The Philosophy of Caodaism

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A bilingual Vietnamese-English Edition

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Chapter 1

How to study Caodaism

It is generally understood that thanks to spiritualism, God and other divine beings’ revelations, which were noted down and called the divine messages, were the foundation of Caodaism. Revelation is called mà khải in Vietnamese. Mà - the curtain. Khải - opening. So the term means God raises a curtain so that humans can gain fascinating insights into the magical realms, for which they have never had enough explanations. It is those revelations that established the religion Cao Đài, which then results in the philosophy of Caodaism.

Carefully systematizing the points of those divine messages, you can see the development of the philosophy of Caodaism as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{God’s revelations} & \\
\text{Noted down as Divine Messages} & \\
\text{Religion Cao Đài} & \\
\text{Divine Messages systematized} & \\
\text{System of thoughts established} & \\
\text{Caodaist views of life and the universe} & \\
\text{Compare and contrast studies} & \\
\text{Indicating the nature of Caodaist culture} &
\end{align*}
\]

To study the philosophy of Caodaism, you need to examine:
- The Caodaist view of human life and the universe.
- Caodaist external laws and internal laws. An insight into both laws is a must to explain Caodaist view of human life and the universe.

According to the way projects are usually done in anthropology in college, an investigation into Caodaism includes three sections:
- Presentation of the philosophy of Caodaism.
- Methods: gaining insight into the spiritual world.
- Explanation of the way of the book.

1. The purpose

1 Thổ Pháp and bì Pháp are two polysemous terms. In this paragraph they mean external and internal laws. External laws affect what you can see in the material world. Caodaist external laws aim to help humans free themselves from suffering while Caodaist internal laws help humans avoid the permanent cycle of reincarnation.
This book is written to thoroughly explain the philosophy of Caodaism and supplement any fundamental research on Caodaism.

**Purpose 1. To thoroughly explain Caodaism**

From time immemorial, religious men and philosophers have pondered human life and death. We common people always dream of meeting a divine being, who can tell us what those gurus and philosophers still cannot completely explain. The first thing we need is that divine being detailed what heaven is. Second, he tells us why we are born. Third, why we have to be born into this world. Lastly, what will happen afterlife and where will we go then?

Of those four points, scientists and materialists deal with the second point, human origin while philosophers and gurus worldwide provide a variety of explanations of the third point. Despite their abundant work, they have not fully covered the first and the last points, which are about what exists before life and what will happen afterlife.

Something, too simple, of course, has been written by a few people on behalf of God, the Supreme Being, for points three and four. That is why lots of people still thirst for a full explanation from any divine beings. While undertaking research on Caodaism, I myself was greatly satisfied to find out those divine beings. God and other deities have explained what we still thirst for through the medium of spiritualism. From the spiritual world, those divine beings give humanity the enlightening and thought-provoking *Chơn Lý Khải Định*. Therefore, I aim to explain the Caodaist divine messages and sermons in order to complete what we still lack.

**Purpose 2. To supplement any fundamental research on Caodaism and correct any politically affected “studies”**

**As for a lack of research on Caodaism**

Đồng Tân⁵, a writer, wrote:

- At the Caodaist Culture Society on November 29th, 1970, Professor Jeremy Davidson, University of London, stated, “Besides the lengthy, complicated rituals and the one-sided dogma, the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council never discusses philosophical topics.” Then he asked the Caodaist Dignitaries there, “Can one define Caodaism as a religion’s philosophy?”

- At the same place on March 30th, 1971, Pastor Victor L. Oliver stated, “Deeply examined, Caodaism seems to have an unclear basic doctrine.”

- In 1970 Pr. R.B. Smith Wrote, “To some extent, western ignorance about Caodaism is the responsibility of the Caodaists themselves.”

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⁵ Đồng Tân, Tìm hiểu triết lý Cơ Đạo, Cao Đài Hồ Chí Minh, Sài Gòn, 1974, tr. 12, 18.
Most non-Vietnamese researchers\(^5\) work is based on previous studies and covers such topics as history, organization, teachings, internal events, and Caodaist sects, not a thorough explanation of the philosophy.

In 2010, Huỳnh Ngọc Thu\(^6\) wrote in his doctoral thesis (page 37): “The already published research has chiefly mentioned the issues of history, ideology and culture, not the nature of Caodaists’ religious activities or the detailed explanations of the rituals, the organization or the religious system so far.”

**As for the research conducted for political and beneficial reasons.**

Reading the doctoral theses by Nguyễn Thanh Xuân, Huỳnh Ngọc Thu, Huỳnh Thị Phương Trang\(^7\), knowledgeable readers can see they lack the “honest intellectuality” because they only write what the government permits. It is true that God Himself founded Caodaism through the medium of spiritualism, but Professor Huỳnh Ngọc Thu, Ho Chi Minh City University of Social Sciences and Humanities, for his own benefit, has mistakenly written:\(^8\)

“Caodaism was founded by the French-trained intellectuals based on Confucianism and supported by several wealthy landowners. Those people really wanted to establish a religion that combines a variety of beliefs and cultures of the Vietnamese southerners.” and “Caodaism is a native religion invented and founded by the Vietnamese southerners based on the foundation of other established religions.”

It is usually known that communist writers give fake information for their benefit. For example, to explain why Caodaism expanded so quickly, Nguyễn Thanh Xuân wrote: “Seriously oppressed and exploited, some starving and poor southerners, whose struggle against the French colonists was unsuccessful, turned to religion resolution, Caodaism.”

According to Đặng Nguyễn Văn, Caodaists try to find out what current farmers think and “show how to free themselves from the repression of everyday life.”

What ruins the reputation of Caodaism is some people take advantage of their Ph.D. to distort the truth for political benefit. That is why the second purpose of the book is to restore the truth.

2. The method

In a project, a good method will lead to success. The method of the book is based on two chief factors: document and insight into the divine world.

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\(^5\) Blagov, Sergei, Caodaism, Vietnamese traditionalism and its leap into modernity, Nova, New York, 2001

\(^6\) Oliver, Victor L., Caodaism, Vietnamese traditionalism and its leap into modernity, Washington D.C, 2004

\(^7\) Smith R. B. An introduction to caodaism, Caoda overseas missionary, Washington D.C, 2004

\(^8\) Werner, J. S. Peasant politics and religious sectarianism: peasant and priest in the cao dai in Viet Nam, Caoda overseas missionary, Washington D.C, 2004

\(^9\) Huỳnh Ngọc Thu, 50 năm cuộc sống của tông đồ Cao Đài trong bộTv Tôn giáo Nam Bộ, 348 tr. 2010 (Doctoral Thesis in history, Anthropology), presently a professor of Ho Chi Minh City University of Social Sciences and Humanities.

\(^10\) Nguyễn Thanh Xuân, Đạo Cao Đài, hai khía cạnh lịch sử và tôn giáo, NXB Tôn Giáo, Hà Nội, 2013, (Nguyễn Thanh Xuân is the deputy head of the religion department of the Vietnamese government, who directly controls Caodaism now.)

\(^11\) Nguyễn Thị Phương Trang, Đạo Cao Đài hiện nay và ảnh hưởng của nó đến đời sống văn hóa thủy thần của cộng đồng người Việt vùng đồng Nước, published by Ho Chi Minh City University of Social Sciences and Humanities 2008, (doctoral thesis)

\(^12\) Huỳnh Ngọc Thu’s doctoral thesis, page 217.

\(^13\) Nguyễn Ngọc Thu’s doctoral thesis, page 220.

\(^14\) Nguyễn Thanh Xuân, Đạo Cao Đài, hai khía cạnh lịch sử và tôn giáo, NXB Tôn Giáo, Hà Nội, 2013, page 49.

\(^15\) Đặng Nguyễn Văn, Cuộc đấu tìm hiểu về đạo Cao Đài, NXB Khoa học xã hội, Hà Nội. 1995
Document
The information in this book is based on the original document like the Divine Messages.

References
- The Collection of Divine Messages.
- Collected Divine Messages.
- The Religion for Advanced Practitioners.
- Official Scriptures published by the Tây Ngînh Temple.
- Sermons given by Caodaist leaders.
- The ebooks, which are carefully selected, at www.DAOCAODAI.info and caodaism.net.
- Lots of compared and contrasted explanations from different authors.

Difficulties with document
All Divine Messages have not been systematically arranged and often incomprehensible because of the metaphors. I have overcome the problem by consulting the work by Caodaist leaders or the dignitaries knowledgeable about the doctrine. Then I categorized the Divine Messages into four sections, which are presented in this book.12

An insight into the Cao Đài esoteric practice and the divine realm
In spite of being knowledgeable and experienced, I have not gotten enlightened yet, so I just try my best to explain God, other Divine Beings and the Caodaist dignitaries’ explanations and systematize the Divine Messages. In addition, I explain some Caodaist important sacraments such as Dâng Tam Bửu, Tảm Thạnh, Hôn Phối, Phép Xác, Phép Đoạn Căn, etc. 13

It is the most difficult for me to examine how to save all souls in the divine realm. First, I have not got enlightenment yet. Only the divine beings, the spiritually enlightened persons and His Holiness Hồ Pháp, who have the Divine Eye14, can see this. I only try to elaborate on what those divine beings have explained. Second, the earthly language is also an obstacle. Language represents thoughts from your senses, so it is limited. Language represents facts, not the nature of facts. It is, however, used to teach humans by God. Average people often pay much attention to the literal meanings of the words, so they usually mistakenly understand what God and other divine beings said. I try to give explanations as clear as possible. Third, I sincerely pray I would be enlightened enough to understand the metaphors used by divine beings.

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12 Such as His Holiness Hồ Pháp, His Holiness Cao thượng Phạm, the late Hiền tài Nguyễn Văn Hồng, etc.
13 Offering the Three Treasures, Holy Bath, Marriage, Purification, Cutting the Earthly Ties, etc.
14 The Divine Eye is between the two human naked eyes.
3. The way

In this book, based on the philosophy of Caodaism, I will try to answer the questions commonly asked by humans such as “What is the heaven?”, “Where do humans come from?”, What do humans live in the world for?”, “What happens after death?” and “What should humans achieve at last?”
Part 1

The Caodaist view of the universe

This is how Caodaism describes the formation and evolution of the universe. The view is established to describe two viewpoints:
- The nature and outlook of the universe.
- Holiness or Selfless God.

According to the Divine Law, the mutual affecting Yin and Yang create and change the universe in the infinite. This changing mechanism produces the concept of Selfless God.
Page one

Heaven

What is the invisible world?

From the invisible world, God used the psychic pen to describe it and His explanations elaborate on the concept: “Everything comes from the same origin.”

The first page of this book tells about God and other Deities have descended into the world, using the psychic pen to reveal what humans wish to know about the universe. (Chapter 2):
- The origin of the universe and God.
- The two-phase creation.

In chapter 3, God describes the scenery of the invisible world in two phases:
- The pre-creation, before God exists.
- The post-creation, after God decided heaven and earth and Yin and Yang and created living beings.
Chapter 2

The constitution of the universe

To study Caodaism, you should begin with the origin of the universe, which is Đạo or khí Hư Vô 無 無. Đạo is the primeval power, which creates the universe and all living beings. Đạo has developed through two phases:

1. The primeval phase called Thiên Thiền 灘 Cồ Ngẫu. This is the phase of Vô Vi 無 虚. The universe is a dark space made of Khí Hồng Mông 洪 蝮.

2. The phase of motion called Hậu Thiền 灘 Cồ Ngẫu. This is the phase during which Đạo transformed and God appeared, creating the universe.

1. The primeval phase: Thiên Thiền Cồ Ngẫu

As for this phase, God explains two vital points: the origin of the universe and the power in the Đạo (Hư Vô Chí Khĩ).

The origin of the universe

God explains that before the universe, there was Đạo. Đạo, which is the origin of the universe, is Hư Vô Chí Khĩ, whose inactive form is called Đạo. Đạo is empty, quiet, invisible, unhearable and untouchable. It exists without beginning and without end. It travels everywhere in the universe, exists in everything including form and emptiness, action and non-action and Yin and Yang. Đạo is the absolute truth and the spirits of everything. Each containing Đạo which regulates and nurtures itself.

The Thiên Thiền Cồ Ngẫu, which means no birth and no death, came before God. At that time, the universe, which is a dark space made of Khí Hồng Mông, was formless, borderless, soundless and dustless.

The power in the Đạo

The universe then contained the Khí Hồng Mông and three elements which triggered the Đạo: the Thần Cục 恒, Yin and Yang. The Yin and Yang combined, forming a mass called Linh Quang. That the three elements

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15 Hư vô, Hư 無 empty, Vô 無 nothing.
16 Thiên Thiền (pre-creation) is everlasting.
17 Thần Cục (the Absolute) is cồ (odd, singly). Yin Yang are ngẫu (even, pair).
18 Vô vi (wu wei) means “never acts yet nothing is left undone”.
19 Hồng 紅: huge. Mông 蝮: covering, enveloping. This primeval dark gas exists, but no-one knows where it came from and when it happened. It is also called Hư Vô Chí Khĩ, Khí Vô Vi, Hư Thiện Thái, Hư Hoà Thiên. Taoism calls it Đạo, Confucianism calls it Vô Cục, Buddhism calls it Chơn Như.
20 Hậu Thiền (post-creation) is transient.
21 The Absolute.
22 Linh - holy; Quang - light.
appeared explains why Ðao is the primeval power, which moved and created the universe and living beings in the phase of Hậu Thiên Cơ Ngấù. When the mass of gas called Hư Vô changed and transformed, God appeared.

2. The changing phase: Hậu Thiên Cơ Ngấù

Everything in the universe is changeable and transient. Changing creates a new life. Ðao performs the same way. Even the term Ðao suggests a thorough inspection of its mobility in order to explain how it creates things. In this phase, the universe is created by the operation of the Thái Cực - Ýn Ýang mechanism within the Khi Hồng Mông or Vô Cực.

God appeared

When the primeval power of Ðao started the universe, God appeared from Tiên Thiên Hư Vô Chí Khí after the mass of Linh Quang exploded.

Therefore, the important change made by Ðao is the appearance of God and the universe. “Without Me, there wouldn’t have been anything in the universe and without Hư Vô Chí Khí, I wouldn’t have existed”. As a result, “I myself have to act under the authority of Ðao.”

Three points are clearly made by the Divine Messages:
- Ðao or Hư Vô Chí Khí is the origin of God and everything in the universe, so God says: “Children, I am you and you are Me.” and “I am the Hư Vô Chí Khí or Ðao.”
- The principle Nhật Thể or Nhật Nguyên means everything completely united and Nhật Nguyên comes from the active Thái Cực
- God Himself created the universe: “I am the one who started the universe...Only one perispirit transformed into the universe and humanity... I opened the Bát Quái to create the universe, which is called Pháp”. Pháp gave birth to things and then humans existed, which is called Tăng.

From then on there has been an omnipotent and omniscient Thái Cực or the Grand Soul called God. “When there was nothing in the universe, the Hư Vô gave birth to Me and My throne called Thái Cực.”

The constitution of the universe and things

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23 Nothingness.
24 The phase after Cơ Ngấù (the Absolute, Ýin and Ýang), when God created the universe and life.
25 The term Ðao begins with two brush strokes / which are Ýin and Ýang. Then, a dash to represent the combination of Ýin Ýang. That is why one transforms into two, two transforms into three, three transforms into everything then everything transforms back into one. The term Ðao symbolizes Ýin Ýang in both active and inactive modes. In active mode they create and in inactive mode they are invisible. Next, the term Ýy, which means self-existing, is put below, making the term tự the highest, that is the origin of the universe. The term Ðao belongs to the set xạí meaning traveling around. Next to this set is the term tâu meaning changing or transforming.
26 No ends or poles, referring to Khi Hư Vô or Hồng Mông.
29 Oneness, monism.
30 The Bagua or Pa Kua are eight symbols used in Taoist cosmology to represent the fundamental principles of reality.
31 Dharma.
32 Sangha.
The universe we humans live in is constituted by two mechanisms:
- Yin Yang mechanism.
- The Thái Cực and Yin Yang mechanism.

**The Yin Yang mechanism**

To form the universe, the two huge masses of gas Âm Quang and Dương Quang cooperate and become a mechanism.

Controlled by God, this mechanism, which moves according to the Thiên Luật, continuously change from inactive to active mode thanks to the nguyên lý thiên nhiên. The Yin Yang mechanism is both compatible and incompatible and can create:
- The invisible world: the Thirty Six Heavens, the Twelve Heavens, the Four Upper Grand Continents.
- The visible world: the Three Thousand Worlds, the Four Lower Grand Continents, the Seventy Two Planets (including the 68th one, our earth).

In this phase, things in the universe are categorized into Yin or Yang, high or low position, light or heavy things, heaven or world.

