

CAODAISM A NOVEL RELIGION

BY
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RELIGION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of contents	Page 3
Preface	Page 5
What is CaoDaism ?	Page 9
What is Đại Đạo Tam Kỳ Phổ Độ ?	Page 10
Are there prophecies about CaoDaism ?	Page 12
How was CaoDaism founded ?	Page 14
What is spiritism ?	Page 19
Who is God ? Who created God ?	Page 22
What are CaoDaism's principles ?	Page 23
Do CaoDaists believe in Heaven and Hell ?	Page 25
How can CaoDaism unite human beings ?	Page 26
How can CaoDaism unite religions when there are too many discrepancies between different religious teachings ?	Page 27
What is the goal of the CaoDaist ?	Page 29
What is the meaning of Cao Đài Tiên Ông Đại Bồ Tát Ma Ha Tát	Page 33
How does CaoDaism represent God ?	Page 34
How is the altar arranged and what is its meaning ?	Page 36
What are the rules of CaoDaism ?	Page 38
How to perform daily services to God ?	Page 40
What is the organization of CaoDaism in exoterism ?	Page 42
What is the meaning of the principle Công Bình (Fairness), Bác Ái (Philanthropy) and Từ Bi (Mercy) in CaoDaism ?	Page 45
How do CaoDaists dress ?	Page 46
Conclusion	Page 76

PREFACE

Since ancient times, the human race has employed every imaginable means and scheme to compete, to fight, and even to destroy one another in order to attain the basic necessities of life in the struggle for survival. Modern times have brought the race the convenience of a luxurious material life, along with the advancement and sophistication of the killing tools. But this progress in materialism and militarism has not been accompanied by maturation in spiritualism. And man has not hesitated to employ his sophisticated weapons to satisfy his inherent greed in the quest for wealth and power. All over the world, we continue to see killing and destruction in the fight for power and fame, land and money, and flesh and food. Man also recognizes that his own destruction is inevitable if he does not exercise a power to rectify his deeds in accord with his conscience. That power can be found nowhere but in religion. Over the past four thousand five hundred years, various religious establishments have been founded in the different areas of the world to teach man to love one other, to do right, and to avoid evil. At about 2500 b.c., Abraham, Isaac and Jacob taught Judaism in Mediterranean Areas; Hinduism was

founded India; and King Phục Hy developed in China Yi king (the philosophy about transformation), which constituted the principles of Confucianism. About two thousand years later, in India, the Buddha, Sakya Muni, founded Buddhism; in China, Lao Tse founded Taoism and Confucius Confucianism; and in the Mediterranean Areas, Jesus Christ founded Christianity. Because of lack of means of travel, however, these religions were initially not very well spread.

Yet, despite scientific breakthroughs which have brought the world closer, man has strayed from the source of understanding found in religion and has become more lost on the road of materialism. Original philosophic and spiritual teachings of various religions were gradually modified in adaptation to the want and convenience of the disciples. People in search for the true way became therefore disconcerted and confused as to the real essence of religion, and as to which religion is the right one. They resolved to living day by day waiting for God to come and save mankind, but they never knew when and where God would come.

The author considers himself blessed to have experienced a novel Way that God has founded through spiritism. This new religion is Caodaism, which is the essence of five principal religions including Confucianism, Geniism, Christianity, Taoism and Buddhism. The author humbly wishes to introduce to the reader through this booklet the general teachings of

this novel Way, which the author has found most important and necessary in a time when mankind still immerses itself in the materialism of modern time, and is in need of spiritual deliverance. This booklet, because of its size, cannot reflect the profundity and ramification of this Way. For further inquiries or comments, please contact The Caodaist Association of Southern California in Anaheim, California. The author wishes to thank all his friends of The Caodaist Association of Southern California for their encouragement, support, and contribution in the preparation of the manuscript, and most of all, the affectionate assistance of his companion in life, disciple Cẩm Hồng, and of his children Hoàn, Hảo, Cẩm Hân and Hiệp who are always present with their eagerness and disponibility.

*Hùm Đắc Bù
1992*

WHAT IS CAODAISM ?

CaoDaism believes that God has come and expressed Himself in a new Way, Đại-Đạo Tam-Kỳ Phổ-Độ or CaoDaism in 1926 in Việt-Nam.

The philosophy of CaoDaism is the essence of Confucianism, Geniism, Christianity, Taoism, and Buddhism. CaoDaism derives from the word Cao Đài which literally means high palace or Supreme Palace (where God reigns). Figuratively, the word Cao Đài is used as God's symbolic name. God, in adapting His teachings to the progress of the human spirit, manifested Himself through spiritism.

WHAT IS ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỲ PHỔ ĐỘ ?

