practical way, leads humanity to religious unity and subsequently to peace on earth.

The new faith rapidly attracted the masses and became a seeming threat to the French government. The French used all possible maneuvers to suppress this fast-growing religion. For fifty years, despite pressure under the French government, suppression by the Vietminh (a Vietnamese Communist group), and the Catholic Ngo Dinh Diem government, the movement nevertheless grew in scope, breadth and influence. But in 1975, the influential presence of CaoDai was usurped in Vietnam by a communist-based government and was destroyed in Cambodia by the genocidal Khmer Rouge. At the same time, however, the way was opened for

awareness of CaoDai to be spread by the multitude of people escaping Southeast Asia during this tumultuous period.

Now as the millennium dawns, a new impetus is created and CaoDai messages are given to new people in new places, such as in the United States. Americans are beginning to discover the value of the original esoteric form of CaoDai. In much the same way as Tibetan Buddhism has been opened to many, CaoDai begins the process of disseminating little by little its valuable and closely held esoteric information to the West. The first temple to open itself to the influx and acceptance of Westerners is underway in Riverside, California. Its leaders have the desire to begin to relate their esoteric traditions in English to Americans, so that the first and main message received from the Supreme Being, that we all are One and must reunite under The One Nameless Divinity, can be delivered, and that a path of esoteric practice toward that end (reunification of the self with the Supreme Being) may begin.

The oneness of God, Man and the Universe

In CaoDai text, among many teachings, one stands out: "Thien Dia Van Vat Dong Nhat The" which means: "The sky, the earth, and ten thousand things are of one same constitution." How can this be? What does it imply? What is the extended meaning? Let's examine a few situations to try to understand how the sky, the earth and all the things in the

universe can be of one same nature.

One can see man as consisting of the physical body, the emotional part and the spiritual part. Let's examine the physical body:

A pedestrian wearily walked in the heat, sweat all over. He looked for a respite, a shade, some water. A plant by the road wilted under the fierce sun. Water would be the savior for the plant and the man. It appears that the stone is untouched but if the stone is in an oven with high enough temperature, the stone also decomposes. Thus, the same effect from excessive heat is observed for the man, the plant, the animal and eventually the stone. If they don't have the same basic constitution, how can a common effect takes place?

Similarly, animals, plants and people all need to absorb nutrients and to eliminate unnecessary materials. The energy they receive is limited to the regular supply of nutrients.

Let's consider the aspect of reproduction. A common law governs reproduction. A marigold plant gives seeds which if placed in appropriate condition, will produce marigold plants. A dog, after conceiving will give birth to a dog. A similar law applies to the human being. The same rule of specific continuation of the line applies, whether human, or animal or plant. The same genetic law governs.

All existence in this universe starts out with the atom. The same basic constitution, the same natural laws are expressed by the Unitarian Universalist principle of Oneness of the Human with the

Eternal and the reign of Natural Law. This common law of physical existence is reminiscent of this saying from ancient China:

Ta cung muon vat dong sinh

Ta va muon vat su tinh chang hai

...

Myself and ten thousand things are born together;

Myself and ten thousand things bear together the same condition.

How about the universe? Well, we are part of it and of its smooth function. We rely on the sun. We also rely on the punctuality of the earth evolving around the sun so that we receive the narrow range of light and temperature we need. Our body and our life are part of the body and the life of the universe. After our death, our body turns into dust which is also part of the universe.

Let's examine the emotional part:

With the learning from life day after day, one starts to identify with one's fellow and feels the same as one's fellow and feels for the fellow. If one were to observe a theater in session, in general, all persons watching the play laugh or cry at the same instant. We share the same emotional reactions. If we can identify with these real similarities, differences will efface themselves and love will grow.

As to the spiritual, God has granted us and everything in the cosmos a part of His spirit. And among human, the spirit is shared that's why human have similar principle. This is why teachings from different religions have a common goal. All religions

stem from one same origin (God) and share the same principles. This is illustrated by the motto found on the "one dollar" bill: E PLURIBUS UNUM which has a counterpart known in Vietnamese as:

Nhut Bon Tan Van Thu (from one, emanate many),

Van Thu Qui Nhut Bon (from many, emanates one).

CaoDai without being CaoDai is the true CaoDai.

Cao Dai gave the following message:

Dipankara Buddha (an old time Buddha) is Me,

Sakya Muni is Me,

Thai Thuong Nguon Thi (an old time Immortal, previous incarnation of Lao Tse) is Me,

Who is Cao Dai.

Various religions contain one primordial truth (which we call CaoDai). If CaoDai religion is only CaoDai, a separate defined entity, it would not truly be CaoDai as it is meant to be. If CaoDai is not only CaoDai, but encompasses Buddhism, or Taoism, or Confucianism, or Christianity, or any path toward God, it is then truly CaoDai. CaoDai does not pro-pound to convert the followers of any path, but wishes to unite all faiths in the understanding that faiths all are of one same principle, and teach tolerance between the religions. That alone would put an end to the religious strife which leads to the majority of wars in the world.

How do CaoDaists employ spiritual messages?

In CaoDai spiritual practice, spiritual messages are often received in the form of verses. The ones used as prayers are almost always in verses. The ones used as educational information are under the form of either verse or prose. Below are some examples of the type of message received. There are many, many more which have not yet been translated into English; still more are being received regularly. CaoDai is a thriving, growing, and ever expanding theology, and we are blessed with the continuing wisdom bestowed to us in the form of these spiritual verses and prose.

Prayers for the Incense Offering

*As the scented cinder smolders into flame,
So too the faith from which the Tao came.
As the winding wisp ascends into the sky,
the wafting scent of heaven stirs my mind.
To the Superior Spirits, I respectfully pray:
May this gesture sway Their Eminence to stay
if but a moment, should they deign to pass this way.
And at this time, as a disciple, I entreat
The Sky above and Earth beneath my feet.
May my heart immersed in hope be recognized
as that pure space of spirit highly prized.
May blessings rain on us a shower of love
as they make their calm descent from Up Above.*

Prayers Before Sleep

*All material desires consume me by day,
Leading my mind and my actions astray.*

*Holy One, I am prostrating here to pray
That your lovingness will cause my mind to stay
Focused and clear on Your Divinity,
Taking no actions toward infidelity.
During my sleep, when my soul is at rest,
Superior Spirits, please guide me to what is best.
Toward my home in your Sacred Nirvana I yearn
So teach me the lesson which I need to learn.*

Prayers Before Eating

*Foremost to the multitude of living beings,
To eat is the most necessary of things.
Cereals, the Creator has brought to this need,
And give to His children upon which to feed.
Our deep thanks go to Sen Nong King
Who taught in the ways of plants' upbringing.
Gratefully I vow to borrow this body of man
In use for the quest of the Eternal land.*

The Voyager's Prayer

*For this is but the road of life;
Along its way may we be saved
By faith in teachings we embrace
Though we are as foam tossed on the wave.
I find my trustfulness oft shaken
So I retreat from early tide
But such happenstance is purification
along the soul's journey toward Cao Dai.
I realize from that place of refuge in my soul
and repent for harm I have caused to others;
May the Almighty know of my good faith
and my dedication to serve my brothers.
As I brave the thorns and brambles,*

May I set out safe and return sane.

*May the Almighty grant me protection as I pass
along Heaven's path and life's road the same.*

Teachings: Entering Divine Realms

*Though arduous it may be to enter Divine realms,
Hesitate not to surpass your human kin,*

*Keep a peaceful heart to turn negative to positive
and keep a plain mindset as your place to begin.*

*Keep practicing your miracles,
and slowly, day by day,*

Your tireless devotion will keep you from the fray.