**The Thái Cực and Yin Yang mechanism produces living beings**

Being alone, God cannot reproduce living beings or create the universe, so God emits another mass of light, divides Thái Cực into Lương Nghi, that is Dương Quang and Âm Quang. “I divided Thái Cực into Lương Nghi, which transformed into Túc Tương, Túc Tương changed to Bất Quái, which continuously transformed in order to establish the universe.”

According to the Divine Messages, the active Thái Cực and Yin Yang mechanism operate in the nature of Vô Cực, following Thiên Luật to reproduce living beings. “I also separated My peri-spirit into multiple pieces which became living beings like materials, plants, insects, and animals.”

**The transformation of God**

While creating the universe, God transforms into the assigned beings to take proper responsibility. For example, God transforms into Đức Phát Mẫu to govern Âm Quang, or Thập Nhị Thần, each of whom is in charge of a

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34 Âm Quang (lit. Yin Light) is the primeval chaotic gas not shone by Dương Quang (lit. Yang Light). The space of Âm Quang shone by Dương Quang will sink and produce living things.
35 Thiên Luật - Divine Law controlled by God.
36 In Yin, there is a part of Yang, so there is the magic gas (similar to the Khảm in the Later Heaven Bagua) which rises. In Yang, there is a part of Yin, so there is the fire of nothingness (similar to Ly in the Later Heaven Bagua) or Hảo Nhịên Khi which sinks. This mechanism collects the khí Hư Vô (the huyễn khí in Yin and hảo nhiên khí in Yang). Huyễn khí and hảo nhiên khí look like two electrical lights crossing each other, making the images of Lương Nghi, which turn endlessly. Lương Nghi expands continuously to create the Túc Tương looking like a cross (┼). Túc Tương then turns like a propeller, spreading thousands of planets which we see now.
37 Túc Tương, which is called Túc Tương Yang, is like the two electrical lights, so there is a shadow called Túc Tương Yin. They all constitute the Bagua. Bagua transforms endlessly and changes the Tiên Thân Ngũ Khi (white, black, blue, red and yellow gases) into Hữu Thiên Ngũ Hành (metal, water, wood, fire and earth). Therefore, there are five directions (east, west, south, north, center) on earth and five organs in a human body (heart, liver, spleen, lung and kidney).
40 God the Mother.
41 The Twelve Time Deities.
part of the daily time. God says “I am the Thập Nhị Khai Thiển⁴¹, controlling the Thập Nhị Thời Thần.”

Thái Cực works in active or inactive mode. In active mode, Thái Cực changes into Yang for fire.⁴² In inactive mode, Thái Cực changes into Yin for water.⁴³ Since nobody governs Âm Quang, God transforms into Đức Phật Mẫu to be the Governor. Taking orders from God, Đức Phật Mẫu obtains the Dương Quang from the Thái Cực and combining it with Âm Quang to create all physical beings in the universe.

**Earthly religions**

Having located heaven and earth, Yin and Yang and living beings, Đạo expresses its use which is the appearance of religions on earth. Religions help humans understand Đạo Vô Vi⁴⁴. Using worldly means, religions teach humans. In Vietnam, the use of Đạo is Caodaism or the Third General Salvation.

In Caodaism, Đạo is the method of religious practice to have a satisfying life and to return to the previous heavenly statuses after death. Beginning with eradicating earthly temptations, you will gradually gain what is called Wuwei⁴⁵ and finally Thiền Nhơn Hiệp Nhữ⁴⁶. Therefore, religions are the doors leading to the Đạo Vô Vi, to the Truth and to where there is no more reincarnation. “Caodaism is the large road built by God for humanity to take in order to attain enlightenment, becoming Divine Beings.” “Đạo is the way for the Deities who were exiled to the world to take so that they can regain their previous heavenly statuses. Đạo is the way for humanity to avoid reincarnation.”⁴⁷

You can see the two important following points:
1. All materials come from Wuwei, that is the physical world comes from the invisible world.
2. Everything and God come from the same origin that is Hư Vô Chí Khỉ.

| Summary |
|------------------|------------------|
| **Tình Thiên Cồ Ngâu : Đạo Vô Vi** | **Hậu Thiên Cồ Ngâu : Đạo Hư Vi** |
| 1. Vô Cực is the mass of Hư Vô Chí Khỉ, which contains Thái Cực and Yin Yang | 3. God appears and transforms into Âm Quang |
| 2. The mass of Đại Linh Quang explodes. | 4. Điều Trí Kim Mẫu controls Âm Quang |
| | 5. Dương Quang and Âm Quang transform into the universe. |
| | 6. The invisible world. |
| | 7. The physical world. |

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⁴¹ The Founders of the Twelve Heavens.
⁴² Ancient religious books call it Mộc Cống (Mr Wood) because wood can start a fire.
⁴³ Ancient religious books call it Kim Mẫu (Mother Metal) because metal can change to water.
⁴⁴ Đạo Wuwei.
⁴⁵ Non- action.
⁴⁶ Becoming one with God.
Chapter 3

The universe

From the Khí Hư Vô⁴⁸ appear the Thái Cực, which is God. God creates the universe and describes it through Divine Messages: “I say Tam Thập Luc Thiên⁴⁹, Tứ Đại Bồ Châu⁵⁰ are in mid-air. They are not planets. The other Thập Nhị Địa⁵¹ and Tam Thiên Thế Giới⁵² are planets. The total number is 3072 stars.”⁵³ In order to reach Bạch Ngọc Kinh⁵⁴, you have to: “Crossing Tam Thiên Thế Giới, you will reach Tứ Đại Bồ Châu. After Tứ Đại Bồ Châu, you can enter Tam Thập Luc Thiên. In Tam Thập Luc Thiên, you need more religious practice in more incarnations before reaching Bạch Ngọc Kinh.”

Generally speaking, the universe includes two parts: the invisible heaven and the physical world.

1. The invisible heaven

According to the Divine Messages, from the highest position to the lowest position, there are:
- Tam Thập Luc Thiên.
- Thập Nhị Thiên, 3 upper for Buddha and 9 lower for Cửu Trùng Thiên.
- The upper Tứ Đại Bồ Châu.

Who can see this invisible world?

All divine beings, His Holiness Hộ Pháp⁵⁵, the people who get enlightenment and the peri-spirits leaving the physical bodies can see this world.

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⁴⁹ 36 Heavens.
⁵⁰ 4 Grand Continents.
⁵¹ 72 Earths.
⁵² 3,000 Worlds.
⁵⁴ The White Gem Capital, where God reigns over the universe.
⁵⁵ Hộ Pháp Phạm Công Tắc, the leader of Hiệp Thiên Đài.
The divine beings in heaven, for example, Bát Nương\textsuperscript{56}.

Bát Nương describes: “The invisible world is divided into Tam Thập Lục Thiên, the highest of which is for The Lord of the universe. The physical world includes three thousand worlds, which are divided into Tứ Đại Bộ Châu to govern Thập Nhị Địa.\textsuperscript{57}”

According to Bát Nương, the invisible world is Dương Khi\textsuperscript{58}, where Dương Quang led by Thái Cực comes from and where Dương Quang produces numerous souls to create heaven.\textsuperscript{59}

Furthermore, Bát Nương says: “The realm of Hư Vô\textsuperscript{60}, which is invisible compared to your physical world, is visible compared to the invisible Dương Quang.

His Holiness Hồ Pháp, who had the privilege of being granted the Divine Eye

The priest who attains enlightenment will have Divine Eye, Divine Ears, Divine Nose and Divine Heart, so he can see the invisible world.\textsuperscript{61}

To know what Heaven is, ordinary people like us have to learn from the Deities like Bát Nương or people with Divine Eyelike His Holiness Hồ Pháp. Only after death can we see Heaven with our peri-spirits.

Tam Thập Lục Thiên

In Tam Thập Lục Thiên, Bạch Ngọc Kinh is located in the highest heaven in the middle of the universe. Thái Cực changes to Lương Nghị. Yang occupies the second heaven and Yin the third heaven. They all form Ba Ngôi Trời or Tam Thiên Vị\textsuperscript{62} in the middle of the universe. Below Tam Thiên Vị are 33 more heavens, each of which is governed by a Thiên Đế\textsuperscript{63}. All Thiên Đế are God’s incarnations. The total number is 36 heavens.

Thập Nhị Thiên

Below Tam Thập Lục Thiên is Thập Nhị Thiên\textsuperscript{64}. “Below the 36 heavens is another heaven called Niết Bàn\textsuperscript{5}. Then there is another nine called Cửu Thiên Gia Hạo\textsuperscript{6}. Nine heavens and Niết Bàn make ten. That is why people usually say: nine realms for heaven and ten realms for Buddha.”

Cảnh Niết Bàn

\textsuperscript{56} The Eighth Female Buddha.
\textsuperscript{57} Lương Tam Thế page 43.
\textsuperscript{58} Yang.
\textsuperscript{59} Lương Tam Thế page 43.
\textsuperscript{59} Nothingness.
\textsuperscript{61} Lương Tam Thế page 44.
\textsuperscript{62} The Trinity.
\textsuperscript{63} Heavenly King.
\textsuperscript{64} Twelve Heavens.
\textsuperscript{5} Nirvana.
\textsuperscript{6} Cửu Thiên - Nine heavens. Khai Hoá - Education.
This realm is for the Buddhas, including three heavens: the tenth heaven called Hư Vô Thiên⁶⁷ governed by Đức Phật Thiên Đặng⁶⁸, the eleventh heaven called Hội Nguồn Thiên⁶⁹ and the twelfth heaven called Hôm Nguồn Thiên⁷⁰ governed by Đức Phật Di Lặc.

Cửu Trùng Thiên⁷¹
Cửu Trùng Thiên includes 9 heavenly levels: the First, the Second, the Thanh Thiên, the Huỳnh Thiên, the Xích Thiên, the Kim Thiên, the Hạo Thiên, the Phi Trường Thiên, and the Tạo Hóa Thiên⁷². The First level is the lowest and heaviest.

The three Levels for Buddha and nine heavenly levels are where Buddhas, Immortals, and Saints regulate all activities in the universe and the evolution of living beings.

Tứ Đại Bồ Châu Thượng⁷³
Tứ Đại Bồ Châu Thượng, which includes Đông Đại Bồ Châu, Nam Đại Bồ Châu, Tây Đại Bồ Châu, Bắc Đại Bồ Châu⁷⁴, govern Tam Thiên Thế Giới.

2. The physical world

According to the Divine Messages, the other Thất Thập Nhị Địa⁷⁵ and Tam Thiên Thế Giới⁷⁶ are planets. The total number is 3072 stars.

God told the early Caodaists to paint 3072 planets on the Quả Cận Khôn⁷⁷, which is painted azure and placed in the Bát Quái Đại.⁷⁸ The Tam

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⁶⁷ Hư Vô - emptiness. Thiên - heaven.
⁶⁸ Đại Pháp Buddha.
⁶⁹ Hội - combination, Ngốn - era.
⁷⁰ Hôm - chaotic, Ngốn - era, Thiên - heaven.
⁷¹ Tứ - 4, Đại - grand, Bồ Châu - continent - Thượng - upper. According to Hiền Tài Nguyễn văn Hồng there are two Tứ Đại Bồ Châu, the Upper and the Lower, but such information cannot be found in any Divine Messages.
⁷³ Tứ - 4, Đại - grand, Bồ Châu - continent - Thượng - upper. According to Hiền Tài Nguyễn văn Hồng there are two Tứ Đại Bồ Châu, the Upper and the Lower, but such information cannot be found in any Divine Messages.
⁷⁴ The Sông - East, the Đông - East, the Nam - South, the Tây - West, the Bắc - North.
⁷⁵ 72 Earths.
⁷⁶ 3,000 Worlds.
⁷⁷ The Universe Sphere.
⁷⁸ The Bagna Tower, which is said to be controlled by God.
Thiên Thế Giới is above the Thất Thập Nhị Địa. The purer and lighter the planets are the higher positions they are.

Tam Thiên Thế Giới79

These pure and light worlds for Gods, Saints, Immortals, and Buddhas only, so they are above the Thất Thập Nhị Địa. According to His Holiness Cao Thượng Phạm,70 Tam Thiên Thế Giới is for the people who have higher heavenly positions and Thất Thập Nhị Địa is where examinations are held for people to compete for those heavenly positions.

Tứ Đại Bộ Châu Hạ81

They are Đông Thăng Thần Châu, Nam Thiềm Bộ Châu, Tây Ngưu Hóa Châu, Bắc Cử Lưu Châu located in the east, south, west, and north respectively. They are said to govern the Thất Thập Nhị Địa.

Thất Thập Nhị Địa

These planets include our earth (the 68th). The earth is governed by Nam Thiềm Bộ Châu because in The Prayer to Praise the Virtues of Deities you can read:

Lòng sô vọng làm dăm tung niêm,
Xin giậu nằm Nam Thiềm Bộ Châu.
I quietly say my prayers
Save my Nam Thiềm Bộ Châu, please!

The first planet is the purest and lightest, so it is the highest. Below our earth, the 68th planet, are four other planets that are in the dark, so they are called U Minh Địa.82

From the middle of the universe, God controls both the invisible and the visible world.

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79 Each world is an earth or a planet.
80 Mr Cao Quỳnh Cư, one of the two assistants to the Hộ Pháp.
81 Tứ - Đại - grand, Bộ Châu - continent - Hạ - lower. According to Hiền Tài Nguyễn văn Hồng there are two Tứ Đại Bộ Châu, the Upper and the Lower, but such information cannot be found in any other Divine Messages.
82 U Minh - dark, Địa - land.
Summary

Tam Thập Lục Thiên (36 Heavens)

The realm for Buddhas

Cầu Trắng Thiên

Upper Tế Đại Bồ Châu Thượng ⑧③

Tam Thiên Thế Giới (3000 worlds)

Lower Tế Đại Bồ Châu Hạ⑧④

Thất thập nhị Địa (72 planets)

⑧③ Đông Đại Bồ Châu, Nam Đại Bồ Châu, Tây Đại Bồ Châu, Bắc Đại Bồ Châu

⑧④ Đông Thượng Thần Châu, Nam Thấp Bồ Châu, Tây Ngưu Hóa Châu, Bắc Cầu Lư Châu
Conclusion for page 1

On the first page, you can see what you have wished to know for a long time: the map of the universe. I have systematized what God has revealed to humanity: the formation and transformation of the universe. This is also the Caodaist view of the universe. The view is also expressed by Caodaist teachings and by the arrangement of the offerings on God’s altar. In addition, Caodaist rituals also contribute to the explanation of the relationship between the invisible and physical world.

The symbol of the universe on the Caodaist altar
God: the Divine Eye.
Thái Cực or the Đại Linh Quang⁸⁵, the source of the universe: the Thái Cực Lamp.
Lưong Nghị (Yin and Yang) in the Earlier Heaven Phase: two candles. Lưong Nghị (Yin and Yang) in the Later Heaven Phase: two cups. The cup of water on the left represents Yang and the cup of tea on the right represents Yin.
The Tam Bửu⁸⁶: the flower vase (body), the cup of wine (mind) and the cup of tea (soul).
The Tam Tài⁸⁷ and Ngũ Khí⁸⁸: the first inner row of three joss sticks symbolizes Tam Tài. The second outer row of two joss sticks, which makes the total number of five joss sticks that stand for Ngũ Khí. These five sticks have to be placed in a specific order. First, the middle (heaven). Then, the right (earth or Yin). Last, the left (man or Yang). The second row is placed next.

How the view of the universe is expressed
The Caodaist cultural nature is visually emphasized during a rite. The Thái Cực lamp, which is permanently lit, stands for the universe eternally shone by God. The philosophy of combined Yin Yang is expressed by:

- The ritual of lighting the joss sticks with two lit candles, one of which on the left represents the sun or Yang and the other on the right the moon or Yin. They are called Lưong Nghị Quang.

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⁸⁵ The Grand Holy Mass of Light.
⁸⁶ The three human treasures: body, mind and soul.
⁸⁷ Three essential elements: heaven, earth and man.
⁸⁸ Five vital energies.
The two hands joined together to represent Yin Yang. “The left hand is the sun, the right the moon, so they stand for Yin Yang. Combining, Yin Yang starts the universe, transforming and reproducing. That is called Đạo.”

- The rite of filling the cups. 80% of a cup is filled with tea, which symbolizes eight categories of souls in the universe. 80% of the other cup is filled with water symbolizes eight precious characteristics of the water in the Ao Thất Bửu in heaven.

How the philosophy of Tam Tâi and Tam Bửu is expressed

You can see kowtowing expresses Tam Tâi. Joining the two hands, a Caodaist puts them in front of his forehead, which is the position of Heaven. Put on the ground, the two hands are on the position of Earth and in front of his chest is the position of Man.

The three cups of wine on the altar also represent Tam Tâi. The middle is Heaven, whose 30% of wine represents the Sun, Moon, and Stars. The cup beside the cup of tea is Earth, whose 30% of wine represents Water, Fire, and Wind. The cup beside the cup of water is Man, whose 30% of wine represents Body, Mind, and Soul.