The Third Revelation of the Great Way or CaoDaism is a novel religion, the philosophy of which is the essence of Confucianism, Geniism, Christianity, Taoism, and Buddhism. This new religion was created by Cao Đài or God in 1926 in Việt Nam. As father of the universe, Cao Đài has communicated with human beings and has revealed His will to men since the beginning of times. The history of religion is divided into three major periods of revelation. In the first two, select individuals received God's instructions and served the suffering humanity by founding and developing Confucianism, Geniism, Christianity, Taoism and Buddhism. In their pristine forms, the revelation given by these human messengers were "truth"; but because of human frailty of the disciples, the messages were not correctly followed. Moreover, these messages were time and culture bound, and applicable only to the people of the area where the founders lived. The effect of the revelations given during these two periods gave a partial picture of God's will. Therefore, Cao Đài decided to give a third and

final amnesty and revelation to the world through His novel Way, CaoDaism. (Table I).

In summary, CaoDaism recognizes God as creator of the universe, father of all beings, origin of different religions, and who manifested Himself in different times and spaces.

Table I

Three Revelatory Periods of The Religion's history

	<u>Religions</u>	<u>Founders</u>
1st Revelation	Buddhism	Nhiên Đăng Cổ Phật
	Taoism	Thái Thượng Đạo Quân
	Christianity (Judaism)*	Moses
	Geniism	Phục Hy
	Confucianism	
2nd Revelation	Buddhism	Sakya Muni
	Taoism	Lao Tse
	Christianity	Jesus Christ, Mohammed
	Geniism	Khương Thái Công
	Confucianism	Confucius
3rd Revelation	CaoDaism	God or CaoĐài

* In this book, the word Christianity refers to the three religions that originated in the Middle East: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

ARE THERE PROPHECIES ABOUT CAODAISM ?

The coming of God was prophesied by Jesus Christ in His New Testament

Matthew 24: 42-44

Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready because the Son of man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

First Thessalonians 5:2

Now, brothers, about times and dates, we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

2 Peter 3:10

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

- Revelation 3:3

Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard obey it and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

The coming of God was also prophesied in Buddhist Canons "After me, Sakya Muni said, will come a Greater Being, the Supreme Being"

In the book "Thanh Tịnh Kinh" of Taoism there is a sentence "Thanh Tịnh Kinh hữu di tích. Công viên quả mẫn chỉ thọ đơn thơ. Thiên mạng phương khả truyền Đại Đạo Tam Kỳ Phổ Độ" which means: "Upon completion of self cultivation, you will receive secret teachings. Whoever has a sacred mission, should spread Đại Đạo Tam Kỳ Phổ Độ"

And God, through spiritism and without a human form, has come unbeknownst to us, like a thief entering our house. He came in the form of a new religion, CaoDaism, in Vietnam in 1926.

HOW WAS CAODAISM FOUNDED ?

CaoDaism was officially founded through a medium system by Cao Đài or the Supreme Being in 1926, the year Bính Dần. But Mr. Ngô Văn Chiêu had been receiving messages and worshipping Cao Đài for approximately six years before the foundation of CaoDaism. He was at that time an officer of the Cochinchina government in Phú Quốc, a quiet beautiful island in the Gulf of Siam. Chiêu led a natural life of great wisdom and complete quietude. In this isolated place, Chiêu evoked spirits with the help of young mediums from twelve to fifteen years of age. He received through these means spiritual instruction. He became particularly interested in a communicating spirit called Cao Đài. Right at the beginning, the name Cao Đài caused general astonishment among those present because no one had ever heard of it. Nevertheless, Chiêu, whose wisdom was admired by all, believed that Cao Đài was a surname of God. When he asked Cao Đài for permission to worship Him in a tangible form, Cao Đài ordered him to represent God

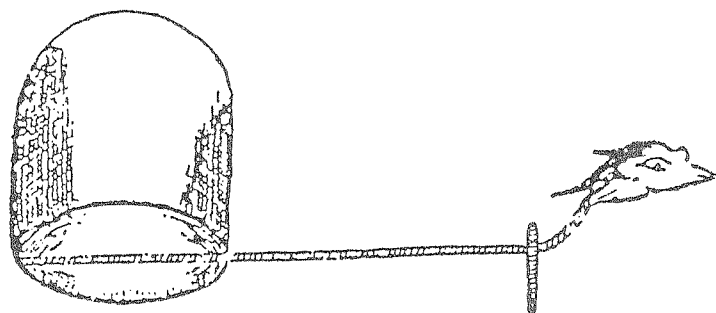
with an eye, which eventually became the symbol of the religion. He was also ordered to become totally vegetarian. In 1924, Chieu returned to Saigon and met with others who were also interested in the spiritual movement. Chiêu shared with them the doctrines and rituals that he had been taught by Cao Đài during the three years of his discipleship in Phú Quốc. In the middle of the year Ất Sửu (1925), a small group of Vietnamese secretaries belonging to various branches of administration in Saigon (including Cao Quỳnh Cư, Phạm Công Tắc, Cao Hoài Sang) were entertaining themselves in the evening by spiritism. They were using “table tipping”. With perseverance and practice, they obtained good results. Their questions to the spirits received surprising answers. Their deceased parents’ and friends’ spirits showed themselves to talk of family affairs and gave counsel. These sensational revelations proved to them the existence of a mysterious world. One of the communicating spirits became particularly noticeable by his high level of moral and philosophic teachings. This spirit manifested under the pseudonym AÃÃ (AÃÃ are the first three letters, with different accents, of the Vietnamese alphabet). These meetings became more serious and regular. As the “table tipping” was cumbersome and no longer convenient, this spirit replaced it by “ngọc cơ” (basket with beak) which permitted direct writing.