*The wicked flaunt their wickedness
but the pure remain pure,*

*Practicing triple cultivation
to assure their spirit's cure,*

And as they rise to the Divine

to claim their lofty station,

they are remembered by the Heavenly Host

and given rein to Heaven's nation.

I bless all of The Supreme Being's disciples. I
take my leave now.

Teachings: Cultivating Heart

And then you will see the outcome

Of the actions you have taken,

Yet complain not, for life is fraught

With opportunity forsaken.

...

In the cultivation of your heart,

Make wisdom's sharp blade steady

For cutting through the karma you

Have honed to make you ready.

...

Your suffering is fully seen

In the Eye of My compassion

Now hasten ye to rise and flee

Toward reunion in My Heaven!

...

And whoever has despised you,

My gentle female devotee,

Has disregarded me and so will see

These deeds' results one day.

Given by H.H. Ho Phap Pham Cong Tac

Teachings: Perseverance and sincerity in
self-cultivation

I, your Master, grant you,

the most sincere disciples, the Chi.

To be pure, your true self

should emanate bright energy.

To help others, heed closely

the Tao's examination

Have no confusion, as you will

find complete illumination.

...

As the moon shines brightly

in the clear night

In cultivating self, child,

keep your heart and mind aright.

Be completely patient with

your hardships year by year,

The blessing of your growth

shall wipe clean your fears.

...

*Child, you were taught to have
compassion,*

*And blessed for your sincerity
of cultivation,*

*The "Huyen Quan Khieu" (Crown chakra)
will open through clarity of your heart,
Which has been replete with My
blessings from the start.*

...

*Tending your virtues and having
mind toward cultivation,*

*Willing to pray to Superior
Spirits in your contemplation,*

*They bless and grant you vision
to their emanations bright,*

*Your name will be sanctified
as a gentle being's birthright.*

...

*Being conscientious of the test
of the Flower Convention Day,*

*You'll be elated to discover
where your predestiny has lain,*

*But for now focus only on the
growth of mind and virtue,*

*Thereby your home in the Divine
abode will be well reserved for you.*

Given by Cao Dai, the 16th day of the first month
of the year Giap Tuat (1994)

Teachings: The Master calls disciples to self-
cultivation

*It is an opportunity so golden,
Nirvana a destiny so highly prized
Divine incarnates, disciples all
Rush to encounter with Cao Dai!*

...

*Our Master speaks: "I love you all
My kind children for volunteering.
On this world you have the honor of
initiating the Tao, and spirits' healing.*

...

*"That you should have this timely mission
We have planned many eons ago
of your gathering my legion together.
Such duty you must not forego.*

...

*"To serve the Tao and lift humanity
to the Lofty Heights I hold,
As the mission was accepted,
As the mission was foretold.*

...

*"As you gather those around you
who hold dear the same ideal
you shall build a bright, clear karma
as the Great Way is revealed.*

...

*"As the Holy Gate swings open,
the wise shall give you mention
as one who, forsaking worldly things,
brings forth Heaven's convention.*

...
*"And by your sacrifices you shall win
 a place in the Divine
 whose host of Genies and Immortals
 make way their day to thine.*

...
*"For those who reach the Tao's true way
 hold sway o'er Heaven and Earth
 Divine emanations bless them
 who realize the Tao's true worth.*

...
*"So take care in your speech and deeds,
 worthy to bear the Heavenly Host,
 Imitate not the unenlightened,
 so ignorant yet prone to boast.*

...
*"I tell you this, my young child so
 you will recall your Master,
 forsaking all of worldly gain
 to reach the Tao much faster.*

...
*"Let not worldly pleasure seduce your mind,
 leaving your Divine post empty, fallow
 For it causes Me, your Father, pain
 to see His children grown so shallow.*

...
*"Do you yet hear my words 'til now?
 Do you remember, children?
 Before my return I leave this verse,
 that you'll heed my words until then:*

...

*"The Tao's path once was widely open
 from Heaven unto Earth
 When Yin and Yang's embrace of Oneness
 first fused to give you birth.*

...
*"The Tao's path still now leads the way
 to escape the Karmic wheel
 and to salvage your own soul
 before is made fast Destruction's seal.*

...
*"You are too well versed
 in the ways of man, so do not wait.
 You always have your Master near you,
 So never hesitate.*

...
*"I have arranged your brethren's presence
 to be with you on all sides,
 Now the timeliest task you must fulfill
 is to build a virtuous mind.*

...
*"I beseech you, contemplate
 this temporal life of error.
 Note its bitterness, repugnancy
 and more its tendency to terror!*

...
*"In the theatre of this life
 with its scripted page too cruel,
 suffer not deceitful play of actors
 on your consciousness so pure!*

...
"Why do you not yet tire

*of the torments of illusion?
And where to store your toil-won goods
upon this life's conclusion?*

...

*"How will you then value
the spoils of life downfallen
bought with the currency of shirking
Your Master's heartfelt calling?"*

...

*"For once having forgot the sound
of Your Master's beaconing voice,
how can you hope to recognize
the hereafter's realm of choice?"*

...

*"Give deep thought to all that I have said,
Let your conscience give your reply,
Meanwhile My blessings all flow out to you
as you are held in My own eye."*

CHAPTER 3

CAODAI "NGOAI GIAO" (EXOTERISM)

The Divine Eye

There is only one God, Who has been worshipped, venerated and prayed to under diverse names in different parts of the world. The Supreme Being has proclaimed that a human shape would be too physical and specific to represent the universality and the essence that God embodies. Therefore the Supreme Being has given us the representation of a shining Eye, which is the image of Universal and Individual Consciousness.

What is the goal of the CaoDaist?

Love and justice for all constitute the immediate task of CaoDai. The ultimate goal is to help humankind achieve ultimate reunification with the Supreme Being through cultivation of the True Self.

On a practical field, CaoDai offers two ways of practice for self-cultivation: the outer way or

exoterism and the inner way, esoterism.

In exoterism, the adepts continue to lead a family life while devoting themselves to the practice of good and the avoidance of evil. One of the ways to accomplish this is to abstain from destroying living beings or in other words to love living beings with a true love, an unconditional love and to observe justice (don't do to others what you don't want others to do to you). In practicing exoterism, CaoDai serves the world with a sense of international sisterhood and brotherhood, in accordance with the Supreme Being's teaching. Besides this, the adepts may perform at least one ceremony per day worshipping the Supreme Being at home, and twice a month at a local temple. In general, most CaoDaists belong to the exoteric practice. The principal temple of the exoteric form is called the Holy See, and is located in Tay Ninh, Vietnam.

Esoteric practice has, however, become more and more popular. The esoterist aspires to unite with the Supreme Being by concentrating on self-cultivation by way of meditation and self-purification. It is not necessary to enter a temple to practice this form of CaoDai, for the esoterist recognizes that the temple resides within. But by coming together, esoterists can share, learn, firm up their thinking and practice together to further their personal self-cultivation. They learn to simplify their needs, to become sincere, kind, loving persons. They learn to expand their love to humanity and nature, to control and become free of adverse emotions in order

to become at one with the Universe and become closer and closer to oneness with the Supreme Being.

Esoterism was originally practiced by Ngo Van Chieu and the group that developed around him. The main temple for esoterism is located at Can Tho, Vietnam in the Mekong Delta.

How does one practice CaoDai?

A spiritual message has said:

Out of Love and Mercy, out of respect for life, I have founded the Great Way's Third Revelation to save the earthly human, to help the virtuous attain a world of peace and avoid reincarnation to the earthly world of suffering.

The ultimate goal of CaoDaists is to be reunified with The All That Is, to return home.