When their wine combines, it makes 90% of a cup, which represents the 9 planes of heaven. Returning to God after death, a soul has to cross these planes.

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89 The Collection of Divine Messages.
90 The Seven-Gem Pond, whose water is said to have eight valuable characteristics: pure, cool, sweet, gentle, slippery, peaceful, giving a secure feeling and nutritious.
Part 2

The Caodaist view of human life

This is a philosophical system that deals with the origin of humanity, life and death and the significance of life. According to Caodaism, humans, and God comes from the same source: the Khí Hư Vô. Humans are born, evolve and return in a spiritual circle. The beginning and the returning points are the Đại Linh Quang. In the process, God is considered the King, the Teacher, and the Father. That is why it is usually thought that God is personal.

In Part 2, there is an explanation for the three main routes according to the Caodaist view of human life.

Page 2 describes the way from heaven to earth. Combining with peri-spirits, souls start from the Đại Linh Quang to descend into the earthly world.

Page 3 describes human life on earth. The bodies, the souls and the peri-spirits live together, preparing to return to their former heavenly statuses.

Page 4 describes the way to ascend to heaven for the souls and the peri-spirits.

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91 The Nothingness.
92 The Grand Mass of Holy Light.
We humans sometimes wonder where we come from and why we exist. Through spiritualism, God has answered that man is made in the spiritual world by combining a part of God’s soul and the peri-spirit given by God the Mother. The soul and the peri-spirit enter a body as soon as a person is born. God’s answer satisfies both theism and atheism because an immortal soul is recognized to exist inside a mortal body.
Chapter 4

Where humans come from

According to Caodaism, the man comes from God and God the Mother. Though coming from the same origin, divine beings say, humanity is categorized according to the source and the evolution of the souls. There are three categories:

- Hoà Nhân⁹³ - the people with the souls which have been evolving from plants and animals to humans after the Creation.
- Nguyên Nhân⁹⁴ - the people with the souls coming directly from God and sent to earth by God the Mother.
- Qui Nhân⁹⁵ - the people with the souls from two sources. First, from the Hoà Nhân and Nguyên Nhân, who have violated the divine law and are punished by being forced to work for Qui Vương⁹⁶. Second, from the Tam Thập Lực Động⁹⁷. These evils descend into the world in order to challenge someone to see if he deserves a place in heaven.

In this chapter, I will cover the stages, during which Nguyên Nhơn is made.

- Stage 1: the soul, which is part of the Đại Linh Quang⁹⁸ or God, is separated. Then the peri-spirit created by God the Mother begins to cover the soul.
- Stage 2: a man is born on earth with three combined parts: the body or Tinh, the peri-spirit or Khí and the soul or Thần.

1. Chơn Linh⁹⁹

All religious people believe in the soul and always wonder where the soul comes from and how it enters and leaves the body. Through divine messages, God explained: "I have a Chơn Linh take care of your life, each of you. That Chơn Linh is unbiased and able to communicate with the Genies, Saints, Immortals, Buddhas and the Đẳng Trọn Lành⁹⁰ in Ngọc Hu Cung.

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⁹³ Hoà - evolving, Nhån - humans.
⁹⁴ Nguyên - primeval, original, Nhån - humans.
⁹⁵ Qui - evil, satanic, Nhån - humans.
⁹⁶ God said: "Do you know who opposes the process of life? It’s Satan. He always wants to stop the process of life. It’s like if there is life from Me, then there is death from Satan." Satan kills humans with hatred: "Because of hatred, all living beings disagree with, oppose and kill each other. That will end the world." According to His Holiness Họ Pháp, Satan used to be the Immortal Chief Kim Quang Sĩ, who was punished by Ngọc Hu Cung for being a traitor. He became Satan since then.
⁹⁷ 36 Caves, which is said to be evil spirits' realm.
⁹⁸ The huge mass of holy light.
⁹⁹ Soul - also called Chơn Hồn, Vong Hồn, Anh Linh, Hoàng Hồn.
¹⁰⁰ The Super Morally Good Beings.
What you have done, either good or bad things are noted down and presented to the Toà Phán Xét101. That Chơn Linh, who not only protects but also instructs you, is commonly called conscience. "102

Origin

Chơn Linh or Tiểu Linh Quang103, which is separated from the Đại Linh Quang104 of God, is granted to each person. It enters the body as soon as a person is born to make that person alive and intelligent. Bát Nương" said, “Souls are from the particles of Dương Quang." Dương Quang comes from Dương Khi107 of Ngôi Thái Cực and makes all the souls.

His Holiness Hồ Pháp preached, “Chơn Linh coming from Nguyên Khí creates life. Chơn Linh has limitless power granted by God."108

Characteristics

Coming from the Tiên Thiên Khi109 in heaven, Chơn Linh has the following characteristics:
- Representing human immortality. Since it is separated from the Đại Linh Quang, it is part of God. After the body dies, it either returns to the Đại Linh Quang or incarnates on earth again.
- Coming from God, Chơn Linh is not affected by the law of Âm Dương, Ngũ Hành, Biên Dịch and Vô Thường110 in the physical world.
- Chơn Linh is really purified, saintly, unbiased, intelligent and enlightened, so it is called Thần Lượng111. It can attain what the human six senses cannot.112
- Chơn Linh is able to communicate with all Deities. Thanks to Chơn Linh, Caodaist priests could communicate with Divine Beings via spiritualism in Hiệp Thiên Đài to found Caodaism.

Mission

Chơn Linh is covered by Chơn Thần and responsible for morally guiding people on earth and after death.

On earth

Taking advantage of the body, Chơn Linh and Chơn Thần practice religion on earth. The practice is considered the same way as taking an
examination held by God in the Third General Salvation. Their responsibilities are:

**Guiding Chồn Thân**

Chồn Linh controls Chồn Thân, which takes command and directs the body. His Holiness Cao Thượng Phẩm said, "If unable to control the body’s earthly desires, Chồn Linh will be admonished and become a failure in the Cổ Thiếu Lỉn Giảng Song." 113

**Archiving**

Good or bad behaviors in life are all recorded by Chồn Linh. That archive will result in either a good or bad life in the next incarnation.

**Instructing the body**

"Being so saintly, Chồn Linh not only protects but also teaches you, children." 114 Chồn Linh, however, only controls the body via a go-between, the Chồn Thân.

**Mission after death**

On the way back to heaven, Chồn Linh instructs Chồn Thân to purify itself so that it can pass the heavenly planes.

### 2. Chồn Thân 115

In Âm Quang Tiên Thiên 116, there is already Nguyên chất 117 in the Kim Bồn 118 in Điều Trì Cung to create Chồn Thân. Nguyên Chất is composed of: Nguyên Tình (Nguyên Chất âm) 119 and Nguyên Khí or Khí Sanh Quang (Nguyên Khí dương) 120.

Luong Nghi phân khí Hu Vô,
Điều Trì Kim Mẫu nương lỏ hối sanh.
Âm duong biên tạo Chồn Thân,
Lo cho non vật về phần hưu vị121.

Luong Nghi122 separated the Khi Hu Vô123,
Điều Trì Kim Mẫu124 operates the divine kiln.
Âm Dương125126 are combined to create Chồn Thân127,
That is the physical part of a human.

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113 The Eternal Life or heaven.
114 The Collection of Divine Messages. Volume 2 page 64.
115 Also Thận Hồn, Linh Thân, Chồn Thân, Phạp Thân, Phúc, cài Vía, Trường Tính, Hảo quang.
116 Âm Quang - Yin Light. Tiền Thiền - Earlier Heaven, before the Creation.
117 Nguyên (-nguyên): primeval, origin. Chất: materials. According to Caodaism, the two nguyên chất from which the universe was created are Âm quang and Dương quang
119 Nguyên Tình or Nguyên Chất âm - Primeval Tinh or Primeval Yin.
120 Nguyên Khí or Khí Sanh Quang or Nguyên Khí dương - Primeval Khí or Khí Sanh Quang or Primeval Khí Yang.
121 Cõi cùng tạng Cống Đỗ Điều Trì Kim Mẫu
122 The two forms Yin and Yang.
123 The gas of nothingness.
124 God the Mother.
125 Yün Yang.
126 Peri-spirit.
Đức Phật Mẫu uses Ngườm Chất to make Chơn Thần, so Chơn Thần is an invisible eternal form, which is always changing depending on the moral or immoral actions in each incarnation.

The divine tool

The divine tool is placed in Diệu Trì Cung run by Đức Phật Mẫu in the Ninth Heaven called Tạo Hoá Thiên. It is the Kim Bồn, the golden vessel, which contains the primeval material to create Chơn Thần.

\begin{align*}
\text{Nơi Kim Bồn vẫn vạn ngườm chất}^{127}.
\text{Tạo hình hai các bậc Nguyên Nhân}^{127}.
\text{In Kim Bồn, there is a huge amount of primeval material}
\text{To create the forms for the Nguyên Nhân.}^{128}
\end{align*}

The mechanism

From the Đại Linh Quang, God releases the Tiếu Linh Quang or souls. Đức Phật Mẫu obtains those souls and covers them with the Chơn Thần she makes from the primeval materials in Diệu Trì Cung. The results are divine beings.

\begin{align*}
\text{Sanh quang đaòng đức quản nhi,}
\text{Chơn Linh phối nhất thần vi Thánh hình}^{129}.
\text{God the Mother gives birth to your children,}
\text{By combining Chơn Linh and Chơn Thần to make a divine being.}^{130}
\end{align*}

Therefore, God is the Father, who grants humans souls. Đức Phật Mẫu is the Mother, who grants humans the peri-spirits. We humans have the same Divine Parents besides our own parents.

Incarnation

As soon as a person is born on earth, the divine beings composed of Chơn Linh and Chơn Thần enter the body. From then on the person has enough three parts.

\begin{align*}
\text{Đại Tỉ Phù tỉ bi tạo hóa,}
\text{Thượng thần giống cả căn khôn.}
\text{Yên toàn đã xác đa hôn.}
\text{God the Father is a mercy to create}
\text{humans, who represent the universe}
\text{And who have both bodies and souls}
\end{align*}

Mission

On earth, Chơn Thần, which is also called the Second Body\textsuperscript{131}, mainly acts as a go-between for the body and the soul. Its role is like the Hiệp Thiên

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{127} Kinh Đệ Cửu Cửu.
\item\textsuperscript{128} Kinh Đệ Cửu Cửu.
\item\textsuperscript{129} Phật Mẫu Chơn Kinh.
\item\textsuperscript{130} Phật Mẫu Chơn Kinh.
\item\textsuperscript{131} Phật Mẫu Chơn Kinh.
\end{itemize}
Đài’s in the Holy See. Chơn Thần takes orders from Chơn Linh and instructs the body in daily life.

**Incarnation**

Thanks to Chơn Linh’s directions, Chơn Thần can gradually control its cruelty. If failing to fulfill its responsibilities, that is satisfying the body’s immoral desires, Chơn Thần becomes corrupted and has to reincarnate to compensate for those immoral actions.

Before reincarnation, the Buddhas in the Tạo Hóa Thiên renew the Chơn Thần by eradicating all the old memories. The new Chơn Thần, therefore, forget all previous experiences in the next incarnation.

### 3. Physical Body

The human physical body is created by the combination of sperms and eggs. It is like the temporary house for Chơn Thần and Chơn Linh to learn and morally improve themselves.

**Composition**

Like the universe, a human is born by the combination of two power Yin and Yang. Through sexual intercourse, a sperm from a husband meets an egg from a wife then an embryo is created and develops into a baby. Inside the womb, the unborn baby receives the Chơn Linh and Chơn Thần, forming a human with three basic parts: Tinh, Khí, and Thần.

**A mass of numerous living things**

“A human body is made of numerous living things. Those living things are connected with each other. They live on other living things like vegetables, fruits, and rice. The food eaten changes into khi[134], which changes into huyệt[135]. They then can create another human body. Thus the cycle of birth and death keeps going on forever.”[136]

**The transformation of vô vi[137]**

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132 The First Body - the physical body. The Second Body - the mind. The Third Body - the soul.
133 The Creation Heaven or the Ninth Heaven.
134 Energy.
135 Blood.
137 Wuwei - non action (lit)
The body is formed by the combination of ngũ hành and Yin Yang, operated by Khí Hư Vô. The body is only a temporary means. Each human is composed of three parts: the physical body and the invisible part, which includes Chơn Linh and Chơn Thần.

The role

For Caodaists, life on earth is only a temporary means to prepare for eternal life in heaven. The body is made of materials, so it is like a motel for a traveler to rest in the evolutionary process.

According to Caodaism, the body is only a lodge for the Chơn Linh and Chơn Thần to practice religion, learning and morally improving themselves for the self-liberation of the Chơn Thần. Hence, you need the body for esoteric practice.

Characteristics

The body, which is made from materials, is a living being with five senses and emotions, so its basic activities are like an animal’s. “A human is basically an animal.”

The body is always badly influenced by the surroundings. If not being properly controlled, it is willing to satisfy its worldly desires. That way the Chơn Thần will be contaminated and have to reincarnate forever. That is why a religious person must always take orders from the Chơn Linh to control the body.

Since the Chơn Linh and Chơn Thần enter the body, they begin the process of morally improving themselves in order to return to God. Being either a Hoá Nhân or a Nguyễn Nhân, they live the same way on earth.

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138 Wu xìng - five elements.
139 Nothingness.
140 God said: “Children, My Dao is formless. But it still needs to combine with materials (soul and body). You should not choose the form and discard the formlessness. You should not choose the formlessness and discard the form either. They both should go together. For example, for food you eat the grain and eliminate the husks, but you need the husks for agriculture to have more rice. Practicing religion is the same way. For the soul to have a higher divine status, you need the body.”
141 The Collection of Divine Messages. Volume I
142 A person with the soul that has evolved from an animal to a human after the Creation.
143 A person with the soul that came directly from God.
Summary

God

1. Releases a Chơn Linh or a Tiểu Linh Quang
   From the Đại Linh Quang

2. Đức Diệu tần Kim Mẫu creates a
   Chơn Thần to cover the Chơn Linh

3. Descending to the world

4. Chơn Linh and Chơn Thần enter a body
Chapter 5

Evolution

In the universe, souls have to evolve in a circle according to the divine law. Beginning from the Đại Linh Quang, souls ascend to the world for incarnation then return to the Đại Linh Quang.

On earth, people with the souls directly coming from God are called Nguyên Nhân. They try to gain higher heavenly status by teaching others, especially the Hoá Nhân. As for the Hoá Nhân, they try to learn from the Nguyên Nhân to also gain a heavenly status after death.

1. The evolution of the Hoá Nhân

According to Caodaism, the people, whose souls have evolved from materials→ plants→ animals→ humans after the Creation, are called the Hoá Nhân. Traditionally, the term “root and top” is used to explain this type of evolution. Root or the head controls the body and top is the results. Look at plants and animals.

- Plants: the head is underground (more Yin), so plants are not intelligent.
- Animals: the head is at the same level with the root, (at the border of Yin and Yang) so they are more intelligent than plants.
- Humans: the head is high up (more Yang), so they are the most intelligent.

The Hoá Nhân have enough three kinds of souls (Sanh Hồn, Giác Hồn, and Linh Hồn). At each of evolution levels, the living beings receive the appropriate souls from God. Plants receive Sanh Hồn, animals Giác Hồn and humans Sanh Hồn, Giác Hồn, and Linh Hồn.

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144 According to His Holiness Thượng Phẩm, after Lưỡng Nghị changes into Bát Quái, materials are created then evolve until they become humans called Hoá Nhân, so their Chơn Thần are still materialistic.

145 Living Soul, Conscious Soul and Holy Soul (lit).
Đức Phật Mẫu combines the Khí Âm Quang and Khí Dương Quang to create living beings including Nguyên Nhân and Hoá Nhân. Then all of the eight categories\textsuperscript{146} of living beings are sent to the earth for incarnation.

\textit{Cận khôn sản xuất hữu hình}  
\textit{Bất hồn vận chuyển hóa thành chủng sanh}\textsuperscript{147}  
\textit{God the Mother creates all physical things}  
\textit{And sends eight categories of souls to the earth.}\textsuperscript{148}

Being created by Đức Phật Mẫu, the Hoá Nhân receive the Chơn Linh from God to enter the Trường Thi Công Quả\textsuperscript{149}. Through numerous incarnations, they evolve from humans→ Deities→ Saints→ Immortals→ Buddhhas. If they practice religion well enough, they also attain high heavenly statues like the Nguyên Nhân. God said, “Either a Nguyên Nhân or a Hoá Nhân’s life is the result of what that person has done in former incarnations.”

Unlike Darwin’s Theory of Evolution, the Caodaist Law of Evolution deals with both the human body and soul.