On Christmas Eve, 1925, the spirit AÃÃ revealed

Himself as God, The Supreme Being, coming under the name of Cao Đài to teach truth to Vietnam. He said, *"Rejoice this day, it is the anniversary of My coming to Europe. Your allegiance brings much satisfaction. This house will be filled with blessings. You will see more miracles which will lead you to further belief. For some time, I have used the symbol AĂĂ to lead you to religious life. Soon you must found a new religion under My instructions"*.

From that day, Cao Đài initiated His disciples into the new doctrine. At about the same time, also in Saigon, Mr. Lê Văn Trung, a former elected official of the colonial council of Cochinchina, one evening, went to a seance of spiritism organized at a friend's house. During this seance, the spirit of Lý Thái Bạch, a great Chinese poet in the eighth century A.D. manifested, took him aside, revealed to him his spiritual origin and

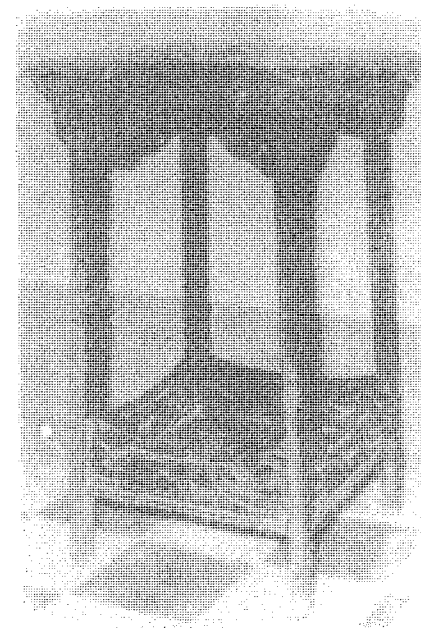
Fig. 1



Ngọc Cơ: basket with beak

announced to him his future religious mission. Trung resolved from that day to lead an exemplary life and to show himself worthy of the mission to which he had been entrusted by Cao Đài. He immediately ceased smoking opium without even the slightest withdrawal

Fig. 2



This is the original table used by Mr. Cao Quỳnh Cư, Mr. Phạm Công Tắc and Mr. Cao Hoài Sang. They sat around the four legged table with their hands resting on its surface and prayed. When the spirit came the table began to shake and knock on the floor. Each successive number of specific raps (according to the convention) indicated a letter of the Vietnamese alphabet.

reaction, abstained from alcohol and meat, and became a sincere priest. Later, Cao Đài sent Mr. Cao Quỳnh Cư and Mr. Phạm Công Tắc to meet with Lê Văn Trung and to invite him to the group worshipping Cao Đài. The group expanded progressively. At the end of the year of Ất Sửu (1926), Cao Đài sent this group of mediums (Cư, Tắc, Sang, Diêu, Đức, Hậu, Trung) to meet with Ngô Văn Chiêu to organize a seance of spiritism during which He instructed them to found a new religion for humanity. The earnestness and selflessness of these pioneers soon attracted an increasing number of adherents. CaoDaism came out of its limited circle to spread among the people at the beginning of the year Bính Dần (1926). Mr. Chiêu, used to his solitude, preferred to keep himself free of this big religious movement. Mr. Lê Văn Trung was then named by the Supreme Being as acting Pope of CaoDaism. The new religion rapidly expanded and was received with much enthusiasm by the masses. The leaders of the religion sent the official declaration of the foundation of CaoDaism on September 28, 1926 to the governor of Cochinchina.

WHAT IS SPIRITISM ?

Spiritism or Spiritualism involves receiving communication from the spirit world through some form of mechanical device like a ouija board, table tipping (Fig. 2) (xây bàn), basket with the beak (ngọc cở) ... The latter is the most commonly used in CaoDaism. The basket with the beak is a wooden stick about 26 inches long; one end of the stick has a carved head of a phoenix; the other end is attached to and covered by a latticed bamboo basket so that the medium may have room to put their upturned hands underneath to hold the basket. The basket is about eight inches wide and five inches high. It is usually covered by a yellow material. Burning joss sticks (incense) are attached to the top of the carved head during seances. To the rear of the head and underneath the stick is a pen like projection about one inch long which does the writing (Fig. 1). Two mediums hold the basket. The interpreter stands next to one of the mediums to read the messages. The secretary writes down what the interpreter reads.