To fit the varying spiritual needs of human beings, CaoDai offers two ways of practice:

1. Exoterism or cultivation according to humanism: a CaoDai disciple, while conducting a normal family life is:

- a. to complete duties toward self, family, society, country, living beings, and nature.
- b. to practice good and avoid evil.
- c. to show kindness to nature, plants, animals, human beings, and to avoid unnecessary destruction of any creature, recognizing that they all have the Supreme Being's spirit and are part of nature's cycle.
- d. to observe five Precepts: do not kill, do not steal, do not commit adultery, do not get drunk,

do not sin by word.

e. to practice vegetarianism at least ten days per month. This is a way to purify one's body and spirit and to promote love by avoiding killing living beings.

f. to participate in ritual acts of devotion and worship to the Supreme Being. There are four daily ceremonies, at 6:00 a.m., noon, 6:00 p.m., and midnight. At least one ceremony per day at home is performed.

2. Esoterism: While a disciple performs his duties toward humanity and is practicing vegetarianism for at least ten days per month, he may be guided in the practice of esoterism with meditation as a major exercise. The goal is to progressively eradicate the inferior self and develop the divine element within the self, reaching toward oneness with the Supreme Being.

How do I formally affirm myself as a CaoDaist?

The "Le Nhap Mon" (Gateway Ceremony) is a ritual and a solemn oath that confirms a person's membership in CaoDai. It is a serious matter and is not to be taken lightly, because it is considered indissoluble. One must be of the age of majority to participate in this formalizing ceremony. It cannot truly be taken as a "conversion" process, however, because CaoDaists of any faith (Judaism, Buddhism, et cetera) may take part in it and still retain the identity of their

religion (as a Jewish CaoDaist, Buddhist CaoDaist, et cetera). In some ways it can be thought of as a baptism, just as a person who is Christian may undergo a baptism to affirm, formalize, and deepen their commitment to their faith.

How is the altar arranged and what is its symbology?

The Divine Eye is at the central point of the altar. Below it is a light placed at the center, symbolizing the Universal Monad (the Universal Oneness of The All That Is) Who is God; it is left continually lit.

There are two candles on the altar: The left one represents the positive logos Yang (active principle, male, sunlight, etc.) It is lit first at the beginning of each ceremony. The right candle, representing the negative logos Yin (receptive principle, female, moonlight, etc.) is lit next. Together they represent the two complementary forces involved in the universe's formation.

In the middle and between two candles, the five sticks of incense in a vase represent the five levels of spiritual development:

1. Purification,
2. Meditation,
3. Wisdom,
4. Universal knowledge,
5. Karmic liberation;

The five sticks of incense also represent the five principal elements of Earth: Earth, fire, water,

metal and plant. In the West these elements are known as: Earth, fire, water, air, and spirit.

Flowers and fruits represent "Tinh" (reproductive cells), the basic elements for the formation of the physical body, the vital matter of human beings.

The three glasses of wine represent "Khi" (the Chi, the vital energy), manifested under the form of human emotions. Number three represents the three levels in the universe, Heaven, Earth, and Human.

The two cups of water represent "Than" (the spirit given by the Supreme Being). The cup on the Yang side contains pure water, and represents pure spirit from God, genuinely good. The cup on the Yin side contains tea, and represents the spirit covered by secular emotions (not pure).

"Tinh", "Khi", and "Than" are the three gems of human beings involved in the process of self-cultivation.

The arrangement of the altar is referred to as a map, which guides human beings in their self-cultivation. This underscores the close relationship between "Ngoai Giao" and "Noi Giao", or between the secular life and the purification life.

How are daily worship services performed at the altar?

Traditionally, CaoDaists put their two hands together: the left hand represents the active principle with its thumb pointing at the base of the left ring finger, and the other fingers wrapping around the

thumb. The right hand, representing the receptive principle, supports and wraps around the left hand, with the right thumb pointing at the base of the left index finger (See Fig.). The two hands joined together in this way symbolize the interaction between active and receptive principles which together have formed the universe and all its beings.

A regular traditional service follows this pattern:

1. Followers show their mutual respect by saluting one another with one bow.
2. Followers face the altar and bow three times with hands joined together as above moving from forehead (representing respect to Cao Dai) to knees (respect to Earth or Goddess) and resting at the chest (respect to Humanity) at the end of each bow.
3. Now kneeling, followers bring their joined hands to the forehead, left temple and right temple, while saying respectively Nam Mo Phat, Nam Mo Phap, Nam Mo Tang, to symbolically show their commitment to God, the Holy Teachings, and Humanity. This follows a pattern of original Buddhist teachings.
4. Next, prayers are sung for up to approximately forty-five minutes, praising the Supreme Being and various Great Religions of the world. The prayers are written in sophisticated verses that have been received during sessions of spiritual contact.

Is there a difference in the esoterism of different religions?

The way of practice may be different even within one religion, but the principle is the same, which is to elevate human spirit to become one with the Supreme Being's spirit.

CaoDai esoteric practice consists of forming a second body or spiritual body by meditation. CaoDai meditation consists of getting control of the "Tinh" or physical body (which is vital matter), regulating the "Khi" (which is vital energy) and purifying the "Than" (which is spiritual principle) so that "Tinh", "Khi", "Than" will become one, forming the second body. This second body is the spirit endowed to each one of us by the Supreme Being. The esoterist develops this spiritual body in order to become one with the Supreme Being's spirit.

How do CaoDaists meditate?

CaoDai meditation is called "thien dinh". "Thien" means quieting, calming down the mind and the emotions; "dinh" means concentration, keeping the mind not wandering around. Originally, Ngo Van Chieu learned "thien dinh" directly from Cao Dai via spiritual messages. Later, Pham Cong Tac also received teachings about "thien dinh" from the Supreme Being. Both Ngo Van Chieu and Pham Cong Tac were enlightened. Pham Cong Tac did not teach "thien dinh" to any of disciples at Tay Ninh because most of them follow exoteric practice. Ngo Van Chieu, in contrary, created his own group and taught "thien dinh" by word of mouth. There has

been no written documentation regarding CaoDai meditation techniques publicly published. In 1964, a group of CaoDaists at Saigon received spiritual messages from Ly Thai Bach ordering to create an organization called "Co Quan Pho Thong Giao Ly" (Organization to spread CaoDai teachings). The purpose of this organization is to unify different CaoDai sects by organizing seminars during which CaoDaists regardless of sects learn the common teaching granted by CaoDai. Through this organization, a meditation technique was taught by Dong Phuong Lao To (previous life of Lao Tse). Currently, CaoDai disciples practice two techniques of "thien dinh", one from Ngo Van Chieu, one from Lao Tse. They are called "tan phap CaoDai" (CaoDai new technique) which, besides minor technical differences, have the same principle which is the cultivation of "Tinh, Khi, Than."

*"Luyen Tinh hoa Khi,
Luyen Khi hoa Than,
Luyen Than huon Hu,
Luyen Hu huon Vo."*

"Tinh" is used to call sperm in man, and in both sexes, reproductive elements (male and female, or Yang and Yin respectively) which, combined, form the physical part, the visible part of a person.

"Khi" is used to call gas, or air, which represents the semivisible part of a person. It also represents the force, or energy and emotions of human being. Among emotions, there are three positive emotions which are joy, love, and happiness, and four adverse ones which are anger, hatred, sadness,

and greed.

"Than" is the spirit, the invisible part of a person, also known as conscience, the part which is pure and genuinely good.

"Luyen Tinh hoa Khi" is to cultivate "Tinh" so that it will be transformed into "Khi."

"Luyen Khi hoa Than" is to cultivate "Khi" so that "Khi" will be transformed into "Than". To cultivate "Khi" is to direct the "Khi" flow through different centers of the body to balance the emotions, good and adverse, so that one's emotions will become purer and purer and become one with "Than," the spirit, or the genuinely pure part of our complete make-up. In daily life, efforts to suppress the adverse emotions would help the cultivation of the "Khi". In other words, "Tinh" and "Khi" will become one with "Than." The trio "Tinh, Khi, Than" forms the sacred fetus called the second body of human being.