\textit{Vòng xây chuyên vọng thân hóa,}  
\textit{Nương xác thân hiệp ngũ Cận Khôn}\textsuperscript{150}  
\textit{All souls have to borrow bodies}  
\textit{To evolve until they unite with God}

2. The evolution of the Nguyên Nhân

Having been born in the world, Nguyên Nhân evolves by practicing religion in many incarnations to attain the positions of Deities, Saints, Immortals, and Buddhhas. God said, “Children, you have to reincarnate lots of times to attain your highest level in Niết Bàn\textsuperscript{151}.”

Becoming a Buddha, the soul still keeps on practicing religion in heaven until he reaches the final destination, which is God’s Soul\textsuperscript{153}.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
  \node (Buddha) at (0,0) {Buddha soul};
  \node (Immortal) at (0,-1) {Immortal soul};
  \node (Saint) at (0,-2) {Saint soul};
  \node (Human) at (0,-3) {Human soul (both Nguyên Nhân and Hoá Nhân)};
  \draw [->] (Buddha) -- (Immortal);
  \draw [->] (Immortal) -- (Saint);
  \draw [->] (Saint) -- (Human);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{146} Rock, plants, animals, humans, Deities, Saints, Immortals and Buddhhas.
\textsuperscript{147} Phật Mẫu Chơn Kinh
\textsuperscript{148} Phật Mẫu Chơn Kinh
\textsuperscript{149} The Virtue Competition.
\textsuperscript{150} Kinh Giải Oan
\textsuperscript{151} Nirvana
\textsuperscript{152} The Collection of Divine Messages. Volume 1 page 57.
\textsuperscript{153} Also, Thiên Hồn, Thái Cực, Đại Linh Quang.
On the process of evolution, a Nguyễn Nhân or a Hoá Nhân can either skip some levels if he/she is extremely successful or go backward to incarnate as an animal if he/she commits a crime. In the Third Salvation, a person can achieve enlightenment in only one incarnation.

3. Descending to earth

The Nguyễn Nhân, who is usually called the world’s visitors, incarnate for the following reasons to:
- Practice religion for higher heavenly statuses.
- Teach Hoá Nhân.
- Make up for bad deeds in former incarnations.
- Save people as assigned by God.\(^{154}\)

**Practicing religion for higher heavenly statuses**

The Nguyễn Nhân incarnate in the world, where God holds the Virtue Competition, to share unhappiness and to serve people for their own higher positions in heaven.

**Teaching the hoá nhân**

Since the Hoá Nhân is still stupid, cruel and uncivilized, Đức Phật Mẫu took orders from God, sending 10,000,000 Nguyen Nhân to teach them. Those Nguyen Nhân, whose souls coming directly from God, have divine positions already. Their teaching will contribute to their attaining higher positions. They will return to God after finishing their missions.

**Bad karma**

At first, the Nguyễn Nhân, who incarnated in the world, were moral and intelligent. They, however, were gradually so contaminated by worldly temptations that they forgot their assignments. They even committed a crime, so they had to reincarnate for compensation.

In addition, Satan also tempted them into doing the wrong things. As a result, they lost the Vạn Cửu Nang\(^ {155}\) given by Phật Mẫu. They then could not go back to heaven.

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\(^{154}\) His Holiness Hiệp Phỉp said there are five categories of world’s visitors:
- The debtors.
- The creditors.
- The students.
- The travelers.
- The heavenly assigned persons.

\(^{155}\) Vạn cửu nang (nang 囊: a bag) a bag that contains 9,000,000 things. According to Khai Pháp Trần Duy Nghĩa, when the Nguyễn Nhân descended into the world, Đức Điều Trì Kim Mẫu gave one to each of them, saying that they would not be able to come back if they lost
Feeling great compassion towards them, God found Three Periods of Salvations to save them. Caodaism is the Third One.

**Saving people as assigned by God**

In addition to the high moral souls who incarnated in the world to save humanity like the Buddha, Jesus Christ, Laozi, etc. other Saints or Immortals are assigned to the earth.\(^{156}\)

According to Caodaism, lots of its dignitaries were divine beings who were assigned to earth by God. For example, His Holiness Họ Pháp Phạm Công Tắc is Vị Hộ’s\(^{157}\) incarnation. In Báo Ân Đường Kiểm Biên\(^{158}\) Sep 19th, 1956 Thanh Sơn Đạo Sĩ said: “Yes, you incarnated in Vi (Hộ) family and now in Phạm (Công Tắc) family...”

Đầu Sự Thái Tho Thanh is Tứ Hàng Bộ Tắt’s\(^{159}\) incarnation. On Jan 11th, 1927 God told him, “You are Quan Âm’s incarnation.”

Đầu Sự Lắm Hương Thanh is Long Nữ’s incarnation.

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\(^{156}\) July 30th 1923 in Miếu Nổi, Tào Quốc Cựu said, “You are so lucky to live when Caodaism is founded because lots of divine beings came here to save people.”

\(^{157}\) A Saint in Chinese mythology.

\(^{158}\) A Caodaist Temple in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

\(^{159}\) Tứ Hàng Bộ Tắt or Quan Âm - Guan Yin.
The world
Where do you live?
Why do you live here?

Where do you live? According to Caodaism, life on earth is temporary. Your body is just a motel for Chơn Thân and Chơn Linh to learn and improve themselves in the Third Salvation.

Why do you live here? According to Caodaism, your mission is to fulfill your human responsibilities and to practice religion for your returning to God.
Chapter 6

Fulfilling your responsibilities

A Caodaist believer begins with the process of fulfilling his/her responsibilities. This is the first of the Five Levels: Nhơn Đạo, Thần Đạo, Thánh Đạo, Tiến Đạo, and Phật Đạo. This is mandatory for all humans to complete this first.

In the Third Amnesty, from October 15th, 1926 to the Long Hoa Competition held by Di Lạc Vương Phật, people can fulfill their responsibilities by:
- Practicing Caodaism as a member of Cửu Trùng Đại.
- Practicing Caodaism as a member of Phước Thiên.

Having finished this stage, a Caodaist believer can do the esoteric practice of Caodaism. In this phase, the believer mainly purifies his/her Chơn Thần by eliminating the Khí Hậu Thiên or his/her seven emotion and six desires.

1. Why you have to practice religion now?

According to Caodaism, the earth or the 68 planets has experienced two n onRequest cn  168:
- Thương ngươn also called Ngươn Tạo Hoá. The First General Salvation was held by the Ancient Buddha, Hồng Quân Lào Tổ and Văn Tuyên Đệ Quân.
- Trung ngươn also called Ngươn Tiền Hoá. The Second General Salvation was held by the Buddha, Jesus Christ, Laozi, Confucius, Jiang Shang. Presently, it is Hà Ngươn also called Ngươn Bảo Tôn. God has held the Third General Salvation in Vietnam for all souls to enter the first ngươn of the next Chuyển when everyone and everything becomes ethical again.

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160 Long - dragon. Hoa - flower. This is the same as Judgement Day.
161 Maitreya Buddha.
162 The Nine-Level Tower (lit) the Caodaist Executive Organization.
163 The Caodaist Charity Organization.
164 Peri-spirit.
165 The energy of Later Heaven.
166 Joy, anger, love, hatred, sorrow, satisfaction and desire.
167 The desires to satisfy your eyes, ears, nose, tongue, mind, and body.
168 A length of time which is used in Caodaism. According to His Holiness Hồ Pháp, it is equivalent to 12,000 years.
169 The First Cycle.
170 The Cycle of Creation.
171 Another name for God by Taoism.
172 The Mid Cycle.
173 The Cycle of Progress.
174 The Last Cycle.
175 The Cycle of Reservation.
176 A length of time used by Caodaism. A chuyền includes three ngươn or 36,000 years.
The three Nguơn in the Third Chuyện in the 68th planet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nguơn</th>
<th>Humans</th>
<th>Society</th>
<th>Salvation</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Thượng Nguơn</td>
<td>Moral Kind</td>
<td>Peaceful Harmonious</td>
<td>The First General Salvation</td>
<td>Past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trung Nguón</td>
<td>Rather immoral Rather warlike</td>
<td>Unfair War</td>
<td>The Second General Salvation</td>
<td>Past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hự Nguon</td>
<td>Very aggressive Cunning</td>
<td>Destructive Deadly</td>
<td>The Third General Salvation</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nguơn Thánh Đức</td>
<td>Moral again Kind again</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Future</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Practicing religion in Cửu Trùng Đài

The believers who join Cửu Trùng Đài become Caodaist dignitaries. They do religious work to both serve people and earn a higher heavenly status. Being Caodaist dignitaries, they, as well as all Caodaist believers, have to perform the Tam Lập: Lập Công, Lập Đức, and Lập Ngọn. That way is called taking the way of the Cửu Thiền Khai Hoá to earn the heavenly positions of Địa Thần, Nhơn Thần, Thiên Thần, Địa Thánh, Nhơn Thánh, Thiên thánh, Địa Tiên, Nhơn Tiên, Thiên Tiên.

Lập Ngơn
They should preach Caodaism to others, preferably through the media.

Lập Công

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177 Three good deeds.
178 Practicing Caodaism, doing charity work and preaching.
179 Cửu Thiền - nine heavens. Khai Hoá - teaching, educating.
They should fulfill their religious responsibilities. For example, they should do any assigned religious work in their local Caodaist temples, one of which is they should perform the daily four rites (at noon, at midnight, at 6 am and at 6 pm).

In addition, being Caodaist dignitaries, they have to take care of other believers in their assigned village or town, helping them in their religious and social life.

As mentioned before, God has held a Trưởng Thi Công Quả181, which is Caodaism, in these 68 planets for the Third Amnesty. To earn the positions of Deities, Saints, Immortals, and Buddhas, everyone must do as much religious work as they can.182 In this competition, the Chairman of the examiners’ board is Đức Di Lạc Vương Phật183. Interestingly, one of the divine examiners is Ma Vương184, who is in charge of challenging the candidates for the divine positions in Heaven.

Vô ma khảo bất thành Đại Đạo,
Đạo bảo khảo bất thành Phật.
Without Satan’s challenges, you cannot get enlightenment.
Religious challenges are a must for those who want to become Buddhas.

« Children, you should know that you cannot get enlightenment until you do enough religious work and fulfill your personal responsibilities. Thus, preaching to others is the only way for you to get enlightenment. There are numerous ways to do so, just take the suitable one, so you may achieve the highest level for less religious work.»185

Lập Đức

They should do charity work by making donations. In Caodaism, there is an organization called Hội Thánh Phước Thiên186, where believers can do charity work, climbing the Thập Nhị Đẳng Cấp Thiềng Liêng187 hierarchy.

4. Practicing religion in Cơ Quan Phước Thiên

In addition to Cửu Trùng Đài, any Caodaist believers can do charity work by joining the Cơ Quan Phước Thiên, which has a hierarchy called Thập Nhị Đẳng Cấp Thiềng Liêng. In this hierarchy, there are twelve ranks including

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181 The Religious Work Competition.
182 “To earn the positions of Deity, Saints, Immortals and Buddhas doing religious work is a must.” The Collection of Divine Messages. Volume 1 and 2.
183 Maitreya Buddha.
184 Also Quí Viên, Chúa Quí, Kim Quang Sứ - Satan.
185 The Collection of Divine Messages.
187 The Twelve Divine Ranks.
40

Minh Đức, Tân Dân, Thịnh Thien, Hạnh Thien, Giáo Thien, Chí Thien, Đạo Nhon, Chon Nhon, Hiện Nhon, Thánh Nhon, Tiên Tứ, Phật Tứ. 188

This organization is responsible for "easing people’s suffering by feeding them, especially the disabled and the underprivileged." 189 Its purpose is expressed through the couplets:

福德天頌萬物眾生離苦劫
善緣地貯十方諸佛合元人
Phương đức Thien ban văn về chủng sanh ý khổ kiếp,
Thiên duyên đia trù thập phương chư Phật hiệp nguyên nhân. 190

福德修心渠道和人尋地利
善慈定性安眾合眾識天時
Phương đức tu tâm lạc đạo hòa nhơn tâm địa lợi,
Thiên tử định tâm an bính hiệp chung thức Thiên thiện. 191

In short, to earn a divine position in heaven, you have to practice religion and fulfilling your personal responsibilities is a prerequisite.

« Though being a Đại La Thien Đế incarnating on earth, you still find it hard to return to your heavenly status unless you practice religion. » 192

Rằng ở đời thi Nhơn đạo tròn,
Trọn rồi, Thiền đạo mới hoàn toàn.
Only when you have already fulfilled your personal responsibilities
Can you practice esotericism successfully?

4. Caodaist Esoteric Practice

According to His Holiness Hoàng Pháp, you can enter the Tình Thất 193 for esoteric practice after completing your duty in Cửu Trượng Đại or Phương Thiền. This practice is called hiệp Tam Bửu. 194 For those who find this kind of practice uncomfortable or too difficult, however, they can safely earn a divine status in
heaven by practicing in Cửu Trùng Dài or Phước Thiền because of God’s great favor in the Third Salvation.
Chapter 7

Tinh converted into Khí

The Caodaist esoteric practice includes three steps: Tinh converted into Khí, Khí converted into Thần and Thần returning to Hư. In the first step, the esoteric practitioner chooses what food to eat in order to:
- Purify his Tinh;
- Convert Tinh to Chơn Khí, which nourishes the Chơn Thần.

1. Tinh, Chơn Khí, Chơn Thần

Tinh is the essence created from food by the human body. In a human body, there is the process of changing from the Tinh to the Hậu Thần Chơn Khí, which cover and nourish the Tiền Thần Chơn Thần.

A Caodaist esoteric practitioner chooses to have a completely vegetarian diet to have pure Tinh because the pure Tinh will change to pure Chơn Khí.

Tinh

At first, the human digestive organs make the Chơn Tinh from the food eaten. Then Chơn Tinh is transferred to nourish, repair and maintain other organs. Besides, it is also burned by the Hòa Tinh and converted to Chơn Khí.

"Hòa Tinh is the heat from Dương Quang, which converts Chơn Tinh to Chơn Khí." Chơn Khí combines with Chơn Thần to make the Đệ Nhị Xác Thần. Therefore, the impure Tinh can contaminate the Chơn Thần. For example, drinking lots of alcohol, you will get drunk, so you are not conscious enough or your Chơn Thần is contaminated. That is why an esoteric practitioner has to practice full vegetarianism.

Chơn Khí

Chơn Khí, along with the Chơn Thần and blood, travels all over the body. Therefore, it becomes:
- The intermediary between your Chơn Thần and Chơn Linh;

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195 Tinh Khí Thần - body, mind, soul.
198 Luật Tam Thể. Page 27.
199 The second body - the peri-spirit. (The first body is the physical one and the third body is the soul.)
- The ties for binding your Chơn Thần to your body, which is called “bắt dấy oan nghiệp” or “thất phúc”. It is via these seven ties that your body requests your Chơn Thần to satisfy its worldly desires. If the Chơn Thần agrees, it might commit some moral crime. These ties themselves are the ones that prevent a person’s Chョン Thần from leaving his body after he dies.

Chơn Thần can be seen by the person who has Divine Eyes as a bright aura (for the Saints), pink aura (for good people) and purple aura (for bad people). You yourself can also realize whether you have enough Chơn Thần or not. You will feel sick, weaken and jittery like when you are too hungry or captive. Having eaten, you will feel alright because now you have enough Chơn Thần.

Chơn Thần

Chơn Thần is covered and nourished by Chơn Khí, so it is impure if the food provided is contaminated. To meet God, your Chơn Thần has to be absolutely pure. “Such a Chơn Thần can come to Me.” Besides, it will not be struck and destroyed by lightning while entering the universe. On the other hand, an impure one has to reincarnate. Again, vegetarianism is a must for those who want to have an absolutely pure Chơn Thần.

2. Vegetarianism

Vegetarian food for Caodaist believers should include vegetables, grains, and fruits. It helps Caodaists:
- Follow the first precept “Do not kill”;
- Change Hậu Thiên to Tiền Thiên;
- Can ascend easily;
- Avoid bad karma and reincarnation.

Also, meat from animals can contain fear, hatred, unhappiness, cruelty, and anger when they are killed. Eating it, you will have the same bad emotions. Besides, animal meat results in sickness such as stomach ulcers, hypertension, heart disease, etc. In reality, vegetarians are usually kinder than meat-eaters.

Following the precepts

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201 The seven invisible ties made of Chơn Khí.
203 Chơn Thần, which is still material, has to enter the Khí Tiền Thiên, where there is always electricity. It should be absolutely pure so that it is lighter than air in order to travel in the space.
204 As for vegetarianism please read Âm Dơng Âm Thực by the same author. Printed by Thánh Thần Seattle, 2016.
Thanks to vegetarianism, human beings can control their thất tình lúc dục. Therefore, they will not break the five precepts. For example, they will neither engage in improper sexual conduct nor steal.