Sacred messages: "It is very difficult for the spirit of a human being to get out of his physical body. A human being, when he purifies himself well, may become enlightened and then, his spirit may get out of his body and travel in the universe. In spiritism, when the basket with the beak is used, if the medium is unconscious, his spirit will get out of his physical body listen to My instructions and command his body to write down the messages. If the reader reads incorrectly, the medium's spirit will not agree. I will scold the reader and oblige the medium to write again. In the other form of spiritism called "chấp bút" or automatic writing or inspirational writing, I come and make your spirit unstable for a while and then your spirit will come and listen to Me. Your hand will obey and write. In this case, there is a combination of your part with Mine so that you may reach a universal knowledge. Before the seance, one has to purify himself both physically and mentally. Do not omit purification and fail in respect. To practice spiritism, the medium should keep his mind pure, not encumbered by everyday living matters, cense and deodorize his hands. Deep meditation will allow the spirit to get out of the body and communicate with Me. Choose a medium with an advanced spirit so that the seance will be fruitful. The medium should practice vegetarianism. He should train himself to be as good as saints, immortals, and buddhas to be able to hold the seance and to transmit the teachings. The medium is considered as one of My

assistants in the propagation of the Way.

Spiritism cannot be taken lightly. In the reception of waves by the spirit, each person has his own waves which may interact with outside waves and may subsequently make his spirit write. This writing may not be correct. One should be cautious in setting up sessions and in distinguishing the authenticity of the writings"

Messages transmitted on January 3rd, 1926.

WHO IS GOD ? WHO CREATED GOD ?

In Dao Duc Kinh, Chapter I, Lao-Tse says:

*"The Dao that can be named is not the eternal Dao
The name that can be named is not the eternal name
The nameless is the beginning of the universe,
The named is the mother of all beings."*

Here, the word Dao is temporarily used to indicate an absolute principle which has no name and which is God.

According to CaoDaism, at the beginning, there is nothing but one principle, one monad, no heaven, no earth, no universe. This monad is Dao or God. God has no name, no form, no color, no beginning, no end, God is invariable, unfathomably powerful, everlasting and is the origin of all. After creating the universe, God has divided His spirit and with it made all creatures, plants and materials.

WHAT ARE CAODAISM'S PRINCIPLES ?

CaoDaists believe that God created the universe, materials, plants and different creatures, each of which has a part of God's spirit.

God's messages: "After creating the universe, I divided My spirit and with it, made all creatures, plants and materials. Everything in this universe comes from My spirit, and therefore has a life. Where there is life, there is Myself even in materials and plants. *I am each of you and you are Me*".

Sacred message transmitted on February 20, 1926.

All creatures are composed of two parts: a perishable physical body, and an invisible part which itself is composed of the spirit and the soul. The spirit, also called the conscience, is a part of God's spirit and has the role of guiding the physical body to the practice of good. The soul or perispirit, being the source of feelings and personality, could lead the physical body to either good actions or evil deeds. Based on the Karma law (which holds that future states depend on

present deeds) all spirits evolve out of a material world and progressively attain higher or lower ranks. To be able to go back to one's origin, which is God, one has to avoid being involved in the reincarnation cycle by cultivating self and finding God in self.

1 - From a moral point of view, CaoDaism reminds man of his duties toward himself, his family, the society (a broader family), and humanity (the universal family).

2 - From a philosophical point of view, it preaches renouncement of honors, riches and luxury, or, in other words, emancipation from servitudes to materialism in attainment of spirituality and full quietude of the soul.

3 - From the point of view of worship, it recommends the adoration of God, the veneration of Superior Spirits and the worship of ancestors.

4 - From a spiritual point of view, it confirms the existence of the spirit and the soul, their survival of the physical body, their evolution by successive reincarnations, according to the law of Karma.

5 - From the initiates' point of view, it communicates to worthy adherents and reveals teachings that shall enable them, by a process of spiritual evolution, to reach the ecstasies of felicity.

DO CAODAISTS BELIEVE IN HEAVEN AND HELL ?

When people are living, Heaven and Hell are all in their heart. If people follow their own wrong inclinations, their life will produce evil results: impure thoughts, eagerness for lustful pleasure, jealousy, anger, hatred, fighting, murder etc ..., and, they will be living in misery, stresses, unhappiness which are already a Hell in their heart. If people listen to their conscience, they will develop in themselves love, joy, peace, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness etc ..., and therefore lead happy lives and may be enlightened, finding a Heaven in themselves.

After this earthly life, if people had committed crimes, they will reincarnate to another life according to Karma law, either on this earth or on another one much colder and darker with misery and unhappiness and which may be considered as Hell. If people had done good things, purified themselves, and completed their duty toward themselves, their family, and their fellow human beings, their spirits become lighter, purer, and may reincarnate to another happier life on this earth or may attain a happier world, Heaven or Nirvana.

HOW CAN CAODAISM UNITE HUMAN BEINGS ?