"Luyen Than huon Hu."

"Hu" is the contrary of the real. The real is what is visible which is the physical part of human being. This visible part is from earth and therefore temporary, not lasting (plant, animal, human being will die and rebecome earth elements). "Hu" is the contrary of the real, and is invisible, everlasting and eternal. At this stage the second body will become "Hu."

"Luyen Hu huon Vo."

"Vo" is the status of nil, the status of the Supreme Being, which is without birth, without death, without form, without color, without sound,

etc.... which is called beatitude, or Nirvana, or Heaven.

"Luyen Hu huon Vo" is to become one with the Supreme Being, reaching the nil status or Nirvana, or Heaven.

CaoDaists may practice whichever form of meditation seems appropriate to the individual, but the following exercise describes the form commonly used by CaoDaists. This exercise is a beginning process to transfer "Tinh", vital matter (visible) into "Khi", vital energy (semivisible) and then into "Than", spiritual energy (invisible); and thus begins the path from the mundane to the sublime. Each person's spirit is a part of the Supreme Being's spirit. However, because of busy daily secular lives, most fail to pay attention to, recognize the presence of, or work to develop that spiritual body. When drives are physical/sexual, a "pham thai" (human fetus) is created; when drives are focused toward the spiritual, a "thanh thai", holy (spiritual) "fetus" is eventually formed which will grow into the Buddhist or spiritually enlightened state.

Meditation quiets the mind which constantly moves from one thought to another, thus allowing first contact with the inner self. This begins the process of developing the "thanh thai" and ultimate unification with the Creator/Original Source.

Following is a simple description of steps involved in this CaoDai meditation technique. Meditate upon the breath in this way for an average of twenty minutes to half an hour initially daily:

1. Sit with spine and head straight, eyes half open, not focussed on anything, mouth closed and relaxed, with the tip of the tongue lightly touching the roof of the mouth.

2. Inhale gently, directing the breath past the "Phach Cung Hoa", the fire center at the heart, (where it is imbued with the fire principle) to the "Phach Ha Dinh", the lower center at the navel (sacral plexus).

3. While holding the breath for two seconds, transfer the energy of the inhalation into the "Phach Cuc Am," the extremely yin center at the base of the spine.

4. Exhaling, direct the energy from the breath up through the spine into the "Phach Cuc Duong," the extremely yang center at the top of the head. Along the way the breath is imbued with the water principle, and the "steam" (from the fire principle) helps the third eye to begin to open.

The important point is that one's expectation should be humble at first and the key to success is absolute sincerity. One should be sincere in the goal of development of love, compassion, and understanding which will naturally lead to the True Self in one's heart and to the unification with the Supreme Being.

Esoterism? When?

In today's fast flying world with its attendant stress and worry of making a living, esoterism is an invaluable resource even for those who do not feel they have the time. When the regular course of

meditation and prayer seems too burdensome, it is time for some creative forms. Meditate (for short periods) just before bedtime, when you are not facing a long laundry list of daily duties. Also, many people do not think of eyes-open meditation, but wakeful meditation can be accomplished during any activity such as sweeping, walking, hammering, folding laundry, et cetera, during the day. The principle behind this practice is to mindfully follow the contraction of the muscles involved so that the mind and the body are one during these activities. This is indeed completely different from activities which are automatically performed while the mind is wandering around. The same attitude of loving kindness and mindfulness toward the world that one uses in any meditation is still an element of the wakeful types.

An invigorating chant carried on while driving does more to raise one's spirit than merely listening to the radio.

There are many ways one can be more attentive to inner spirituality while managing busy daily schedules; the idea is to access inner creativity in order to reach the spiritual level within you that is waiting to be expressed. For instance, acts of service to humanity, however seemingly small, and expressing one's love of nature and animals (as in practicing partial or total vegetarianism), are other ways to cultivate self to become purer and purer spiritually. These take very little or no time away from busy schedules. With mindfulness and creativity, each individual can discover many more.

Victor Hugo and CaoDai**VICTOR HUGO IN LIFE**

Victor Hugo was born in the city of Besancon, France, in the year 1802. His father was a general in the army of Napoleon Bonaparte. Hugo rose to become the most prominent poet of 19th century France. In his younger years, he followed his father to Spain, then Italy, then came back to settle in Paris. Being very bright, it was said that "he studied one and knew ten." His work was recognized as great early in his life. With his talent for poetry, at age 15 he submitted a poem which won an award from the Academie de France. In 1841, Hugo himself became a member of the Academie.

After the revolution of 1848, he participated in the Assemblies of the legislature and Judiciary. He was an orator for the defense of freedom, but his political interests which defended freedom were in opposition of the then government and drew him first to live away in exile from France for 19 years, then later to be expelled from Brussels for allowing French refugees to take shelter in his home. But later he was able to return to the land of his birth.

Because France later in the 19th century displayed its national spirit through the political and cultural influence of Victor Hugo, manifested through his work, abundant as it was in quantity, quality and variety, a national funeral was carried out by the French government when Hugo died in 1885 and his body was thereafter interred in the Pantheon in Paris.

During his lifetime, Hugo published numerous works: plays and novels as well as poetry; all rich in deep thoughts, sentiment, poignancy, parables and hidden values. He belonged to the 'romantic' school of literature which portrayed sentiment freely without having to conform to any rule. Two of his most renowned works still popular today are "Les Miserables," and "Notre Dame de Paris."

Few writers have equaled Hugo in the ability to analyze the human condition and to draw in words such a variety of characters.

Victor Hugo's spirit lives on and guides as a beacon the activities of the CaoDai community; Hugo has been named the patron saint of the overseas spread of CaoDai, and has been the impetus for its expansion in the West through the spiritual contact he has granted disciples of CaoDai over the years.

VICTOR HUGO IN SPIRIT

In 1927, the head of the legislative body of CaoDai, Pham Cong Tac, was ordered by Cao Dai via spiritual contact through spiritism to establish the CaoDai Foreign Mission in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Pham went to Phnom Penh and stayed at Mr. Cao Duc Trong's home. Pham had been told of Mr. Cao in these messages from God, and had not known him prior to his journey. Pham related to Mr. Cao the power of the Holy Messages received in Saigon which had given teachings to guide the newly-formed sect of CaoDai. Mr. Cao asked Pham to set up such a session of spiritism, and enjoined the cooperation of his neighbors, Mr. Tran Quang Vinh and Mr. Dang

Trung Chu. The ensuing session produced miraculous results.

More and more people came to the sessions all wanting to ask advice for their personal lives. They put their questions on paper and when their turn came, they would step forward and kneel in front of the Ngoc co table, and prayed while their written question was held above their head. Each received a poem starting with their name that gave exacting answers to their questions. This high level information served to attract many people into the faith.

Among the spirits who attended these sessions was one who presented himself under the Vietnamese name Nguyet Tam Chon Nhon, later revealing that he had been none other than Victor Hugo in his former life, and that he, the spirit of Victor Hugo, had received an order from Cao Dai to establish the CaoDai Foreign Mission. So it was that the CaoDai Foreign Mission, with Victor Hugo as its titular head, was initiated then and there in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Over the ensuing period, and even unto today, Victor Hugo continues to communicate with disciples of Cao Dai. In the early days of the sessions held by Pham, Cao and Tran, Hugo also revealed that Tran was actually the incarnate of his own son, Francois Hugo, and that Tran would have a very bright future with fame and fortune. Initially Tran was incredulous of this prophecy, as at that time he was a simple secretary with very low income. However, it proved true later, beginning in 1930 when Tran traveled to

France to propagate CaoDai, becoming renowned both at the French Congress and at the United Nations. In 1942, Tran had the opportunity to come back to Vietnam and became the leader of CaoDai Army. The experiences from this leadership indeed helped him to be later chosen to serve as minister of defense of the BaoDai government from 1948-1951.