**Changing the Tình Hậu Thiên into Tiền Thiên**

Khí Tiền Thiên (the real Yang and Yin), which had existed before the universe was created, is extremely light and pure.

Khí Hậu Thiên or Chơn Khí, which comes from the air and food, is responsible for protecting and feed Khí Tiền Thiên. Whether Chơn Khí is pure or contaminated depends on what kind of food a person has.

God said: "Make use of your physical body and change its ngaon tình (qi and blood) into the ngaon khí. As a result, the Tính Hậu Thiên becomes the Tính Tiền Thiên. Training the ngaon khí is making the ngaon thân more intelligent." 207

The reason why that change should be made is both khí are gaseous, which are active based on the principle "động khí tương cầu", meaning two gases of the same characteristics can unite. For the khí Hậu Thiên to unite with the khí Tiền Thiên, you should purify it while you are still alive by having vegetarian meals.

"Vegetarianism is good for Tiền Thiên while the meat is good for Hậu Thiên." 208
"Therefore, I make you practice full vegetarianism before entering the meditation house." 209

**After death consequence**

While ascending through heavenly levels, the Chơn Thần is like a vehicle that carries the Chơn Linh. The speed of ascending is higher if the Chơn Thần is more purified. Vegetarianism brings about a lighter Chơn Thần who can ascend faster, avoiding another incarnation.

Bát Nương said, “To escape the Âm Quang, you need to have vegetarian meals. That is why God requires you to practice vegetarianism."

The peri spirit of a vegetarian is light, brilliant and it can easily fly out of the atmosphere.

**Avoiding reincarnation**

Vegetables and grains are the food God grants to humanity. Vegetarianism is what God prefers to develop mercy, control bad behaviors,

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205 Thất tình - seven emotions. Lúc dục - six desires.
210 The peri spirit.
211 The souls.
212 The Eighth Female Buddha.
213 Âm - yin. Quang - light. This place is similar to Hell.
avoid bad karma, and follow the five precepts, especially the first one: “Do not kill.” It is fair that you live on vegetables and grains then you die and your body nurtures them.

3. Meat-eating

Animal-based food provides humans with contaminated Tinh. Contaminated Tinh gives contaminated Khí, which covers and feeds Chơn Thân. Consequently, you have a contaminated Chơn Thân.

While you are alive

According to Caodaism, the animal instincts inside a meat eater is a big obstacle on the way of practicing religion. It is extremely easy for that person to commit a crime or break religious law.

Too much Khí Hậu Thiên

Animal-based food creates lots of contaminated Khí Hậu Thiên, which pollutes the Chơn Thân. As a result, Chơn Thân becomes too dumb to resist worldly temptations.

Committing a crime

The flesh of animals is generally impure because it contains the animals’ anger when they are killed. That impurity becomes toxic substances in the cells. Additionally, meat is harder for digestion than vegetables and grains.

Caodaist Law

That is why Caodaist Law prohibits killing or using the meat for offerings. The believers whose jobs are relevant to killing animals or selling alcohol and drugs have to change their jobs.

The believers who practice vegetarianism 10 days a month and above are permitted to enter the meditation house. In the meditation house, however, they have to practice full vegetarianism.

After death

After death, there are no more worldly temptations from human desires and emotions, but the meat-eaters’ Chơn Thân are still impure because of the

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216 According to scientists, fruits stay in your stomach 20 minutes, grains 2 hours and meat 4-6 hours.
217 Tôn Lật, Đạo Pháp, chương IV, Điều thứ hai mươi một.
218 Thê Lật, Điều thứ mười hai: Trong việc cùng té vong linh không nên dùng hi sanh, dùng toàn dò chay...
219 Thê Lật, Điều thứ hai mươi: Người bổn đạo chằng nên chuyển nghề gì làm cho sai sanh hai vị... không được buồn bấn các thợ nâu mành và a phiền.
contamination from meat-eating. Those Chơn Thần have difficulty leaving the physical bodies to enter heaven, so God has granted the sacrament called Phép Đoạn Cần\textsuperscript{220} to help them.

**Unable to enter heaven**

The meat-eaters have impure physical bodies and Chơn Thần, so their souls have difficulty entering heaven. God said, “Children if you practice esotericism without vegetarianism, your Chơn Thần will be so polluted by Khí Hạ Thiên that you cannot enter heaven.”\textsuperscript{223}

**Unable to escape the cycle of reincarnation**

God said, “How can you recover if you get enlightened while doing the esoteric practice without vegetarianism? If you get enlightened that way, you will be struck by lightning while flying in the air because your contaminated Chơn Thần is still electrically conductive. You might be intelligent enough to hide somewhere as a Nhân Tiên\textsuperscript{222}, but your earthly exile has not been finished.”

\textsuperscript{220} Phép - sacrament. Đoạn cần - cut off bad karma.
\textsuperscript{221} The Collection of Divine Messages. Volume 1 p46.
\textsuperscript{222} Nhân - human. Tiên - immortal.
Chapter 8

Khí harmonizes with Thần

“Khí hiệp Thần” means the Khí Hậu Thiên\textsuperscript{223} or Chon Khí will harmonize with the Khí Tiên Thiên\textsuperscript{224} or Chon Thần if it is as pure and light as Khí Hư Vô\textsuperscript{225}. The term “harmonize” describes the heavy contaminated Khí Hậu Thiên changes into the light pure Khí Tiên Thiên. His Holiness Hô Pháp said, “Converting Khí into Thần is the phase in which you make yourself more virtuous, control your bad behaviors, and promote noble thoughts. That will purify your Khí. When that Khí moderately circulates in your body, you can easily follow God’s teachings and feel peaceful and wise.”

1. The harmonization of the khí

During esoteric practice, the practitioner should understand the condition for the two khí to harmonize with each other and know what Khí Hậu Thiên is. Khí of the same characteristics will find and harmonize with each other.

The two khí can harmonize with each other on the condition that they are equally pure/contaminated or have the same electronic waves. For example, for the contaminated Hậu Thiên Chon Khí to harmonize with the pure Khí Tiên Thiên, you need to adjust the frequency of the Chon Khí by purification so that it vibrates with the same frequency as that of the pure Khí Tiên Thiên. The practice is similar to that of a tuner. Therefore, the phase of “Khí harmonizes with Thần” is the hardest because the practitioner himself/herself has to purify his/her Khí Hậu Thiên related to the Chon Thần or Khí. The Chon Thần should be as pure as when it was in the Thái Hư to harmonize with Thần in accordance with the principle “Đồng khí tương cầu.”\textsuperscript{226} Similarly, His Holiness Cao Thường Phạm said about the Long Tu Phien\textsuperscript{227}, “How to turn on and turn off of the Long Tu Phien is always in accordance with the rule “Đồng khí tương cầu.”, that is the Long Tu Phien attracts and takes the moral Chon Thần to the Cực Lạc Thế Giới\textsuperscript{228} while it pushes back the impure Chon Thần. That Chon Thần gradually moves to the dark U Minh.\textsuperscript{229}

Khí Hậu Thiên made by the seven human feelings and six desires.

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\textsuperscript{223} Khí - qì, energy. Hậu Thiên - later heaven.
\textsuperscript{224} Khí - qì, energy. Tiên Thiên - earlier heaven.
\textsuperscript{225} Khí - qì, energy. Hư Vô - nothingness.
\textsuperscript{226} Khí of the same characteristics will find and harmonize with each other.
\textsuperscript{227} Long tu - dragon beard. Phien - fan.
\textsuperscript{228} Nirvana.
\textsuperscript{229} Hell.
The seven feelings and six desires create the two Yin Yang Khí Hậu Thiên that naturally hide in human internal organs\textsuperscript{230}. The Khí caused by six desires can be seen on the body and the Khí caused by seven feelings through the unusual changes in human thoughts. These two Khí are the two obstacles so hard for religious practitioners to overcome.

**The influence of the six desires on the body**

The six desires cause the Hậu Thiên Yin Khí to nurture and rouse the body. Thus, the signs from this relationship can be seen in the body. For example, the greedy will put on weight or the sex maniacs and drinkers look pale and thin.

**The influence of the seven feelings on the mind**

The seven feelings cause the Hậu Thiên Yang Khí that frequently vibrates together with the Khí Tiên Thiên Chơn Thần via an intermediate called Ngũ Thần\textsuperscript{231}. Without any control, this Khí will be overactive, disturbing the Chơn Thần. Mental signs can be seen such as a person who is overjoyed can go insane and a worrier can become mentally ill. Such bad influences can prevent an esoteric practitioner from getting enlightened.

**2. The source of the seven feelings and six desires**

According to His Holiness Cao Thường Phạm, everyone has seven feelings and six desires, which caused by the internal organs. Their boss, however, is the Chơn Thần\textsuperscript{232}.

**Ngũ hành\textsuperscript{233}**

Everything in the universe can live and reproduce thanks to the Tiên Thiên Ngũ Hành and Hậu Thiên Ngũ Hành. The Hậu Thiên Ngũ Hành are the visible forms of the Tiên Thiên Ngũ Hành. Entering a physical body the Tiên Thiên Ngũ Hành convert into the material Hậu Thiên Ngũ Hành, which cause the seven human feelings and the six human desires.

**Ngũ hành Tiên Thiên**

The peri spirit or Chơn Thần already contains:

1. Tinh Tiên Thiên of the Nguyên Chất\textsuperscript{234} from the Kim Bồng\textsuperscript{235} for Đức Điều Trị\textsuperscript{236} to create the human forms.

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\textsuperscript{230} Luật tam thể. P20
\textsuperscript{231} Ngũ Thần là: Thức Thần (tím), Ý (tì), Phụ (phế), Chí (thận), Hồn (can).
\textsuperscript{232} Luật Tam Thế. P20.
\textsuperscript{233} The five elements.
\textsuperscript{234} The Primeval Substance.
\textsuperscript{235} The Golden Vessel.
2. Khí Tiên Thiên or Khí Сань Quang, which is the life source.

In the Ngữ Hành Tiên Thiên, there are Ngữ Nguron Hưu Danh or Ngữ Khí Tiên Thiên.237

Ngôn Tinh from tuy in the kidney.
Ngôn Tinh from móc in the liver.
Ngôn Khí from thò in the spleen.
Ngôn Thần from hoà in the heart.
Ngôn Tinh from kän in the lungs.

Ngữ hành Hậu Thiên

Ngữ Hành Hậu Thiên is the visible forms of the Ngữ Hành Tiên Thiên. After fertilization, the Chơn Thần enters the body and the Ngữ Hành Tiên Thiên convert into the material Ngữ Hành Hậu Thiên, which are the heart, spleen, lungs, kidney and liver. In each organ, the Ngữ Nguron Hưu Danh also change into Ngữ Nguron Hưu Chất. Ngữ Nguron Hưu Chất enter the Ngữ Hành Hậu Thiên to create Ngữ Thérc or Ngữ Thần, which are Thérc Thần in the heart (fire), Vọng Ý in the spleen (ground), Quí Phách in the lungs (metal), Chí in the kidney (water) and Du Hồn in the liver (wood).238

Thất tình luc dục

Entering the Cửu Trường Đại239, you can see the statue of the Seven-Headed Serpent and the dragon that spits six sparks. The former represents the seven human feelings and the latter six desires.

The seven feelings are joy, anger, love, hatred, sorrow, satisfaction and desire.

The six desires associated with the six sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind) are the desires for beauty, melodious sounds, fragrance, good taste, smooth touch, and good thoughts.

In the internal organs, there is an invisible system including:
- The six desires (the Hậu Thiên Yin Khí of the organs)
- The seven feelings (the Hậu Thiên Yang Khí of the organs)
- Ngữ Thần or Khí Tiên Thiên directly related to the Chơn Thần.

The Chơn Thần is the director of this system and all actions of the seven feelings, the six desires and the Ngữ Thần or Ngữ Thérc.

Each organ connects a Thần, a feeling and a desire as described in the following chart.

237 Ngữ hành Tiên Thiên create ngũ khí, that is yellow, azure, white, red, black.
239 the Nine-Level Tower.
The relationship between the five human internal organs and other invisible factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five elements</th>
<th>Five internal organs</th>
<th>Seven emotions</th>
<th>Six desires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fire (red)</td>
<td>Heart (tongue)</td>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>Desire for good touch and good thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth (yellow)</td>
<td>Spleen (mouth)</td>
<td>Thinking</td>
<td>Desires for smooth touch and good thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal (white)</td>
<td>Lungs (nose)</td>
<td>Peri spirit</td>
<td>Desire for good smell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water (black)</td>
<td>Kidney (ears)</td>
<td>Will</td>
<td>Desires for good sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood (azure)</td>
<td>Liver (face)</td>
<td>Soul</td>
<td>Desire for beauty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How to communicate with the world

Those invisible factors communicate with the world through five doors or the forms of Ngũ Hành: the eyes are the doors of the liver, the tongue is the door of the heart, the mouth is the door of the spleen, the nose is the door of the lungs and the ears are the doors of the kidney. Through these doors, the Khí Hậu Thiên of the seven feelings and six desires become active and excite the Khí Tiên Thiên Ngũ Thân. The Chơn Thân, however, can decide to either control or ignore those activities.

How seven feelings and six desires become active?

They become active when the internal organs are exposed to the surroundings through the “doors” or when the person's thoughts trigger those emotions.

Take a box of matches, the box is like the body with five “doors” of the internal organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin, and thinking) and the matches are like everything around (colors, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, and thoughts). Striking a match, you light a fire. It is like you feel good when you listen to your favorite music then you have a desire for more.

Although you are not exposed to the surroundings, you can always think of everything, which triggers your emotions and desires. In addition, a lack of nutrition also causes the Hypothalamus to give signals that your body needs it. For example, if your body needs water or food, you feel hungry or thirsty though you do not see water or food. Hence, emotions and desires are instinct

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240 Those five doors are proven by the diagnosis of Chinese medicine. The red tip of a tongue signals heart disease. An old man with loss of hearing signals his kidney problems. Cold wind causes sneezing and runny nose. A person with a liver problem can have eye problems. A problem with the spleen is shown by mouth sores.
and they (also called Khí Hậu Thiên) are very necessary for feeding and exciting your physical body. Desires are the signals of physical life, but too much desire will seriously contaminate your mind. That is why Caodaist teachings advise believers to control their six desires.

3. The physical body and the six desires

First, you should notice the six desires pollute the physical body and prevent your souls from ascending after death.

The six desires and the seven emotions become active when your body is exposed to the surroundings. They activate the system of Tâm, Tánh and Xác phàm. Your thoughts from the Tâm are transferred to the Tánh or Chơn Thân, which gives orders for the physical body to carry out.

Thoughts (Tâm, Chơn Linh) → actions (Tánh, Chơn Thân) → agent (Xác phàm).

During the process, if the Tánh or the boss lets the emotions and desires go to the extremes, the physical body can be polluted, the individual can break the Tán Luận241 and the Chơn Thân becomes impure.

The six desires support the physical body

To clarify this point, the desires for good tastes and the five senses of taste242 can be a good example.

Sometimes you crave something. That creates a desire for some taste, which signals a lack of some substance in your body. For example, you crave sweet food and feel exhausted after thinking hard or worrying so much. A sweet cake will help recover yourself. The sweet cake increases the Khí Hậu Thiên to support the Khí Tiên Thiên or Ý.243

Another example is you crave salty food because of a low level of salt in your blood. You may have walked or played the sport in the blazing hot sun. That signals a lack of salt and salty lemon juice will help.

Why does Caodaism advise its believers to control their six desires despite their importance?

The impure khí from the six desires

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241 the New Law or Caodaist Law.
242 bitter, sweet, spicy, salty and sour flavors.
243 Thoughts.
When the six desires become active, they trigger the Ngũ Thần and the three forms of each individual: the Tâm (soul), the Tánh (peri spirit) and the physical body. The Tâm creates thoughts, which affect Tánh. Tánh regulates desires according to ethics.

Take the box of matches mentioned above, it can give moderate light and fire to help, but it can also destroy everything if going to the extremes. The latter represents the impure Khí from the six desires.

The signals of impurity

A person with a strong desire for sexual intercourse looks very pale, for sweet and fatty food becomes grossly fat and for the bitter taste in coffee or tea has a heart problem, etc.

The invisible impurity in Khí

Those who like partying can show their impurity through the color of their aura. Wicked people, meat-eaters and drunkards will be seen with a dark purple aura.

The impurity according to religion

All extreme desires make people commit a crime. The Chơn Thần is responsible for those impurities, so Chơn Thần has to reincarnate for compensations.

Caodaism advise believers to always control their desires. A strong desire for beauty can lead to fornication, for melodious sounds can lead to impolite words, for good smells can lead to sexual desire and fornication, for good senses of taste can lead to killing animals for food, for smooth touch can lead to sexual desire and fornication and for good opinions can lead to evil plots.