People get confused and separated because of many religions. Being the essence of other religions' principles, CaoDaism is able to bring human beings together in love and concordance. During a seance of spiritism in 1926, Cao Đài gave the following message:

“Formerly, people lacked transportation and therefore did not know each other. I then founded at different epoches and in different areas, five branches of the Great Way: Confucianism, Geniism, Christianity Taoism and Buddhism, each based on the customs of the race. In present days, transportation has been improved, and people have come to know each other better. But people do not always live in harmony because of the very multiplicity of those religions. That is why I have decided to unite all those religions into one to bring them to the primordial unity.

Moreover, the Holy Doctrine has been, through centuries more and more denatured by the people responsible for spreading it, so that I have now firmly resolved to come Myself to show you “the Way”

Message transmitted on 4-24-1926

HOW CAN CAODAISM UNITE RELIGIONS WHEN THERE ARE TOO MANY DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS ?

There certainly are discrepancies between religions concerning their way of practice, because at different places and in different times, God manifested Himself differently according to the customs of the race. However, the doctrines are the same because they all come from the same origin, God.

Sacred messages from Cao Đài on 4-7-1926:

“Nhiên Đăng Cổ Phật (a very old time Buddha) is Me,

Sakya Muni is Me .

Thái Thượng Ngươn Tử (an immortal of the old time) is Me.

Who is Cao Đài.”

exactly as in the case of Jesus who is Himself God.

All religions recognize God as the Father of the

universe and of all living beings; and there is God within every one of us. CaoĐài says: "I am you, you are Me".

Sakya Muni says: "Your heart is Buddha, Buddha is your heart" or "I am a Buddha already enlightened and you are a Buddha who will be enlightened".

In the Christian New Testament, Ephesians 4:4-6, Saint Paul says: "We are all parts of one body, we have the same spirit, and we have all been called to the same glorious future. For there is only one Lord, one faith, one baptism and we all have the same God and Father who is over us all and in us all and living through every part of us."

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THE CAODAIST ?

The ultimate goal of the CaoDaist is to escape from the continuing cycle of reincarnation for the heavenly union with CaoĐài. There are two sects in CaoDaism: exoterism and esoterism.

1 - Exoterism: The duty of a CaoĐài disciple in exoterism is, while conducting a normal family life:

- to devote himself to the practice of good and avoidance of all evils.
- to show kindness to nature, plants, animals, human beings and to avoid unnecessary destruction of any creature recognizing that they all have God's spirit and are part of the reincarnation cycle.
- to serve the society in representing God's image to the world.

"God is you, and you are God". The CaoĐài disciple has to cultivate self based on Confucian principles which consist of three obligations of a man's duty (between king and citizens, father

and child, husband and wife) and of five virtues (humanity, obligation, civility, knowledge, and reliability). Most CaoDaists are practicing exoterism. The central temple called Holy See Tay Ninh is located in Tây Ninh, Việt Nam (Fig. 3&4).

2 - Esoterism: The esoterist cultivates his personal holiness by meditation, by progressive eradication of the inferior self, and by resultant development of the divine element within the self, he may be enlightened and then guide other disciples in their self cultivation. Actually, esoterism is practiced by Ngô Văn Chiêu's sect, called Chiêu-Minh Vô Vi, the main temple of which is located in Cần Thơ, Việt Nam.



Fig. 3 - Holy See Tây Ninh (front view)

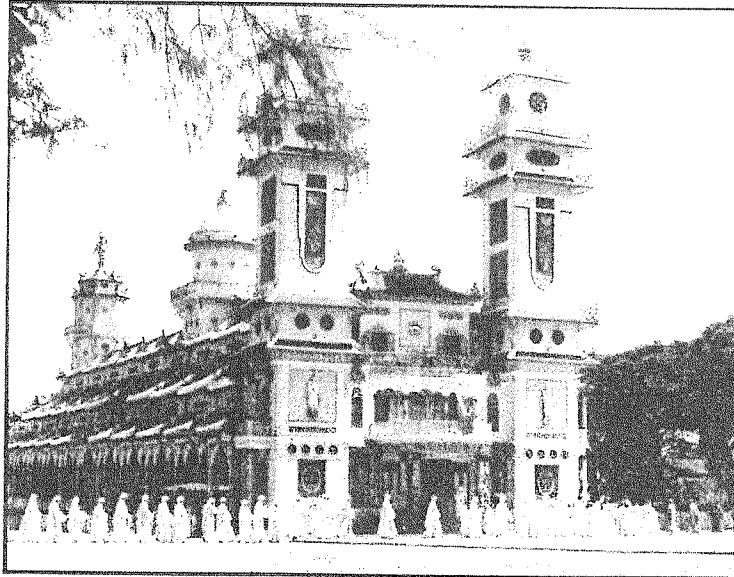


Fig. 4 - Holy See Tây Ninh

With a combination of the three principal religious architectures: the Catholicism is marked by its verticality (bell tower and drum tower), the Buddhism by its horizontality (the Nine Sphere Palace in the middle and the Octagonal Palace on the left) and the Islamism by its sphericity. The temple was constructed under the direction of Mr. Phạm Công Tắc who was inspired by God and the spiritual pope Lý Thái Bạch. Mr. Phạm Công Tắc was neither an architect nor an engineer.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF CAO ĐÀI TIÊN ÔNG ĐẠI BỒ TÁT MA HA TÁT ?