The spiritual messages from Victor Hugo:

To this day, Victor Hugo remains the "patron saint," as it were, of Cao Dai activities outside of Vietnam. His past messages are still highly considered.

April 20th, 1930: Dialogue between the Ho Phap and Victor Hugo:

Ho Phap: I would like to receive information about our Master and His powers

Victor Hugo:

(Verses)

*You ask a question steeped in mystery
Eternally asked, yet never correctly understood
I perceive in the Infinite that countless universes exist.
Of whatever size, they are enormous
But life on those worlds takes on
similar form to our own.
One of these world systems is more advanced
From the standpoint of spiritual and ethical evolution;
They have advanced from a similar state as ours is now
And continue to move forward.
Upon these firmaments reign continual Beauty,
Their people are, for the greater part, Divine,*

*Peace and harmony reign supreme in their world,
 And the inhabitants know not the word war.
 To them, nothing is relative, all is absolute;
 Their noble souls emulate virtue;
 Science and wisdom their only production.
 There, the spirit supersedes mortal frailties,
 And their worlds prosper without the need of law.
 Union is achieved by spiritual understanding;
 Death is overcome through high consciousness.
 Death and life are but the same to them.
 Overriding Love is exalted universally;
 Souls and living beings merge in sanctity.
 On a certain plane of existence we share the bounty
 of this harmonic connection.
 Someday, you will be able to appreciate
 the value of such an existence, when the Earth
 has progressed to a similarly high state.*

Ho Phap: When will the Earth have these
 benefits?

Victor Hugo:
 (verses)

*In order that you may comprehend
 the process of spiritual evolution,
 I have to use a spiritual expression
 you will understand.
 You must advance through stages of purgatory,
 Even the blessed have a long way
 to go to reach enlightenment.
 In order to comprehend the nature
 of the Highest Spirit,
 One must evolve to that same level*

*to fully understand.
 No lesser spirit can even begin to comprehend;
 Even the Buddha could only make
 suppositions on the matter.
 I don't say you must comprehend
 all that I am telling you,
 What I say reflects thoughts from
 the spirits' vantage point.
 Suppose for a moment that the Holy of Holies,
 Also once had a life in one of these universes.
 Passing at length through the realm of matter,
 He became mortal; a sage;
 And therefrom advanced upward
 unto the Divine level,
 Entering at last into the mystery of Creation.
 Through successive lives, gaining in spiritual power,
 Finally transforming into the
 Master of wisdom and science.
 Attracting the best of spirits into a core of allegiance,
 And across the border of Infinity together they passed.
 Ho Phap: (Referring to the Creator) He has a
 heaven of His own?*

Victor Hugo:
 (Verses)

*Yes, as each of us are within our own soul domain
 Which is a product of our own spiritual life force.
 Those of complementary karmic states to our own
 Accompany us and populate our environs.
 These are not necessarily trustworthy,
 Having their own agendas to fulfill,
 Thus it is upon our own shoulders*

to redeem ourselves.

Leaving ourselves impure invites evil into our lives.

This is whence the spectre of Satan emerges,

If we face facts, we realize this,

For Satan has a place in God's plan.

By that element, our unpurified

attributes cause all our strife,

Through jealousy, envy, or pure caprice.

...

You have, Ho Phap, a cramp in your hand,

Let us put off our talk 'til tomorrow...

Reprise

I continue my discussion of the Genesis,

In order to give you the information you seek.

...

Once, in a place of absolute void and darkness

In which nothing ever had stirred,

Being in a primal gaseous state,

Slept somnolent germ and lethargic.

Where no creature yet lived nor matter moved,

Having eternally been held frozen in a dormant state.

Ho Phap: Is this the nature of the "water"
spoken of in the Christian "Genesis"?

Victor Hugo:

(Verses)

Yes, chemically it can be referred to as hydrogen,

Various densities of that which

forms the basic inner core of life.

The animating force of God hovered

over this primal "water,"

This is the sense in which these

words must be understood.

...

God's indescribable Astral power,

which we shall call Light,

Brought forth life from such inert materials as these.

A layer of oxygen was produced,

Meeting the hydrogen with explosive reaction,

This detonation bringing about a cosmic fusion

Wherein the Divine fire was born

and holy water formed.

Under the effect of these two elements,

all was transformed.

From the primordial elements of gas and then liquids

Life emerged, or more properly, a vitality

encompassing both what we call life and death.

By the marvels already apparent,

Imagine what is left to discover!

Whatever comes from the level of God,

Is nearly beyond human comprehension.

But the divinely-fed fire expanded vastly outward,

Casting its nebulae infinitely distant,

Sending matter to the far reaches of the Universe

Where it formed suns and planets in all their detail.

It endures cycles of decomposition and renewal.

And where so ever life exists, it is animated

by the Light and Mind of God.

The Divine substance takes on a spectrum of densities,

More or less pure,

And each density takes a different form,

Be it stone or flesh, air or ether,

According to its vibrational purity.

*Intellect is apportioned to all creatures.
According to their state, a portion more or less refined,
Thus it is too with the Soul; as for the body,
'Tis vitality that determines its condition.*

...

*The rest you have understood.
I stop here.*

Ho Phap: Pardon, if all comes from our Master, all must be perfect. Why then do we observe imperfection in nature?

Victor Hugo: What are these imperfections? May I give you some explanations?

Ho Phap: The wickedness and uselessness of beings, as well as men, animals, and vegetables. Their cause for being cannot be reasonably appreciated.

Victor Hugo:
(Verses)

*Nothing is wicked or useless in nature.
To stay alive, all must receive nourishment.
The Good Lord ardently loves His Children,
And through this great love,
they are provided with the means.
For their progress, He creates for them sufferings,
But they're also given means of defense.
Have you seen in this world a man truly pious?
Though they be wicked to us, they are useful to them!
How did our great sages become as they are
As revealed by the pages of human history?
A fierce struggle between the weak and the strong,
Those of greatest fortitude are more often the victors.
The struggle between the two polarities*

*Leads to an upward march
Of ideas and wise realizations.
Our dear world is purely relative;
Wicked and useless are only qualifications.
On this globe, each of us has a place;
All worlds, all lives are but classrooms,
The universe is therefore a school for our spirits,
Who attend it for erudite study.
Those who fail their courses,
Must repeat them, and study the lessons again.
All spirits hope to read the eternal book
That holds the wisdom that
should make them immortal.
The goal is to accomplish the task before us
Which takes time and effort on our parts.
From the material world to divine purity
Is a road leading into Eternity.
The result is the realization of true self,
And through conscience, to know how to be.
The difference in characteristics has its reason;
'Tis an aid in making comparisons.
Make room for great tolerance in your studies;
Classify the spirits according to their aptitude.
Simply separate those who are human
From those already a little divine.
Recruit the best of these to
the task of uplifting humanity.
Use all means to teach the spiritually unenlightened
Without showing distaste for any shortcomings
you may perceive in them;
Think only of the advancement of their souls!*

*Love always in order to give humanity
These two verities: Love and Eternity.*

Ho Phap: The Father and the Master are different. Why does our Father take also the title of Master?

Victor Hugo:
(Verses)

*He is at the same time Father and Master,
Because from Him come all beings.
He nourishes our body with that
which is useful to our forms
And makes up our spirit of what is divine.
In Him all is science and wisdom;
Progress of soul is His unceasing work,
Vile materials are latent jewels in His eyes
Vile spirits, He reconstructs into Saints.
Love is His rule, Justice His power.
He knows but the virtue, and none of the vice.
Father: He gives to His children vitality.
Master: He bestows on them His own divinity.*

Does CaoDai have its own prophecies?