4. Chơn Thần and the seven emotions

Chơn Thần, which is created by Phật Mẫu, is half Yang and half Yin, so it can be either pure or impure. Listening to the Chơn Linh’s advice and controlling the emotions and desires, Chơn Thần becomes pure, or, conversely, it becomes impure.

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244 A person with the divine eye or a kirlian camera can see those colors.
245 Peri spirit.
246 The Mother Goddess.
The seven emotions include love, hatred, joy, anger, sorrow, satisfaction and desire. Each of them goes with corresponding internal organs. Joy goes with the heart, love, and hatred with the spleen, anger with the liver, sorrow with the lungs and desire with the kidney.

The similarities between the seven feelings and the six desires are they naturally hide in the internal organs, influence the Ngũ Thần and activate the Tâm and Tánh.

Oppositely, their differences are the desires tend to support the physical body. If abused, they become impure and leave polluting marks, which prevent Chơn Thần from ascending to heaven. Unlike the desires, the emotions go with the Tiền Thiên Ngũ Thần, pollute the Chơn Thần and leave the impure marks in Thần.

The moderate emotions become good agents for the development of the internal organs while the extreme ones become contaminated agents for the Chơn Thần. Those extremes are advised to be controlled carefully.

**Moderate emotions**

Inactive emotions hiding in internal organs are called Trung. Active and moderate emotions are called Hoà. Trung Hoà is the ideal state of a human and the universe. "The universe is nothing but the term Trung Hoà." Moderate emotions are good, for instance, a piece of good news can excite and cheer you up.

**Extreme emotions**

Chơn Thần, the boss of emotions, is responsible for any crime you have committed. When emotions go to the extremes, they become evils that obscure the Tâm and the signs can be displayed as follows:

In anger, you feel a blush rise on your face and your limbs shake. Anger is one of the three toxins and the ten evils. Too much anger makes you silly and prevents your religious practice. "A moment of anger burns and melts your Kim Đơn." That is why God always advises you to manage your anger.

Too much sorrow shrinks and lowers the Khí of the lungs. Your face becomes too pale, your hands are too cold, you can hardly breathe.

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247 Thức Thần in the heart, Y in the spleen, Phục in the lungs, Chỉ in the kidney, Hồn in the liver.
248 Average.
249 Harmony.
251 Greed, anger, stupidity.
252 Killing, stealing and robbing, engaging in improper sexual conduct, lying, saying dirty words, encouraging hostility, speaking ill of someone, being greedy, being angry and being stupid.
Too much joy disperses the Khí of the heart. You become so crazy that you dance and talk nonsense.

Being too worried or loving someone too much, you feel too bored to do anything because the Khí of the spleen is damaged. Fear damages the Khí of the kidney. In the long term, you are more likely to have mental diseases.

In short, extreme emotions can obscure the Thần, so you will follow the animal instincts of the body. They will become the evils who lead you in the wrong way. Consequently, you can cause bad karma and have to reincarnate for compensation for good. Caodaist advice is a believer should “Tu Tâm luyện Tánh.” or to manage those emotions and desires to prevents the extreme ones from damaging his Thần.

5. Tâm Tánh

Tâm

Tâm (also called the Nguon Thần, Chơn Linh or Tiểu Linh Quang) comes from God or Đại Linh Quang. Tâm is responsible for teaching Tánh, which is the Chơn Thần created by God the Mother. Thanks to the Chơn Thần, a human can reincarnate in the world.

Tánh

According to His Holiness Họ Pháp, Tánh is our second component. The first component is Tâm or Chơn Linh and the third one is our physical animal-like body. Therefore, those three components influence and support one another. Caodaism always advises its believers to let their Tâm teach their Tánh. Finally, they can attain enlightenment.

How the system works

How do the Tâm and Tánh work? Let us have a look at how the desires and emotions act and whether or not a person practices religion.

Desires and emotions become active in two stages:
- The beginning stage: when the outlets of the five internal organs are open, so the things around are realized by consciousness leading to emotions and desires.
- The action stage: then the person begins to have an idea and act accordingly.

254 “Improve the Tâm and train the Tánh.”
255 Sermon of His Holiness Họ Pháp.
A man, John Doe, for example, sees a woman. Thanks to his eyes, he knows the woman is pretty (or ugly). After that, he wants (or does not want) to have sex with her.

Reactions
If the man is a good religious practitioner
He can distinguish between right and wrong, so his Tâm can control his Tánh. He still keeps calm. As a result, his Tánh follows his Tâm or God’s will and he will not behave badly.

If the man is a bad religious practitioner
His Tâm lets his Tánh follow the worldly desires, that is trying to have sexual intercourse with the woman. If the woman does not agree, he tries to behave badly, even commit a crime. This is when evil overcomes conscience, ruining the merits the religious practitioner has made for years. The man is tricked into committing a crime by Satan.

To remind all Caodaists, there is the statue of His Holiness Họ Pháp controlling the seven-headed serpent in Hiệp Thiên Đài and divine messages showing that one must practice Caodaism to the highest level. Without perfect practice, practitioners get nowhere!

6. Advice on how to improving Tâm and training Tánh

Kinh Khai Cửu²⁵⁶ vividly expresses the principle tu Tâm dựng Tánh (improve your soul and train your peri spirit) by describing a person as a ship traveling on a sea of suffering. To arrive at the harbor Thiên (heaven), you have to cut off your emotions and close your desires. The emotions and desires are like the wind, which can become a storm and sink the ship. For example, extreme anger makes you get such bad karmas that you have to reincarnate for compensation. Divine beings always advise Caodaist believers not to let that wind become a storm.

Divine beings’ advice
Đức Phát Mẫu (the Divine Mother) says, “Children, whether you are dignitaries of Hiệp Thiên²⁵⁷ or Cửu Trùng²⁵⁸, you should try to uphold your Tâm for your merits.”

²⁵⁶ The Commencement Prayers for a Caodaist funeral.
²⁵⁷ The Caodaist Judiciary Body.
**Advice from Caodaist doctrine**

Human emotions and desires that instinctively exist in the five internal organs cannot be eradicated if you are alive. Consequently, Caodaist practitioners should take advice from Caodaist doctrine to convert them into noble emotions. For example, you should become angry because you do not have more merits or you can keep the five precepts. The evil six desires will become the lucr thong if successfully managed. There are two ways to manage them:

- Understand how they work then force them to follow God’s will.
- Lead them into serving people by creating more merits.

**How to manage emotions and desires**

You should prevent them from going to the extremes by three following techniques:

- Chanting prayers. The Khí from the sounds calms the Khí Tiên Thiên down. As a result, desires and emotions become mild winds blowing over the water surface.
- Meditating. The practitioner sits still and breathes moderately. In Caodaism practitioners have to enter Tình Thất (meditation house) for an elaborate practice.
- Practicing vegetarianism. This calms the body down and reduces desires.

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258 The Caodaist Administrative Body.

259 (ṣaḍ abhijñāḥ) - six supernatural powers attained by the Buddha.
**Extreme emotions and desires pollute Tâm and Tánh**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organs</th>
<th>Heart</th>
<th>Spleen</th>
<th>Lungs</th>
<th>Kidney</th>
<th>Liver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outlets</strong></td>
<td>Tongue</td>
<td>Mouth, body</td>
<td>Nose</td>
<td>Ears</td>
<td>Eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Six causes</strong></td>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>Touch, thought</td>
<td>Smell</td>
<td>Sound</td>
<td>Color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Six stimuli</strong></td>
<td>Tasting</td>
<td>Thinking, touching</td>
<td>Smelling</td>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>Sight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Six desires</strong></td>
<td>Desire for good taste</td>
<td>Desire for smooth touch and good idea</td>
<td>Desire for good smell</td>
<td>Desire for melodious sound</td>
<td>Desire for beautiful colors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seven emotions</strong></td>
<td>Joy and satisfaction</td>
<td>Love, hatred</td>
<td>Sorrow</td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Angry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mechanism**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soul</th>
<th>Peri spirit</th>
<th>Physical body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Physical contamination**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seven emotions</th>
<th>Invisible signals in Thần</th>
<th>Specific signals in body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invisible contamination</td>
<td>Khí Tiên Thần Nghĩa Thần is disturbed</td>
<td>Khí Hậu Thần is disturbed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Religious contamination**

| Not allowed to enter heaven because of polluted Chơn Thần | Not allowed to come to God because of polluted body |

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**The significance of earthly life for Caodaists**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earthly life</th>
<th>Technique for practicing Caodaism</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practicing Nhơn Đạo and Thiền Đạo for the privilege of the Great Amnesty</td>
<td>Practicing Tâm lập to attain enlightenment on earth</td>
<td>Attaining high statuses in heaven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicing vegetarianism for a pure Chơn Thần managing emotions and desires</td>
<td>Purifying Chơn Thần for the privilege of crossing the Cửu Tr营业执照enthal</td>
<td>Ngũ Thần concentrates at Chơn Thần; Pure Chơn Thần help Chơn Linh climb through all levels in heaven</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 9

Death

According to Caodaism, only the material corps die while the Chơn Thàn (peri spirits) either reincarnates or helps the Chơn Linh (souls) return to its origin to unite with Đại Linh Quang (God).

Those who really die are the ones committing a serious crime. They become the ghosts who will be destroyed.

1. The death of the physical body

According to Caodaist divine messages, the physical body is dead because it belongs to the material world, which changes according to God’s law. His Holiness Cao Thượng Phạm says, “When the body dies, its Yin Yang electricity, together with the Chơn Thàn, is emitted. If the body is pure enough, the Yang Khí and the Chơn Thàn return to heaven from the Nê Hưn Cung.” For an impure body, the Yin Khí and the Chơn Thàn descend from the toe tips to become materials ready for more incarnations.

In the earthly world

After the body is dead, Caodaist funerary rituals including performing sacraments and chanting prayers are conducted.

Funerary sacraments

In the period of grand amnesty, taking orders from God, His Holiness Hộ Pháp shows the assigned Caodaist dignitaries seven sacraments to save people both physically and spiritually. Those believers who have taken the oath ritual and practiced vegetarianism at least 10 days a month receive the sacraments such as Phép Độ Hôn, Phép Tận Độ, Kinh Cửu, Tiêu Trường và Đại Trường.

For example, in the ritual of Phép Độ Hôn, the dignitary, first, performs the Sacrament of Phép Xác (purification) after the prayer Cầu Siêu and Khi Đã Chết Rồi are chanted. Second, he performs the sacrament of Đoàn Cẩn (cutting off 7 bad ties). This releases the Chơn Thàn and Chơn Linh from the physical

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260 A mysterious place between the top of the skull and the brain.
262 Phép Tận Thạnh, Phép Giải Oan, Phép Hôn Phối, Phép Giải bệnh, Phép Xác. Phép Đoàn Cẩn, Phép Độ Thăng.
263 The sacrament of transporting the soul, the sacrament of complete transport, the posthumous prayers, the lesser celebration and the larger celebration.
body to ascend to heaven. Finally, he performs the sacrament of Đạo Thắng (help ascend) to send the soul to heaven.

**Chanting prayers**
To help souls ascend to heaven, Caodaist believers should chant:
Kinh Tận Đỗ Vong Linh to free the dead quickly from suffering.
Kinh Cầu Hồn Khí Hấp Hồi (requiem for dying people) to tell the dead decisively leave the earthly world and avoid going to hell.
Kinh Cầu Siêu (request for amnesty) to beg the divine beings to save the dead.
Kinh Khí Đá Chết Rơi (after death) for the death to leave the earthly world.
Kinh Dưa Linh Cưu (carrying the coffin to a cemetery) to beg the local genii to help to separate the soul from the corpse.
Kinh Hạ Huyệt (lowering the coffin down the grave).
Kinh Tuần Cưu (funerary prayers) to help the dead cross nine heavens and Kinh Tiểu Tướng and Đại Tướng to help the dead enter the realm of Buddha.

**In heaven**
In the Vườn Ngàn Uyển (divine garden) in the first heaven, a withered flower represents death on earth. This garden is owned by Đức Phật Mẫu (Divine Mother). There are twelve kinds of flowers. Each flower represents life on earth. It blooms as a person is born and withers as he dies.

*Vườn Ngàn Uyển sánh hoa dâng heo*
*Khởi hình hài dâng.currentTarget*

A flower has withered in the Vườn Ngàn Uyển, That is a person died on earth.

**Where the corpse goes?**
After death, the corpse, which is composed of earthly materials, decomposes according to God’s law. It will then turn to earth and become the elements of another body.

*Nhuộc thể tổ sanh hoàn tại thế*
*The body made of earth then will return to earth.*
*(The couples on the Prajna Boat)*

*Khởi vật chất tổ hồn việt tử;*  
*Đất biến hình tổ thất khá còn.*
*Without a soul, the material mass is called a corpse*  
*It is made of earth, so it will return to earth.*
*(Kinh Tận Liêm)*

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264 Without this sacrament, the Chơn Thánh and Chơn Linh cannot ascend until the corpse is completely decomposes.  
265 Bảo Đại Hồ Tấn Khoa said the Sacrament of Đạo Thắng helps the dignitaries’ souls enter the Bát Quái Đài more easily.  
266 For those who practice vegetarianism at least 10 days a month.  
267 Huyền Tài Nguyễn Long Thanh said the Eighth Female Buddha uses the term Cổ Âm Quang (Yin Light) instead of the conventional term Địa Ngục, Địa Đế, Địa Dĩ, Địa Tài, Địa Lý, Địa Chính, Địa Mục, etc.  
268 Kinh Địa Nhệt Cưu  
269 Câu đối trên thuyết Bá Nhã do Giải Pháp Nguyên Trung Hậu sáng tác và đề xuất Đức Lý Giáo Tông giảng ở chính văn: Vận sự việt tổ, nhuộc thể tổ sanh hoàn tại thế.
Hồn Trời hóa tro về Thiên cảnh,
Xác đất sanh đến linh phúc hồi.

The soul will return to heaven
The corpse will return to earth
(Kinh Tận Liệm)

In short, Caodaism defines death by the separation of the Chơn Thần (peri spirit) and the Chơn Linh (soul) from the physical body. Chơn Thần and Chơn Linh will either reincarnate on earth or go to heaven.

2. The real dead

The earthly world is considered an environment of a challenge to souls. It is arranged by God for souls to evolve to higher levels. Evils also have miracles to tempt souls into committing a crime and become the real dead. There are two kinds of them.

Those who lose the Chơn dương

The wicked will lose the Chơn Dương. They then have only a false body of thuận âm and will become the real deal. They are like the spoiled seeds, so they never develop into a plant. They will become ghosts who wait for destruction. They cannot reincarnate.

In the period of grand amnesty, the incomplete religious practitioner who has committed crime is allowed to enter the Âm Quang, where they can practice religion. If truly repenting, they are allowed to reincarnate to pay off the bad karma. In the Âm Quang, the Buddhas and Immortals come to comfort and teach the sinners. Đức Địa Tạng Vương Bồ Tát is in charge of the male sinners and Thất Nương Điểu Tri Cung the female sinners.

Punishment

Those who seriously break the divine law and who do not keep the entry oath will be severely punished. The punishments include Thiên Trư Địa Lực and Đạo Tam Đồ Bát Năng Thoát Tục.

Thiên trư Địa lực

Those who commit a serious crime will get killed. It is the same as the Ngũ Lời Tru Diệt (killed by lightning). Sinners’ Chơn Thần is struck by

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270 Kinh Tận Liệm
272 thuận - complete. Âm - Yin.
273 Âm Quang - Yin Light, the Dark. The new name for hell.
274 Ksitigarbha.
275 The Seventh Female Buddha.
276 The ritual for Caodaist beginners, including an oath.
lightning and turn to the primeval substances obtained by Diệu Trì Cung. Their Chơn Linh has to wander until another grand amnesty when the Divine Mother grants them a new Chơn Thần for another reincarnation.

3. Ascending and descending

After a divine judgment, the Chơn Thần and Chơn Linh can either descend or ascend.

The enlightened people will ascend
Those who get enlightened on earth can ascend to heaven or eternal life. His Holiness Hồ Phập said, “Those who follow Caodaist teachings and practice vegetarianism at least 10 days a month can be taught the Caodaist esoteric practice and their Chơn Thần ascend.” And “Those who get enlightened can return to the former divine statuses only after a reincarnation.”

Descending
The two main reasons for descending are:
- Because of failing to get enlightened, a soul has to reincarnate on earth to pay off the karmic debts or to evolve.
- Losing the Văn Cửu Nang.

Reincarnation
Since the Chơn Thần is related to the physical body, only Chơn Thần has to reincarnate. Reincarnation is the opportunity for Chơn Thần to practice religion and evolve to a higher level of intelligence and morality until it reaches the perfect point, uniting with God.