It is the full symbolic name of God which indicates a combination of the three main religions, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.

Cao Đài means Supreme Palace where God reigns. It represents Confucianism.

Tiên Ông is the lowest rank in Taoism.

Đại Bồ Tát Ma Ha Tát is the lowest rank in Buddhism.

Together, Cao Đài Tiên Ông Đại Bồ Tát Ma Ha Tát, the full name of God, represents not only the unification of the three main religions but also the humility of God who represents Himself as the lowest rank of religions. Sacred messages: "I use the name Cao Đài Tiên Ông Đại Bồ Tát Ma Ha Tát to found the new Way, Đại Đạo Tam Kỳ Phổ Độ which consists of a combination of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism"

Messages transmitted on 12-24-1926

HOW DOES CAODAIISM REPRESENT GOD ?

A human shape would be too physical and specific to represent the universality and the essence that God embodies. There is only one God, but He has been worshipped, venerated, and prayed to under diverse names in different places of the world. Therefore, God ordered man to symbolize Him by an Eye, which is the image of Universal and Individual Conscience.

God's messages: "The Eye is the principle of the heart,

From which comes a source of light.

Light is the spirit,

The spirit itself is God" (Fig.5)

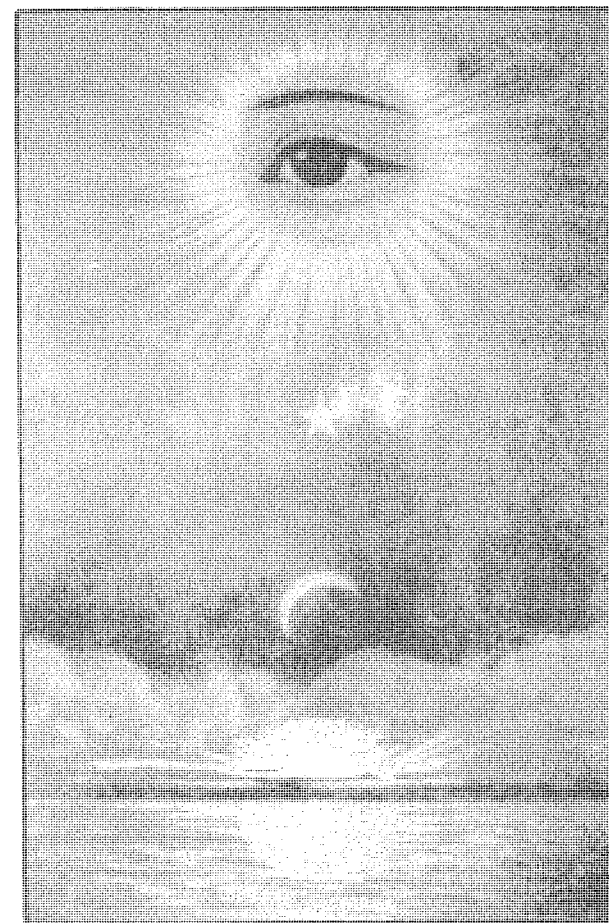


Fig. 5 - Divine Eye (Thiên Nhân)

HOW IS THE ALTAR ARRANGED AND WHAT IS ITS MEANING ?

The Divine Eye is in the middle.

On the altar, the light in the middle symbolizes Universal Monad (Ngôi Thái Cực) who is God. It should be continually lit.

The two candles: The left represents positive logos (male) or sun light. It must be lit first at the beginning of each ceremony. The right one representing negative logos (female) or moon light, must be lit next, after the left one. Both candles represent yin and yang, the two main principles in the universe formation.

The five sticks of incense: represent five levels of spiritual development of human beings:

- 1 - Purity (giới hương)
- 2 - Meditation (định hương)
- 3 - Wisdom (huệ hương)
- 4 - Universal knowledge (tri kiến hương)
- 5 - Karmic Liberation (giải thoát hương)

They also represent five principal elements of the earth: metal, plant, water, fire and earth.

The three offerings

Flowers: representing the sperm (Tinh) or the essence of all matters without which no life may be manifested.

Wine: representing ether (Khí) vital energy uniting the physical body and the spirit.