Since 1975, through political upheavals and divine arrangement, the CaoDai disciples came to be spread all over the world, whereby they received the mission to bring the invaluable CaoDai faith to all humanity.

Meanwhile in Vietnam, under the socialist government, CaoDai became totally paralyzed: the faith's structure was dissolved; spiritism forbidden.

Activities for the spreading of the Tao could not take place. Having a fervent love for peace and devotion to the Tao, CaoDai disciples have gathered to form CaoDai organizations all over the world with the goal of maintaining the faith overseas and of bringing the Tao to all humanity, exactly as a message from the Supreme Being foretold in 1926:

Verses:

*From now on, My people,
you shall not be thrice divided.
Your Master will unite you
in one haven where you'll tarry.
When North and South have been dispersed,
and your fates have coincided,
You shall bring forth the
Tao I have given you to carry.*

The "thrice divided" refers to the three main faiths in Vietnam which were united now under the same roof of CaoDai.

The "one haven where you'll tarry" means that the former refugees from Vietnam all are waiting as a group outside their own country for the next stage in the development of their lives and their faith.

"When North and South have been dispersed" refers to the fact that people from all over the Vietnamese countryside have spread both within their own country and to other countries for refuge.

By their fates having "coincided," refers to the fact that people from all stratas of society have met the same fates such as becoming refugees and working together to spread the knowledge of their

faith in faraway lands.

The Tao (Great Way) "I have given you to carry" is of course CaoDai; and as the message affirms, Cao Dai's people are serving as messengers of their path in a way that, should the events in Vietnam not have happened, they would not have had the opportunity to do. So the Master is affirming to His disciples that there is purpose behind those events, and indeed everything that happens, which is beyond our human foresight and understanding.

There are many such prophecies among CaoDai messages which have also been fulfilled as well as those which wait to be fulfilled.

Does CaoDai worship Jesus?

CaoDai recognizes the divinity of the Christ and Christianity is one of the original and principal elements of CaoDai. Many CaoDaists worship Jesus as the Divine in human form. One of the symbols used at the altar of private homes has the figure of the Christ.

How does CaoDai relate to Islam?

We wholeheartedly agree with the basic tenet of Islam: "There is no God but God." In other words, God is One, and we are all simply worshipping different manifestations of the same Power.

What is the role of the Mother Goddess in CaoDai?

In Chapter I of the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tse states:

*The Tao which can be told is not the Universal Tao,
The name which can be named is not
the Eternal Name,
The nameless is the fountainhead of the universe;
The named is the Mother of all beings.*

In CaoDai, the Goddess is seen as the manifestation and embodiment of the outer world (yin) including the entire Universe. In other words, we exist within Her form, and without Her our own manifestations would not be possible. Is this not the true definition of a Mother? Her properties and domain is that which is visible and manifest: Our bodies, our world and everything visible which it contains. Every CaoDai temple complex contains Her temple, and She is worshipped as our Creatrix. CaoDai adherents wear white for church occasions; the donning of simple white clothing symbolizes the equality of children in the eyes of a mother, as well as the purity of the esoteric realm we aspire to.

Our spirit is from The Supreme Being, the Yang Element, the Unseen, the Spiritual Almighty. That Spiritual Home is what we strive to reach; yet we are closest to our Mother at this point in which we have physical presence. She provides everything to us until that point of spiritual illumination when we become one with The All That Is and reach enlightenment; She is the main element of our physical lives

until we returned to our Source, the Supreme Being, by cultivation of our True Self.

The Tao Te Ching continues:

Having no desire, one can comprehend the Mystery;

Ever desiring, one instead sees the manifestations.

These two realities spring from

the same source but differ in name;

This appears as darkness. Darkness within darkness

The gate to all mystery!

In the world we have pictured the Goddess in many forms, and in CaoDai we will continue to use all those symbols of worship; for as God is One to the CaoDaist, so is Goddess. As with the myriad names of God, She too is replete with them.

In the tradition of CaoDai, we see All as One; truly both Mother and Father are also one, but we are twin-element beings, dual in our very nature, of two eyes and two brains and two genders, and as a matter of course we will find a way to differentiate all which surrounds us, even unto that which created us. The unadulterated reality is that The All That Is is of that elusive Single Element, of One All-Encompassing Eye, of One Mind, and no gender.

Life and death. Reincarnation and Karma.

CaoDai propounds that each human being has two lives: a spiritual one which is everlasting like the Supreme Being because a human being's spirit is part of the Supreme Being's spirit; and a physical life which is temporary and which is used by the spirit

for its evolution toward unification with the Supreme Being. The earth is considered as a school of life where human beings' spirits learn to progress by means of education, knowledge, and experiences through the physical body. The physical body, being comprised of matter, is only temporary and suffers wear and death with time. The spirit has to leave this physical body sometime via physical death and to use another body via rebirth to continue its evolution. All education, knowledge, and experiences of this life would be factors of influence upon the person's intelligence, knowledge, and experiences in the next life and would explain early knowledge and experiences of ingenious individuals such as Beethoven, Mozart, Einstein, et cetera, in the West, and Nguyen Binh Khiem, Le Qui Don, et cetera, in Vietnam. Striking examples of "deja vu" described by many authors and of the experiences from the lives of the Dalai Lama, such as recognizing objects they used in previous incarnations, is attributable to the reincarnation phenomenon.

To CaoDai, death is the gateway to live another life for spiritual progression. Depending on one's level of spiritual evolution, a human spirit may have to reincarnate on earth to learn more or to progress on to other dimensions.

As the divine law is love and justice, this law is the golden rule for the spirit to follow in order to progress. Justice is: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," or, "Do not do to others what you do not want others to do to you." This rule

of justice is also called Karma, and the results of one's actions take on Karmic meaning. As the Bible states: "As ye sow, so shall ye reap." Karma explains why human beings have to sustain certain sufferings as a result of committing certain misdeeds or unfavorable actions (which are also called sins) on this earth. One way to be detached from sufferings and sin is to observe love and justice to others and by practicing self-cultivation.

Does CaoDai have Military Forces?

The Military Forces known as "CaoDai Military Forces" are not an organization of CaoDai religion. In fact, there is no mention of a military forces in CaoDai policy and constitution. Moreover, any CaoDai disciple who wants to participate in any political organization has to resign from the position that he/she holds in CaoDai Sacerdoce. The military forces were formed by a group of CaoDai nationalists to fight against the French and later to protect CaoDai disciples from the Viet Minh.

CaoDai was founded in a country that was under the French colonialization. Certain of its leaders, as other Vietnamese at that time were nationalists and were more or less personally involved in the anti-French movements. The colonial authorities therefore viewed CaoDai with extreme distrust especially because of its rapid expansion and popular appeal to the masses. In 1941, the French arrested the Ho Phap Pham Cong Tac and other CaoDai leaders,

exiled them to Madagascar, and closed all CaoDai temples. In 1942, Mr. Tran Quang Vinh, a CaoDai bishop and head of the Phnom Penh congregation, returned to Vietnam, cooperated with the Japanese Secret Police, and secretly formed a military force to fight the French.

CaoDai Military Forces, armed by the Japanese, participated in the coup d'etat overturning the French in March 1945. After the Japanese surrender in August 1945, CaoDai Military Forces had a loose alliance with the Viet Minh, which ended shortly later when CaoDai Forces surrendered to the French. Tran Quang Vinh then negotiated with the French authorities for the release of Pham Cong Tac from Madagascar as one of the conditions for the cooperation of the CaoDai Forces with the French. Since then, CaoDai Military Forces were armed by the French and became a solid protection of CaoDai disciples from being massacred by the Viet Minh. Under Ngo Dinh Diem's government, in 1956, CaoDai Military Forces were disbanded and assimilated with the South Vietnamese Forces.