Losing the Văn Cửu Nang
Since earliest humans were stupid, cruel and barbarous, Đức Phật Mẫu (the Divine Mother) was ordered by God to send 10,000,000 original souls to the earth for incarnation. Their duty was to teach the evolving souls and to perfect themselves for higher divine statuses. The original souls were noble, intelligent and moral at first. Most of them, however, were gradually contaminated by earthly temptations. They forgot what their duty was and committed lots of crimes, so they were punished with reincarnation again and again. Most of them were tempted by Quỷ Vương (Satan) into losing the Văn Cửu Nang granted by Đức Phật Mẫu when they had left heaven. For love, God holds amnesties to lead them back.

Lịnh căn ngày do xuống trận ai,
Cái cải vai mới nhập mẫu thái.
Vì mắt biếu nang, mê nghịch hài.

278 According to Khai Phập Trần Duy Nghĩa, when souls incarnate, Đức Diệu Trì Kim Mẫu gives them a bag called Văn Cửu Nang and says they cannot return to Her if losing a thing inside.
Làm sao tình dừng trở lại?
The original souls ascended to the earth
They were so happy to be born as humans.
Then they lost the precious bags and love the earthly joys
They don’t know how to wake up and return
Conclusion for Page three.

In the earthly world, birth and death are the law. You only temporarily live with a false body, that is the physical body. Thanks to that false body, your Chơn Thần, and Chơn Linh practice religion, learn and evolve.

After death, the physical body decomposes while the Chon Thần and Chon Linh return to God in heaven. So, death is the transformation from materials to invisible forms through three phases:
- Phase one. Your Chơn Thần and Chơn Linh go to the earthly world from heaven or from Khí Tiên Thiên to Khí Hậu Thiên.
- Phase two. Your Chơn Thần, Chơn Linh and physical body live together in the world, trying to find the way back to heaven.
- Phase three. Your Chơn Thần and Chơn Linh return to heaven or pure Khí Tiên Thiên from the polluted Khí Hậu Thiên. That is why self-purification is a must for religious practitioners on earth.
Page four
How to liberate yourself?
where to go after death?
What will be?

It is usually claimed:

Lai như lui thủy hê, thế như phong;
Bất trí hạ xì lại hê, hạ sở chung.

Born to be a stream flowing so fast
Where to come or where to go is unknown

Then asked

Where to go after death? God answers your soul will come to Tòa Phán Xét\textsuperscript{279} in Trung Giới to know whether you ascend or descend. (Chapter 10)

What will be? What is the final purpose for humans? If ascending, your three treasures will unite while crossing Cầu Trương Thiên (chapter 11) and travel back to your origin, that is God. (chapter 12).

\textsuperscript{279} The Court of Judgement.
Chapter 10

To the Trung Giới

When the physical body becomes useless, the Chơn Linh and Chơn Thần leave for the Trung Giới to the Toà Phán Xét, where: «The absolutely perfect divine beings in Ngọc Hư Cung report all your good and bad deeds to Toà Phán Xét ».

1. Some explanations for the invisible realm

Before following the Chơn Hồn to the invisible realm, it is necessary to explain something according to the Divine Messages and the Caodaist Prayers such as the view of heaven, the body of a religious practitioner, the speed of the Chơn Thần and the realms which are not visited.

The view of heaven

His Holiness Cao Thượng Phẩm explained that the invisible realm is only khí điện quang. The palaces and temples are in the forms of light and halos.

Hảo quang chiếu chín tảng mỹ bắc,
Tây Phương cô Palest chiếu lòa.
Hảo quang chiếu điện Cao Đài
Halos shine the nine silver clouds
The West of Buddha is so bright
The halos shine Cao Đài

In a seance on the first day of the first lunar month, the Year of Tiger (1926), Bạch Ngọc Kinh, where God dwells, is described as an eternally changing aura.

Chư thần chỏa mặt màu thương dõi,
Liệt thành kính thần phép vấn cáo.
All the genies are dazzled by the constantly changing colors.
All of the Saints are scared by the miracles.

Forms in heaven

Heaven is invisible. Humans, as well as divine beings, have two forms: the Chơn Thần and Chơn Linh, both of which are called Chơn Hồn (souls). They all are light or electricity.

Languages are thoughts

There are no sounds in heaven, so souls communicate by thoughts. That is why Caodaists chant prayers. The miraculous vibrations of the sounds and the thoughts of the practitioners can convey their wishes to divine beings in heaven.

280 The realm between the earthly world and heaven.
281 The divine court.
His Holiness Hồ Pháp said, “There are countless souls in heaven. The language used there is thinking to convey ideas to each other. What you think is what you get.”

The speed of Chơn Thân
Chơn Thân travels as fast as light.

Năng lai năng khinh khinh,
Mau như điện chiều, nhẹ thành bồng mây,
As fast as electricity and as light as a cloud

2. To the Tòa Phán Xét

Thanks to the funerary sacraments like Phép Xác, Phép Giải Oan and Phép Đoạn Căn, the Chơn Thân leaves the physical body and together with the Chơn Linh travel to the Trung Giớí, waiting to go to Tòa Phán Xét. After the judgment, they will either ascend or descend.

Descending: rebirth
Committing crime or having bad karma, the Chơn Thân has to reincarnate on earth. The Caodaists who break Caodaist law will go to Âm Quang to practice Caodaism again.

Ascending
In the Third Salvation, God allows:
- Caodaist practitioners who have got enlightened on earth in only one life to return to the realm of Buddha in Hư Vô Thiên.
- Caodaist practitioners who have fulfilled their religious responsibilities to return to God.

3. Two ways of ascending
Chơn Thân will ascend after nine days in trường đình. The divine status attained will decide how the Chơn Thân ascend. Chơn Thân can go straight to the assigned level or climb those levels one by one.

Going straight to the status attained

283 The Divine Tribunal.
284 Practicing vegetarianism at least 10 days a month, keeping the entry oath and have enough merits.
285 Trường đình - the rest stop. Caodaists consider the funeral house a place where you say good bye to the dead.
Having practiced Caodaism and fulfilled the human responsibilities, a Caodaist can attain status on earth. Each earthly status is equivalent to divine status in one of the nine heavens. Therefore, his Chơn Thân will go straight to the corresponding heaven. For example, a Caodaist dignitary at the level of Immortal will go to heaven for Immortals, which is the Hư Vô Thiên. In addition, the rituals of Tuấn Cửu and the sacrament Phép Đổ Thằng are not performed.

In the assigned level, the Chơn Thân keep on practicing Caodaism with the help of the Female Buddhas in order to climb to higher levels. Without any progress, one must reincarnate on earth.

Climbing the levels one by one
If keeping the entry oath and practicing vegetarianism at least 10 days a month, you will be taught how to practice religion according to the level you have reached.

The decision of Tòa Phán Xét

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<th>Going to Tòa Phán Xét</th>
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<td>Descending ↓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enlightened person</td>
<td>Descending ↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ascending</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Descending ↓
Caodaists breaking promise, committing a crime. More religious practice in Phong Đô

Descending ↓
Reincarnation to pay off bad karma

Descending ↓
Serious sinners who become ghosts, waiting for amnesty
Chapter 11

Ascending the Cửu Trùng Thiền

After reaching the Trung Giới, souls enter the Thương Giới and ascending the Cửu Trùng Thiền to combine the Tam Bửu. On the way, souls need the following helps to get the superpower to ascend the levels:

The help from esotericism.

Kinh Tuần Cửu, Tiêu Trường, and Đại Trường is the Caodaist esotericism to help souls ascend the levels. In this Third Salvation, God has closed Hell and cleared the way of Cửu Thiền Khai Hoá. His Holiness Lý Giáo Tông said, “Esoterically, heavenly beings will convert ... you can convert successfully.”

Chanting Kinh Tuần Cửu

The Caodaist dignitaries will show believers how to chant the Kinh Tuần Cửu, which changes the Tâm so that it can ascend those levels, combining the three treasures and avoiding reincarnation.

The help from divine beings.

On those levels, Cửu Vị Tiên Nương Điều Tri Cung and other divine beings give sermons and guide souls through the heavenly levels.

Ngố Cúc Lạc theo hữu Xa Lợi,
Cửu Trùng Thiền mở lối quí nguyên.
Look at the direction of Nirvana and Buddha,
Cửu Trùng Thiền is now clear for you to return.

Those divine beings will help the Tam Bửu blend in with the energy of the levels according to the rule “dòng thanh tương ứng, động khí tương cấu”. As a result, all types of souls can get enlightenment in only one life to return to God.

The reason why souls need help is that the nine heavenly levels and the Chơn Thần are gaseous. The higher the level, the lighter the gas with more
Yang light. The Chơn Thần is still a bit impure, so it needs helps from Kinh Tuấn Cửu and the divine beings.

To understand the process of combination of the Tam Bửu on the way, you need to understand the Kinh Tuấn Cửu, which depicts the transformation of souls from Genii, Saints to Immortals in this way.

1. The technique of perception

It is extremely difficult to depict the way to the invisible world because of no specific documents that elaborate on it. There is only the information in Kinh Tuấn Cửu, Tiêu Tướng, Đại tướng and some Divine Messages. For understandable explanations, it is described in earthly languages to be chanted by believers. The literal meanings of a language can only give images resembling the earthly scenery, not the nature of heaven, that is Đạo.

From those pieces of information, I depict and explain the divine path by a technique of perception, from which the practice of combining the three treasures during the process of ascending the Cửu Trùng Thần.

The origin and the meanings of the prayers

The prayers are all granted by the divine beings from those heavenly levels, not by any human beings. For instance, the Seventh Prayer is granted by the Seventh Female Buddha, who is in charge of leading the souls from the Kim Thần 292 to the Hạo Nhiên Thần 293.

The prayers are chanted to help a soul ascend the nine heavens to return to God.

Understanding the languages in the prayers.

The Kinh Tuấn Cửu, Tiêu Tướng, Đại tướng each depicts the temples, houses, and palaces in each level. The divine beings use earthly languages to convey their ideas so that believers can gradually be enlightened the divine language or Đạo. However, how can an ordinary person, without divine thinking and eyes, visualize the divine scenery by reading the prayers?

How His Holiness Họ Pháp answer.

To witness the scenery in heaven, humans should attain the divine eyes by doing esoteric practice or are granted the privilege to do so by God like His Holiness Họ Pháp. His Holiness Họ Pháp said, “What heaven is like is equivalent to what Tâm is. No one knows what it is like. If you get enlightened, leave your physical body and meet the divine beings, you will see it is unlike what you expected.”

293 The Immense Heaven or Seventh Heaven.
Reading the sermons by His Holiness Hồ Pháp, you can then understand the scenery in heaven, which is described in the Kinh Tuấn Cửu as the magical halos, depending on how much enlightened a soul gets. The soul now is also a beam of light that blends in with the halos in that heaven. For example, in Cửu Trùng Thiền there are three forms of souls: genii, saints and immortals. Souls entering the eighth heaven called Phi Tương Thiền will see the Cung Tân Thức, Cung Diệt Bůu, etc. This is what His Holiness Hồ Pháp saw and told believers in His sermons. “Having entered the Tôa Tàm Giáo Bộ Quái Đại, you can see a bright halo. It then disappears and you see The Scale of Justice that also disappears after that. You can see yourself and your whole past life.”

His Holiness Hồ Pháp depicts Ngọc Hu Cung, “What a beautiful world it is! There are lots of bright halos whose colors magically changes swiftly. Your Chơn Thán has to change to those colors in order to join Ngọc Hu Cung. Otherwise, you are expelled immediately. Thought, not speech, is the only method of communication there.”

His Holiness Hồ Pháp depicts Bạch Ngọc Kinh, “The brilliant colors always change and it is covered by a thoi khí”. It operates like a living animal, changing its colors. I don’t know how to describe it!”

The similar terms are used to describe it in Caodaist Prayers.

Kinh Bạch Ngọc muốn lăn điện chiếu
Kinh Bạch Ngọc is brightly shone by electricity

Nắng lôi nặng khí khinh khinh,
Mầu như điện chiếu, nhẹ nhàng bóng mây.
The soul travels around so easily
As fast as lightning and as light as a cloud

Perception through the metaphors

First, it is necessary to define some terminology.

Cung: a large building. For example, Cung Tuyết Khổ - sorrow eliminating building

Đài: a high building. For example, Đài Nghịệt Cạnh - bad karma tower.

According to Mr. Hà Ngọc Duyên295, Cung is the metaphor for the inner Tâm. For instance, Cung Lập Khuyết means looking at yourself to see the imperfections. Cung Ngọc Diệt Hính means looking at yourself to eradicate materialistic things. Diện and Đài are the metaphors for the outer Tâm. Đài Nghịệt Cạnh and Đài Chiếu Giám reflect your good and bad karma. Đài Huệ Hương purifies your Chơn Thán. Linh Tiêu Diễn means Tâm has an easy life.

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294 Thoại - excellent, Khổ - gas.
295 Bản tin Đại Đạo, số:15/79, Maryland, Tr.76-96
According to Bát Nương\textsuperscript{296}, those halos in Heaven represents the vô hình sắc tướng\textsuperscript{297} versus the vô hình vô tướng\textsuperscript{298} of the Dương Quang\textsuperscript{299} or God. “The He Vô\textsuperscript{300} is invisible compared to the material world, but visible compared to the formless Dương Quang.”

**The status of Tâm on each level of heaven**

The heavenly levels are considered a ladder for souls to climb. The rungs are the spaces of different light waves according to the waves of Genii, Saints, Immortals or Buddhas. Your religious practice changes the light waves of your Chon Thần, so you can climb that ladder. How fast you can climb depends on how pure your Chon Thần is. That is why on each level Chon Linh helped by the divine beings purifies your Chon Thần like what is said through the metaphors.

Cửu Trùng Thiên\textsuperscript{302} symbolizes the three statuses of Genii, Saints, and Immortals. It is shown by the Cửu Trùng Đại\textsuperscript{303} or Cửu Thần Khai Hoá on the earthly world. That is displayed in the following list.

### The equivalent statuses

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<th>Divine Beings</th>
<th>Nine Heavens</th>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chính phộ sư, Phò họ - Master</td>
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<td>Giáo Tông - Caođai Head.</td>
<td>Thần tiên - Heavenly Immortals</td>
<td>Creation Heaven</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Thanks to those metaphors, I understand that a Chon Thần climbing the divine ladder will no longer be tempted by the physical body into doing something wrong. Chon Thần now listens to the soul for self-improvement and self-purification to fulfill its duty, which is transporting the Chon Linh high up to the next levels. There is a female Buddha to guide souls on each level and divine beings to teach how to combine the Tam Bửu\textsuperscript{304} and avoid reincarnation.

\textsuperscript{296} The Eighth Female Buddha. Lữ Trảm Thế page 44.
\textsuperscript{297} vô hình - invisible. Sắc tướng - forms.
\textsuperscript{298} vô hình - invisible. Vô tướng - formless.
\textsuperscript{299} Dương - Yang. Quang - light.
\textsuperscript{300} Nothingness.
\textsuperscript{302} Lữ Trảm Thế. Page 44.
\textsuperscript{303} The Nine Heavens.
\textsuperscript{304} The Executive Body of Caođaism.
\textsuperscript{304} Three treasures: body, mind and soul.
2. Images of the stages in combining Tam Bửu

The above technique allows me to depict the journey a Chơn Hồn takes through the levels in heaven.

From the first to the third level: as a Genie

Changed to fit the status of genie on the first three levels, you realize the physical body has died (withered flower) and you are about to go to heaven (eating divine peaches). You know that you are at the same level as Ông Hiền (meeting the Seven Sages). This stage is described by the metaphors in the prayers:

The first level

The soul goes to the Ngân Uyển, watching his “flower” become withered. That means the physical body has died and he is no more tied down by the seven karmic strings. The Nhứt Nương helps the soul calm down.

Khả tính thức tiên đản nhở lại,
Đoạn chở rối oan trái bửu sanh.
Wake up, remember your previous life
And pay off the bad karmic debts

She also tells the soul that there is no need to worry about earthly temptations like thắp âc or lúc trần:

Vườn Ngân Uyển sanh hoa đã héo,
Khờ hình hà dâ chứa rã tan
Bây đây oan nghiệt hết rạng.
A flower in the Ngân Uyển has withered
The body begins to decompose
You are no longer tied down by the seven evil strings

The second level

The soul is granted divine peaches in the longevity party. The metaphor here is he is about to leave for heaven.

Tây Vương Mẫu vẫin Đào trong chín,
Chén tạing sam có linh ngự ban.
The West Queen’s peaches are almost ripe.
They and the longevity wine are granted.

The third level or the Azure Heaven

Ngan - the bank of the sea of sorrow. Uyển - garden. Ngân Uyển is the garden in heaven. The First Female Buddha under the Divine Mother is in charge of it. In Ngân Uyển there are 12 different types of flowers representing the 12 zodiac signs. A flower stands for a person. It becomes withered when that person dies and blooms when he reincarnates. It is beautiful if that person is good and ugly if he is immoral, according to the First Female Buddha.