Tea: representing the spirit (Thần)

They are all the three best elements of human beings. (Fig. 6)

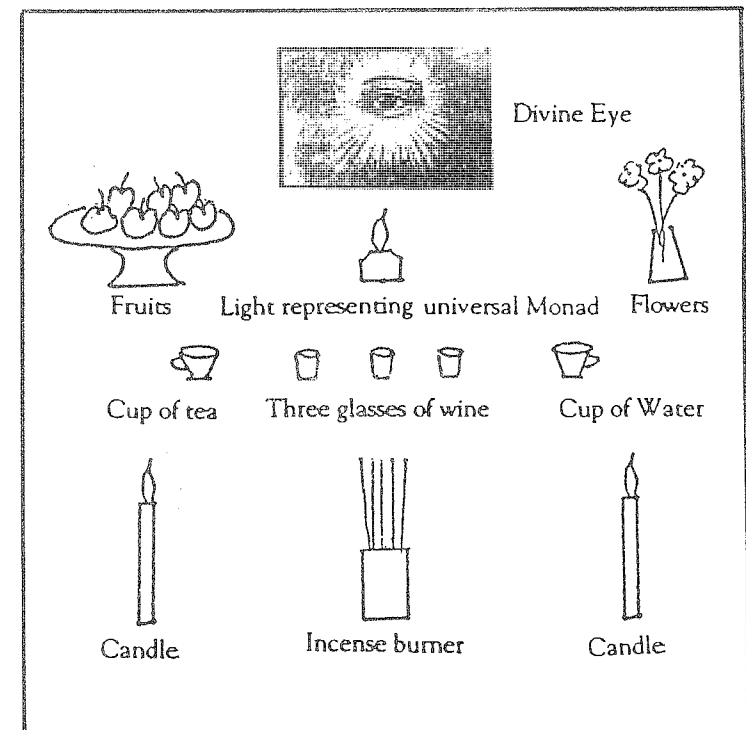


Fig. 6 - Arrangement of the altar

WHAT ARE THE RULES OF CAODAISM ?

FOR THE DISCIPLES: The CaoDaist shall obey rules and regulations of CaoDaism

1 - Practice vegetarianism:

Through vegetarianism, the CaoDaist observes his responsibility not to harm or destroy the opportunity of fellow travellers (animals) to progress in their spiritual evolution. Vegetarianism is therefore a means of self purification. A minimum of ten days per month is required.

2 - Observe five interdictions:

- a. Do not kill living beings (within which there is God's spirit)
- b. Do not be dishonest
- c. Do not commit adultery
- d. Do not get drunk
- e. Do not sin by word

3 - Participate in ritual acts of devotion and worship to Cao Đài:

There are four daily ceremonies at 6:00 A.M. , Noon, 6:00 P.M. , and Midnight. A minimum of one service per day at home is required.

FOR THE PRIESTS: Besides practicing complete vegetarianism, observing the five interdictions, the four commandments and conducting daily ceremonies worshipping God, the Priest's mission is to expand the religion by teaching others its principles.

Following are the four commandments:

- a. Obey the teaching of the superior, and be opened to opinions of the subordinates. Use civility as the basis for living in harmony with others. Accept your mistakes and repent.
- b. Don't be arrogant. Do not mind your effort in helping others to succeed. Do not keep in your heart personal animosity.
- c. Account clearly for expenses and income. Do not borrow things without returning. Do not take common property for your own use. Do not neglect public services for your own services. Obey the laws of the country.
- d. Be polite to everybody, to the superior as well as to the subordinate in teaching and counseling. Respect people even in their absence. Try to conciliate all quarrels. Do not abuse your authority to obstruct talented people.

HOW TO PERFORM DAILY SERVICES TO GOD ?

The follower put two hands together: the left hand represents the positive logos with its thumb pointing at the base of the left ring finger (corresponding to the year of the mouse) and the other fingers wrapping around the thumb. This symbolizes Heaven being created in the year of the mouse. The right hand representing the negative logos, supports and wraps the left hand with the right thumb pointing at the base of the left index (corresponding to the year of the tiger). This symbolizes the human beings being created in the year of the tiger. Two hands joined together symbolize the interaction between the positive logos inside (left hand) and the negative logos outside (right hand) leading to the formation of the universe and human beings. Regular service follows this pattern:

1 - Followers salute one another by bowing one time

2 - Followers occupy positions according to rank, in front of the altar, bow three times, with hands joined together (as described above) moving from the forehead (representing respect to God) toward the knees (representing respect to Earth) and then resting in front of the chest (representing respect to Humanity) at the end of each bowing.

3. After kneeling, each follower makes a commitment of self to Cao Đài, His teachings, and to Humanity by putting his hands in the middle of the forehead, on the left side of the forehead and then on the right side and praying Nam Mô Phật, Nam Mô Pháp, Nam Mô Tăng respectively.

4. Next, the followers make spoken greetings to Cao Đài, the three Lords of the earth (representing three main religions) and to the superior spirits by praying:

- a. Nam Mô Cao Đài Tiên Ông Đại Bồ Tát Ma Ha Tát
- b. Nam Mô Quan Thế Âm Bồ Tát
- c. Nam Mô Lý-Đại Tiên Trưởng Kiêm Giáo Tông Đại Đạo Tam Kỳ Phổ Độ.
- d. Nam Mô Hiệp Thiên Đại Đế Quan Thánh Đế Quân
- e. Nam Mô Chư Phật, Chư Tiên, Chư Thánh, Chư Thần.