The establishment of the CaoDai Military Forces is totally against the love concept taught by Cao Dai. Those who founded the army, however, reasoned that the presence of an army may help to protect CaoDai disciples from being massacred.

The Ho Phap Pham Cong Tac, upon return from exile, had referred to CaoDai Military Forces as "Tam Muoi Hoa" (the fire inside one's heart which may burn and destroy oneself). He therefore moved

CaoDai Military Headquarters out of the Holy City. As a matter of fact, after the assimilation of the Cao-Dai Military Forces with the South Vietnamese Forces, General Nguyen Thanh Phuong, the former leader of the CaoDai Military Forces, under Ngo Dinh Diem direction, had come back to the Holy See to try arrest Pham Cong Tac. To Ngo Dinh Diem, CaoDai had become a threat since its principle of love and unity constituted a popular appeal to the masses and since CaoDai had called both the North and the South Vietnamese governments to get together and be united with each other to form a unique country in love and peace. Pham Cong Tac subsequently had to flee to Cambodia where he passed away several years later.

Thus, the CaoDai Military Forces were just a temporal phenomenon created because of the French, and then finally dissolved with the end of the French colonialization in Vietnam. CaoDai religion does not provide for a military force.

CONCLUSION

Dai Dao Tam Ky Pho Do or CaoDai is an integrative spiritual path founded in Vietnam. Its principle is, "All religions have one same principle, and one same origin," and "the Universe and all things are bestowed with God's Spirit." Its diverse spiritual teachings allow all persons in all spiritual states to find refuge in it. CaoDai affirms that true love and justice would lead to harmony on earth and are also the basis for individual spiritual liberation.

CAODAI, A PRACTICAL WAY TO RELIGIONS' UNITY AND TO PEACE ON EARTH.

*Do not to others which if done to thee
would cause thee pain. Hinduism.*

*Hurt not others in way that you yourself
would find hurtful. Buddhism.*

*Don't create enmity with anyone as God is
within everyone. Sikhism.*

*Do not do unto others all that which is not
well for oneself. Zoroasterianism.*

*In happiness and suffering, in joy and grief,
we should regard all creatures as we regard
our own self. Jainism.*

Do not do unto others what thou wouldst not they do unto thee. Judaism.

Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. Christianity.

None of you truly have the faith if you do not desire for your brother that which you desire for yourself. Islam.

If it harms none, do what you will. Wicca.

Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you. Confucianism.

Lay not on any soul a load which ye would not wish to be laid upon you and desire not for anyone the thing you would not desire for yourself. Baha'i.

Isn't it wonder in the presence of how much religions have in common? If an individual as well as a religion takes time to study others' religions, one would realize that they are but one unique truth which has been expressed under different ways.

At this current moment, in this current situation of the world, the existence of CaoDai is just to remind humanity and all religions that ALL RELIGIONS ARE OF ONE SAME ORIGIN, AND OF ONE SAME PRINCIPLE and that humanity are just brothers and sisters of one same father creator. If people are open to read and study on their own each other's religions, or to contact other religious communities in their areas to talk to the religious leaders and perhaps to some of the faithful as well to simply build a continuing dialogue of understanding between them, this would be likely the most powerful weapon against hatred and intolerance, and hopefully many

friendships will result. In addition, various church groups could organize meetings where different religions could be discussed, speakers could be invited, videos and music of different traditions could be shown, understanding between humans would be enhanced. Also, could charity projects for communities be established with participation of everyone regardless their religions, and their ethnic origins so that through love and compassion for the needies, humans would become closer and closer to each other, love would develop between them as a solid bond, and peace would be subsequently be found between individuals at first, and then progressively in local communities and finally on earth.

GLOSSARY

AAA: The first three letters of Vietnamese alphabet, used by the Supreme Being as His name in the spiritual sessions in order to guide His initial disciples to the CaoDai path.

Ahura Mazda: Zoroastrian name for the Supreme Being.

Allah: Islamic name for the Supreme Being.

Baha'í: A religious movement initiated by Bahá'u'lláh in 1844. It teaches that since God is beyond our comprehension, He can be known only through His manifestations, e.g.,

Moses, Jesus, Mohammed.

BaoDai: The last emperor of Vietnam.

Buddhism: the path created by Gautama, the Buddha, that guides humanity to enlightenment, or the oneness with All/Nothingness (Nirvana), Through an understanding of the causes of suffering, meditation, and Dharma (karmic study).

Can Tho: a province in South Vietnam where Ngo Van Chieu developed the CaoDai esoterism called Chieu Minh Vo Vi.

Cao Dai (two words): "Cao Dai" literally means

high palace or Supreme Palace or Abode on High (where God reigns). Figuratively, the phrase Cao Dai (two words) is used as God's symbolic name, and CaoDai (one word) as the path being taught.

Cao Duc Trong: One of the initial disciples of Cao Dai.

Cao Hoai Sang: One of the initial disciples of Cao Dai.

Cao Quynh Cu: One of the initial disciples of Cao Dai.

CaoDai (one word): Also known as CaoDaim, the path that leads to the oneness with Cao Dai, the Supreme Being.

CaoDai Ngoai Giao: CaoDai exoterism which guides humanity to live a peaceful secular life in love and justice.

CaoDai Noi Giao: CaoDai esoterism which guides humanity to self cultivate to reach oneness with the Supreme Being.

CaoDaim: See CaoDai

Chi or Khi: Vital energy. See Tinh Khi Than

Christianity: As defined by Vietnamese CaoDaists, a blanket term used for the religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Co Quan Pho Thong Giao Ly: CaoDai organization for spreading CaoDai teachings.

Confucianism: The path taught by Confucius with the purpose to create a peaceful order of humanity's secular life.

Confucius (551-479 BCE): Chinese philosopher whose teaching contributed greatly to the peaceful

order of humanity's secular life. He taught a standard similar to the teachings of Jesus: "Do not do to others what you do not wish to be done to yourself." His standard of familial and societal conduct remains a widespread influence across the East, even unto today.

Dai Dao Tam Ky Pho Do: Dai Dao Tam Ky Pho Do means The Third Revelation of the Tao, the Great Way, otherwise known as CaoDai.

Dang Trung Chu: One of the initial disciples of Cao Dai.

Dieu, Duc, Hau: initial disciples of Cao Dai.

Dinh: one among the steps of meditation consisting of concentration.

Divine Eye: the symbol representing the Supreme Being, and used as the symbol of CaoDai, the path.

Dong Phuong Lao To: a previous life (incarnation) of Lao Tse.

Esoterism (eso: inner): A way of self-cultivation by returning to the inner self, which helps humanity reach oneness with the Supreme Being.

Exoterism (exo: outer): A way which guides humanity to live in harmony with each other in love and justice.

Flower Convention Day: Equivalent to the Judgment Day of Christianity.

Gautama: Also known as The Buddha, which means "an enlightened one" who lived from the mid-seventh to the mid-sixth century BCE, and who initiated the beginning of Buddhism.

Giao Tong: head of the Cuu Trung Dai, the Executive Branch of CaoDai exoterism.

Giap Tuat: year of the dog.

Hinduism: A diverse body of religion and philosophy originating in India with a belief in a Supreme Being of many forms and natures and which holds the view that opposing theologies are aspects of one eternal truth and having a desire for liberation from earthly evils into spiritual realization. These beliefs were further refined into Buddhism by The Gautama Buddha, Siddhartha, who was born to a high-ranking Hindu family.

Ho Phap: head of the Hiep Thien Dai, The Legislative Branch of CaoDai exoterism. Translated in some CaoDai texts as the "Pope" of CaoDaism.