The ten evils: killing, stealing, engaging in improper sexual conduct, lying, saying dirty words, encouraging hostility, speaking ill of, being greedy, being angry, being stupid.

The six earthly things: beauty, melodious sounds, sweet smell, good taste, gentle touch, good idea.

Kinh Đệ Nhứt Cửu

Vườn Đào Tiên do Phật Mẫu chưng quản, cơ 3600 cây đào, đúng trái Đào Tiên để làm phần thượng

Kinh Đệ Nhị Cửu
The light on this level is azure. The soul will see the Bamboo Grove Seven Sages, who have become the Seven Immortals in the Thiên Thai Cave. On the Island of Bông Lai, the soul’s emotions and feelings will be washed off, that is the soul is now a sage ready to ascend to the level for immortals.

Cố Thần Thiên lên miền Bồng đảo
Đông Thần Thái Bảy Lảo đốn đầu
From the Azure Heaven, you go up to the Bông Đảo
And are received by the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove at Thiên Thai Cave.

**From the fourth to the sixth levels: as a Saint**

When the soul enters the level for Saints, he sees the inner and outer worlds of Tầm via the divine palaces and the monuments.

All the divine buildings are metaphors.

*Cung Lấp Khuyết* - seeing the imperfections.
*Cung Tuyết Khổ* - cutting off the earthly sorrow.
*Cung Ngọc Diệt Hính* - eliminating all visible forms.
*Cung Văn Pháp* - being in a meditation house to see the past bad karma.

Đại Niết Cạnh or Đại Kiều Giám - identifying your good or bad deeds in a previous life.

Đại Huệ Hướng - eliminating all impurity.

**The Fourth Level or the Yellow Heaven**

The light on this level is yellow. Lời Thần will eradicate the soul’s evil air and impure light with his divine rod. The soul then goes to Cung Tuyết Khổ to meet Huyền Thiên Quán, that is cutting all the earthly sorrow.

**The Fifth Level or the Red Heaven**

The light on this level is red. The soul climbs to the Đại Kiều Giám, whose mirror shows what he has done in his former life.

Đại Kiều Giám Cạnh Minh nhec thuộc,
Xem rõ rạng tội phước của sinh,
Entering the Đại Kiều Giám Cạnh Minh,
You can see your past achievements or crimes.

Then the soul enters Cung Ngọc Diệt Hính to eradicate all the material forms. The soul reads the Vô Tự Kính to know his former incarnations and current status.

**The Sixth Level or the Metallic Heaven**

The soul now enters Cung Văn Pháp, which is a meditation house containing the dharma of all religions, to know his former divine status.

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312 Kinh Đệ Tam Cưu
313 The Thunder God.
314 God’s another incarnation.
315 Kinh Đệ Ngũ Cưu
316 The Wordless Book of Prayers.
Cung Lập Khuyết is the metaphor for getting the imperfections. Đại Huệ Hương implies the soul’s impurity is washed off.

Vào Cung Văn Pháp xem qua,
Cung Lập Khuyết tìm duyên định ngự;
Đem Chơn Thân đến tận Đại Huệ Hương,
Looking around in the Cung Văn Pháp,
The soul finds out his former status
Then goes to Đại Huệ Hương.

From the Seven to Ninth Level: as an Immortal.

As an Immortal, the soul then goes to Cung Chương Pháp, where he studies the law of the universe and gets enlightened. After that he goes to Cung Tận Thúc, where he realizes the magical power of the universe, so he sees the Kim Mao Hâu, a lion-like animal representing the power of the soul in heaven. Then he goes to Tích Sơn, Niết Bàn. The soul also goes to Cung Diệt Bửu to see the real values of earthly treasures so that he can give them up.

In Cung Bắc Đẩu, the soul reads his past and future lives from the Book of Thiên Tảo and learns the heavenly etiquette.

In Cung Tri Giác, he knows how to combine the Tam Bửu and ready to achieve Buddhahood.

He also meets Chư Đệ Bổ Tát and Phó Hiện Bổ Tát, that is, he is at the same level as those Bodhisattva.

The Seventh Level or the Heaven of Hảo Nhiên

He sees Chư Đệ Bổ Tát and Phó Hiện Bổ Tát unlock the Kim Cô. That means the soul is shown how to ascend to Cung Chương Pháp, which takes care of the law of the universe.

The Eighth Level or the Heaven of Phi Trường

On this level, the soul is far away from the impure earthly world. He enjoys listening to the bell and drinking the divine wine. The sorrow he had in the previous incarnation is eradicated by the Nước Cam Lồ. He goes to Cung Tận Thúc and sees the Kim Mao Hâu with the superpower of religious practitioners. In Cung Diệt Bửu, he sees earthly properties and gives them up. He sees Tử Hàng Bổ Tát.

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317 Mount Tích.  
318 Nirvana.  
319 Three Treasures: body, mind and soul.  
320 Goddess bodhisattva and an incarnation of Ārya Dharmārāja.  
321 Samantabhadra, Universal Worthy, is a bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism.  
322 Hảo Nhiên, immense, Nhiên is burning. The immense heaven.  
323 When Chư Thân descends to the earth, the Nê hoành cung is locked by an invisible Kim Cô (golden circle)  
324 Beyond thought Heaven. (Lị)  
325 Holy Water.
The Ninth Level or the Heaven of Creation

According to Kinh Tự Cửu, after 81 days, the soul ascends to this level. In the Cung Tri Giác, he knows how to combine the Tam Bửu, gets enlightened and prepares to the level for Buddhas.

Cung Tri Giác, trừ tình thần,
Huởn hư màu nhiệm thơ đất đăng Tiên.
Meditating in Cung Tri Giác.
The soul returns to nothingness and goes to heaven.

Then the soul is permitted to enter the Diệu Trì Cung to see God the Mother, granted some divine wine, allowed to know his own destiny in Cung Bác Đầu, taught the heavenly etiquette and admitted to Linh Tiểu Điện to kowtow to God.

On the ninth level, Tinh, Khí, and Thần are safe and sound, that is being combined.

Đã qua chín từng Trời đến vị,
Thần dũng an, Tinh, Khí cũng an.
Passing nine levels in heaven,
Your soul, body, and mind are safe.

From now on, the soul is ready for the process of “Thần hươn hư”330, going to the world of Buddha with the help of Caodaist prayers chanted by other believers. Finally, he is about to take the path of “hươn vô”331, that is going to the nature of “emptiness” of God for higher divine status.

326 On this level God the Mother, on behalf of God, creates everything in the universe.
327 Kinh Để Cửu Cửu
328 Body, mind and soul.
329 Kinh khai cửu Tiểu Tường và Đại Tường
330 Soul turns to nothingness.
331 Nothingness turns to void.
Chapter 12

To be freed

In the third grand amnesty, God clears the way to Cực Lạc Thế Giới for enlightened people to return.

Đông địa ngục, mở tung Thiên,
Khai đường Cực Lạc, dân miền Tây Phương.332.
Hell has been closed and heaven opened.
The way to Nirvana has been cleared.

Therefore, after the Nine Heavens, the Tam Bửu have been united and the soul begins the way of “Thânuron hư” or “the soul turns to nothingness” to go to the world of Buddha.

Having passed the three levels of the world of Buddha, the soul enters the final process that is “hưuron vô” or “nothingness turns to void”. The soul now unites with the nature of nothingness of God in the Tam Thập Lực Thiên333. After that, he continues his religious practice until he can get to Bạch Ngọc Kinh334. When the soul becomes Đại Hồn335 or heavenly soul, you will unite with the Đại Linh Quang. Caodaism calls this process “Hiệp mốt cùng Thầy.”336

1. Entering the world of Buddhas: Thầnuron Hu337

After the Nine Levels of Heaven, the soul’s bad karma in previous lives has been eradicated. The Tam Bửu have been united.

Đã qua chín từng Trời đến vị,
Thân đăng an, Tinh, Khí cùng an.338
Passing nine levels in heaven,
Your soul, body, and mind are safe.

200 days after the Tuần Cửu, the ritual of Tiểu Tướng helps the soul go to the Tenth Level or the Nothingness Heaven, which is the world of Buddhas. In this world, you are not affected by earthly emotions like greed, anger, stupidity, love, hatred, etc.

300 days after the Tiểu Tướng, the ritual of Đại Tướng helps the soul go to the Eleventh Level or Hội Ngộ Thiên and the Twelfth Level or Hồn Ngộ Thiên under Đức Đì Lạc Phát Vương339 for the Hội Long Hoà340.

332 Kinh giải ấm
333 36 Heavens.
334 Passing the Tam Thiên Thế Giới, you reach the Từ Đại Bồ Chusaha After Từ Đại Bồ Chusaha, you can enter the Tam Thập Lực Thiên. In Tam Thập Lúc Thiên you have to reincarnate for more religious practice before going to the Bạch Ngọc Kinh, which Buddhism calls Nirvana.
335 Great Soul
336 Uniting with the Master or uniting with God.
337 Soul turns to nothingness.
338 Kinh khai cụu Tiểu Tướng và Đại Tướng
339 Maitreya-Buddha.
Prayer for Tiều Tướng\(^{341}\)
Getting to the world for Buddhas is when Thần\(^{342}\) turns to Hư\(^{343}\) or attaining enlightenment. The soul enters Nirvana, which is below Tam Thập Lục Thiên (36 Heavens). Therefore, the prayer for Tiều Tướng only mentions the outer world of Tảm.

The metaphors in the Prayer for Tiều Tướng
Meeting Phát Nhiên Dâng\(^{344}\) and Phát A Di Đà\(^{345}\) in Lôi Âm Tự\(^{346}\) means the soul is now completely happy to be taught Buddhism.
Ngôc Hư Cương - the nothingness of Tảm is represented by the fact that the soul sees the dharma in Ngôc Hư Cương.
Thiên Kiều\(^{347}\) means the soul finds the way to return to God.

At Bồ Công, where your religious work is recorded for the Long Hoa Hội.
The Holy Water in Ao Thất Bửu\(^{348}\) will eradicate the soul’s bad karma and impurity and gives absolute intelligence.

\[Ao Thất Bửu gởi mình sạch tát \quad^{349}\]
Your earthly impurity is eliminated in Ao Thất Bửu

Images depicted in the Prayer
On the Tenth Level or the Hư Vô Thiên\(^{350}\) governed by Đức Phát Nhiên Dâng, the soul sees the Ngôc Hư Cương, steps on the Thiền Kiều, goes to Tây Quí, enters the Lôi Âm Tự, kowtows to the Phát A Di Đà and looks in the Bồ Công to know how much religious work he has. Then he is washed with the holy water in the Ao Thất Bửu before ascending to the next level.

Prayers for Đại Tướng\(^{351}\)
Chanting the prayers for Đại Tướng, which is granted by Phật Thích Ca\(^{352}\), helps the soul move up to the Eleventh Level or Hội Nguron Thiên and the Twelfth Level or Hồn Nguron Thiên. Those heavens are managed by Đức Di Lạc Viuong Phật, who is also the Judge in Hội Long Hoa.

It is important that there are no metaphors in the Prayers for Đại Tướng. What Đức Di Lạc will do in the world is mentioned carefully here. He will

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\(^{340}\) the Dragon Flower Competition. (The Judgement Day)
\(^{341}\) The Caodaist Ritual held 281 days after a death.
\(^{342}\) Soul.
\(^{343}\) Nothingness.
\(^{344}\) Dipankara Buddha or Lamp Bearer Buddha.
\(^{345}\) Amita Buddha or the Buddha of Endless Light.
\(^{346}\) Lôi Âm - thunder. Chia - pagoda. It is located in the capital of Cực Lạc Thế Giới, where Đức Phật Thích Ca and Đức A-Di-Da-Phật dwell.
\(^{347}\) the Divine Bridge in heaven.
\(^{348}\) the pond made from seven types of jewels.
\(^{349}\) Prayers for Tiều Tướng
\(^{350}\) the Heaven of Nothingness.
\(^{351}\) A Caodaist ritual held 581 days after a person’s death.
\(^{352}\) Shakyamuni Buddha, also Siddhartha Gautama, Shakyamuni, or simply the Buddha, is considered the founder of Buddhism.
incarnate to modify all the past religious teachings, unite all the religions on earth and establish a new ethical era.

Tái sinh sửa đổi chơn truyền:
Thấu các đạo hà hành làm mọi (353).
Born to modify all the religious teachings.
He also unites all the worldly religions.

He also presides the Hội Long Hoa and decides who will become the new Immortals and Buddhas.

Hội Long Hoa tuyển phong Phật vị.
Trưởng thi Tiên Phật dựa tiếp kiến (354).
In Hội Long Hoa, he will ordain new Buddhas.
That is a competition to challenge Immortals and Buddhas.

This will be the time for everyone to be saved and for Hell to be closed.

Khai cơ tàn dỗ Cầu tuyên diệt vong.
Everyone will be saved and Hell will be closed.

So far the soul has experienced four statuses: Genii, Saints, Immortals, and Buddhas. On the way, he has passed Tam Thiên Thế Giới and Тур Đại Bồ Châu and is ready to travel to Тур Thập Lục Thiên.

2. The path of Hư hồn Vô (355)

Finally, it comes to the process of Hư hồn Vô, when the Huyễn Quan Như Khiếu (356) leaves. According to Đức Hỏ Pháp, attaining Nothingness is getting enlightened. Hư hồn vô is when the religious practitioner has only Đạo Tâm or love, joy, and satisfaction. He has attained nothingness (no fame, benefit or power). He is now completely free. He becomes absolutely selfless and enters the nature «Nothingness » of God. Đạo is formless. Đạo is no nothing. The Master is nobody. The cycle of rebirth has been stopped like what is written in the Kinh Xuất Hơi (357):

Đạo hư vô, Sư hư vô,
Rêo chưởng thọát tue, phát cả tuyệt sinh.
Đạo is Nothingness and Master is nobody.
It's time to be freed from the earthly world and the cycle of birth.

According to Caodaist Divine Messages, souls now enter the purest and highest level in the universe, which is the Тур Thập Lục Thiên. Each heaven is governed by a Thiên Tào (358). This is the center of the universe. Bách Ngọc Kinh

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353 Kinh Đại Tương
354 NT
355 Hư - nothingness. Vô - void. Hư hồn - turn to. Nothingness turns to void (?)
356 the Divine Eyes
357 Prayers after a meeting.
358 An organization under God.
is at the highest level or the Thái Cực\textsuperscript{359}, the center of the 36 heavens. The second highest is Ngôi Dương (Yang) and the third-highest is Ngôi Âm (Yin), both of which represent the Lươn Ngữi\textsuperscript{360}.

Thai Cực and Lươn Ngữi unite to form what is called Tam Thiên Vị\textsuperscript{361}. Below is 33 heavens, so there are 36 heavens totally. A Thiên Đề, a Divine King who is God’s incarnation, reigns each of those 33 heavens.

Having entered the Tam Thập Luc Thiên, souls keep practicing religion to enter the Bát Quái\textsuperscript{362}, the Tứ Tượng\textsuperscript{363}, the Lươn Ngữi and finally the Thái Cực or Bạch Ngọc Kinh. At last, souls unite with the Đại Linh Quang\textsuperscript{364} to “Unite with God”. That is also the conclusion of this book.

**The return journey of a religious practitioner**

6. Tam Thập Luc Thiên

Tam Thiên Vị

Bạch Ngọc Kinh is the highest level at the center

Yang is the second level. Yin is the third level.

33 heavens

5. Three Buddhist heavens:

Hồn Người Thiên, Hồi Nguyên Thiên, Hữu Vô Thiên

4. Cửu Trùng Thiên for Genii, Saints, Immortals:

Tảo Hội Thiên, Pha Tướng Thiên, Hạo Thiên, Kim Thiên, Xích Thiên, Hiểu Thiên, Thanh Thiên, Second Heaven with the Divine Peach Garden, First Heaven with the Garden of Ngan Uyên

3. Bypassing:

Tứ Đại Bảo Châu Tượng: Đông Đại Bảo Châu, Nam Đại Bảo Châu, Tây Đại Bảo Châu, Bắc Đại Bảo Châu

Tam Thiên Thất Giới

Tứ Đại Bảo Châu Hạ: Đông Thất Thiên Châu, Nam Thất Thiên Châu, Tây Ngọc Hào Châu, Bắc Cầu Lư Châu

2. Thập Phần Xệt

1. Seventy Two Planets.

*Planet 68*: leaving the body after death

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\textsuperscript{359} the Absolute.

\textsuperscript{360} the Two Forms i.e. Yin and Yang.

\textsuperscript{361} the Trinity.

\textsuperscript{362} Ba Gua.

\textsuperscript{363} the Four Phenomena.

\textsuperscript{364} the Grand Mass of Light or God.