Hu: The ultimate reality, beyond and contrary to what we consider as "reality" (which is actually illusory/Maya). The contrary of the real. Hu is invisible, everlasting and eternal.

Humanism: The path created by Confucianism, Socrates to guide humanity to have a peaceful secular life.

Immortal: Title given by Taoist to someone who reaches immortality by self-cultivation.

Islam: The religion founded by Mohammed (570-632) emphasizing the sovereignty and the oneness of Allah, the Supreme Being.

Judaism: The religion tracing its roots to Abraham, which believes in a single Supreme Being of such greatness and glory that His Name is unspeakable, and having its spiritual and ethical principles

embodied chiefly in the Bible and the Talmud. As with The Buddha, who further refined Hinduism into what is now known as Buddhism, the Judaic-born Yeshua (Joshua, later to become The Christ) further refined the beliefs of Judaism into what is now known as Christianity.

Karmic law: The spiritual complement of the scientific principle that every action has an equal and opposite reaction; the principle of balance and righteousness which holds that a person's future state depends on present deed. This law is compared to the concept found in the Christian Bible, "As ye sow, so shall ye reap."

Khi: The Chi, the vital energy, one of the three gems of the human being. See also Tinh Khi Than

Khuong Thai Cong: Representative of Shintoism.

Lao Tse (sixth century BCE): Contemporary of Confucius, and the author of the Tao Te Ching and the founder of Taoism.

Le Nhap Mon: The Gateway Ceremony.

Le Qui Don (1726-1784): A Vietnamese scholar who is considered as genius.

Le Van Trung (1875-1934): One of the initial disciples of Cao Dai. He was the Acting

Giao Tong, head of the Cuu Trung Dai, the Executive Branch of CaoDai exoterism from 1926 to 1934.

Ly Thai Bach (701-760): a Chinese scholar of the T'ang dynasty. His spirit is the Giao Tong of CaoDai.

Ly Thiet Quai: An Immortal of ancient China.

Macrocosm: The Supreme Being, considered by

the Zoroasterianism as the Divine light.

Master: The Supreme Being considered Himself as the Master of human being.

Meditate: a technique of self-cultivation which may lead to the oneness with the Supreme Being.

Mohammed (571-632): The founder of Islam.

Moses: The founder of Judaism.

Mother Goddess: The counterpart of the Supreme Being, believed as responsible for the creation of the visible world.

Naf-matmainnah: The Muslim name for human's spirit.

Nam Mo Phap: Commitment to the Holy teachings.

Nam Mo Phat: Commitment to Buddha, the Supreme Being.

Nam Mo Tang: Commitment to humanity.

Ngo Dinh Diem (1901-1963): The first president of Vietnam from 1954-1963.

Ngo Van Chieu (1978-1932): The first disciple of Cao Dai.

Ngoc co: A device used in communication between human beings and Superior Spirits.

Nguyen Binh Khiem (1492-1587): Vietnamese Laureate and famous prophet, revealing himself as the Master of Bach Van Dong (White Cloud Stanza) with many Saints as disciples, among them is Victor Hugo.

Nguyen Thanh Phuong: A leader of CaoDai Military Forces.

Nguyet Tam Chon Nhon: or Victor Hugo (1802-

1885), French famed poet, revealing himself through spiritism under the name of Nguyet Tam Chon Nhon, the spiritual chief of the CaoDai Foreign Mission.

Nhien Dang Co Phat: Dipankara Buddha, an old time Buddha.

Oneness: Status of becoming one with.

Oomoto: A Japanese organization founded in 1892 by spiritism with the principle that all religions have one same origin.

Perispirit: One of the three gems of human beings, also known as "Khi."

Phach cuc am: Regulating center at the root of the spine.

Phach cuc duong: Regulating center at the top of the head.

Phach cung hoa: Regulating center at the heart (the fire center).

Phach ha dinh: Regulating center at the umbilicus.

Pham Cong Tac (1890-1959): One of the initial disciple of Cao Dai, and the chief of the "Hiep Thien Dai," the legislative branch of CaoDai exoterism.

Pham thai: human fetus.

Phu Quoc: an island in the gulf of Siam.

Phuc Hy: or Fu Shi, a king of ancient China, believed to have discover Yin and Yang principle and to be the author of the I-Ching.

Sakya Muni: - See Gautama.

Self realization: Enlightenment, a status of wisdom, understanding self.

Sen Nong: a king of ancient Vietnam.

Shintoism: also know as Geniism, a path that guides individual progress, respect to nature and service to humanity.

Spiritism: A means of communication between human beings and the Superior Spirits.

Spiritual messages: Messages from Superior Spirits.

Supreme Being (Almighty God, the ONE and ONLY God; known in CaoDai as "Duc Cao Dai"): Being believed to be the Creator of the universe and of all life.

Tam Muoi Hoa: Fire from inside of human being responsible for anger, hot temper, hostility, ferocity.

Tan phap CaoDai: The new technique of CaoDai for meditation.

Tao: The Way.

Tao Te Ching: The book about the Way and the virtue, the most widely known and popular of Taoist texts.

Taoism: The Way created by Lao Tse guiding human being to live according to nature,

Yin and Yang with alchemy and the quest for immortality.

Thai Thuong Dao Quan: The previous life of Lao Tse.

Than: Spirit. See Tinh Khi Than.

Thanh thai: Holy or spiritual fetus.

Theosophy: the teachings of the Theosophical Society with the goal of forming a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color.

Thien: Quieting down, one of the step of meditation.

Thien Dia Van Vat Dong Nhat The: The Heaven, the Earth, and ten thousand things are of one same constitution.

Thien dinh: Meditation.

Thien Nhan: Divine Eye.

Tinh: Vital matter, the physical body of human being. See Tinh Khi Than.

Tinh, Khi, Than: Tinh, the vital matter of human being, Khi, the vital energy, and Than, the spirit, represent the three gems of human being. CaoDai meditation would lead to the oneness of Tinh, Khi Than, the formation of a holy spirit, the spirit believed to be the oneness with the Supreme Being.

Tran Quang Vinh: One of CaoDai dignitaries, the founder of the CaoDai Military Force.

Vegetarianism: Nutrition without eating meat.

Victor Hugo: (1802-1885), French famed poet, revealing himself through spiritism under the name of Nguyet Tam Chon Nhon, the spiritual chief of the CaoDai Foreign Mission.

Viet Minh: Vietnamese Nationalist freedom fighters who won independence for Vietnam from the oppressive French Colonialism at the battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954. Later, through political machinations they evolved into what is known to Americans as the Viet Cong (Vietnamese Communist).

Vo: Status of nil.

Yahweh: The (unspeakable by Jews) Judaic name for God.

Yang: The masculine, active principle in Chinese philosophy.

Yeshua: The original name of Jesus.

Yi King: The book of transformation, the famous book of Chinese thoughts believing that everything is a product of the Yin and Yang principles.

Yin: The feminine, passive principle in Chinese philosophy.

Zoroastrianism: The ancient religion of Iran at about 600 BCE worshipping the Supreme Being under the form of Holy flame (light).

Wisdom would dictate that the only true power is spiritual power; yet historically mankind has employed every means of exploitation, including religion, against each other in a quest for temporal power. But in 1920, new hope was quietly bestowed upon the world in the form of a message, delivered to a secluded mystic, from God. This message, thereafter called the Third Revelation of the Ultimate Way (Tao), or CaoDai, teaches the unity of purpose behind all religion. That this flower of peace took seed in a land destined for war may seem a contradiction, but once understood, the CaoDai path simply transcends all contradiction and leads the world to tranquillity. Within these pages is found the revelation of a unique yet all-encompassing path to God.