The followers bow at the end of each prayer

- 5. Chants are next sung for incense offering
- 6. Chants are sung for prayer opening
- 7. Prayers are sung to Cao Đài, Nhiên Đăng Cổ Phật (Buddhism) Thái Thượng Đạo Quân (Taoism), and to Confucius (Confucianism)
- 8. Prayers for offering of wine, flowers, and tea.
- 9. Closing prayers (ngũ nguyện)

WHAT IS THE ORGANIZATION OF CAODAISM IN EXOTERISM ?

CaoDaism is managed by two powers, the spiritual one and the earthly one.

A. The spiritual power: This power is seated at the Bát Quái Đài (Octagonal Palace) headed by God who gives orders and messages to the earth via mediums. God is assisted by Divine spirits who are representatives of different religions:

Representatives of the five branches of religions:

Sakya Muni represents Buddhism

Lao-Tse, Taoism

Jesus Christ, Christianity

Khương Thái Công, Geniism

Confucius, Confucianism, a religion of humanity

Representatives of the three main religions, the three lords of the earth, specifically responsible for the third revelation of the Great Way:

Quan Âm Bồ Tát represents Buddhism

Lý Thái Bạch, Taoism

Quan Thánh Đế Quân, Confucianism.

B. The earthly power: This power consists of the Cửu Trùng Đài (Nine Sphere Palace) or the executive body headed by the Giáo Tông (Pope) and of the Hiệp Thiên Đài (Heavenly Union Palace) or the legislative body headed by the Hộ Pháp (Conservator). The Nine Sphere Palace is in charge of the administration of the religion. The Heavenly Union Palace communicates with Cao Đài via seances and has the right of jurisdiction and of control (Table II)

Table II Earthly structure of CaoDaism

<u>Hiệp Thiên Đài</u> Legislative body	<u>Number</u>	<u>Cửu Trùng Đài</u> Executive body	<u>Number</u>
Hộ Pháp (Conservator) Legislative affairs director	1	Giáo Tông (Pope)	1
Thượng Sanh Secular affairs director	1	Chưởng Pháp Censor cardinal	3
Thượng Phẩm Religious affairs director	1		
Thập Nhị Thời Quân 12 zodiacal dignitaries	12	Đầu Sư Cardinal	3
Tiếp Dẫn Đạo Nhơn Instructor	unlimited	Phối Sư Archbishop	36
Chưởng Ấn Chancellor	unlimited		
Cải Trạng Lawyer	unlimited	Giáo Sư Bishop	72
Giám Đạo General inspector	unlimited		
Thừa Sử Historian	unlimited	Giáo Hữu Priest	3000
Truyền Trạng Investigator	unlimited		
Sĩ Tải Archivist	unlimited	Lễ Sanh Student priest	unlimited
Luật Sư Student of law	unlimited	Chức Việc Subdignitaries	unlimited
		Tín Đồ Followers	unlimited

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE PRINCIPLE CÔNG BÌNH (FAIRNESS), BÁC ÁI (PHILANTHROPY) AND TỪ BI (MERCY) IN CAODAISM ?

This is a combination of principles of the three main religions.

Confucianism and Christianity teach fairness “Do not do to others what you do not want the others to do to you” (Confucius). Do for others what you want them to do for you (Matthew 7:12) or treat others as you want them to treat you. (Luke 6:31)

Taoism teaches philanthropy which is love of mankind, a desire to help mankind as indicated by acts of charity. Buddhism teaches mercy which is compassion, sympathy by kindly refraining from inflicting and punishment.

HOW DO CAODAISTS DRESS ?

The disciples in exoterism wear white dresses and black turban. The white color, being the combination of different colors represents the combination of different religions and also the purity. The black turban means that the followers still have social and family life.

The disciples in esoterism wear white dresses and white turban which represent purity and complete eradication of the inferior self.

The dignitaries of the executive body (Cửu Trùng Đài): the Pope wears white dresses. The other dignitaries wear colored dresses according to their branch:

Buddhist branch: the dignitaries are dressed in yellow which represents virtue

Taoist branch: the dignitaries are dressed in azure, the color of tolerance and pacifism

Confucianist branch: the dignitaries are dressed in red, the symbol of authority

The dignitaries of legislative body (Hiệp Thiên Đài) wear white dresses except Hộ Pháp, Thượng Phẩm, Thượng Sanh, Directors of legislative, religious and secular affairs respectively.



Dress of the Pope
(for the big ceremony)

RELIGIOUS DRESS
OF THE DIGNITARIES OF THE
HIỆP THIÊN ĐÀI
(HEAVENLY UNION PALACE)



Dress of the Conservator
(for the big ceremony)



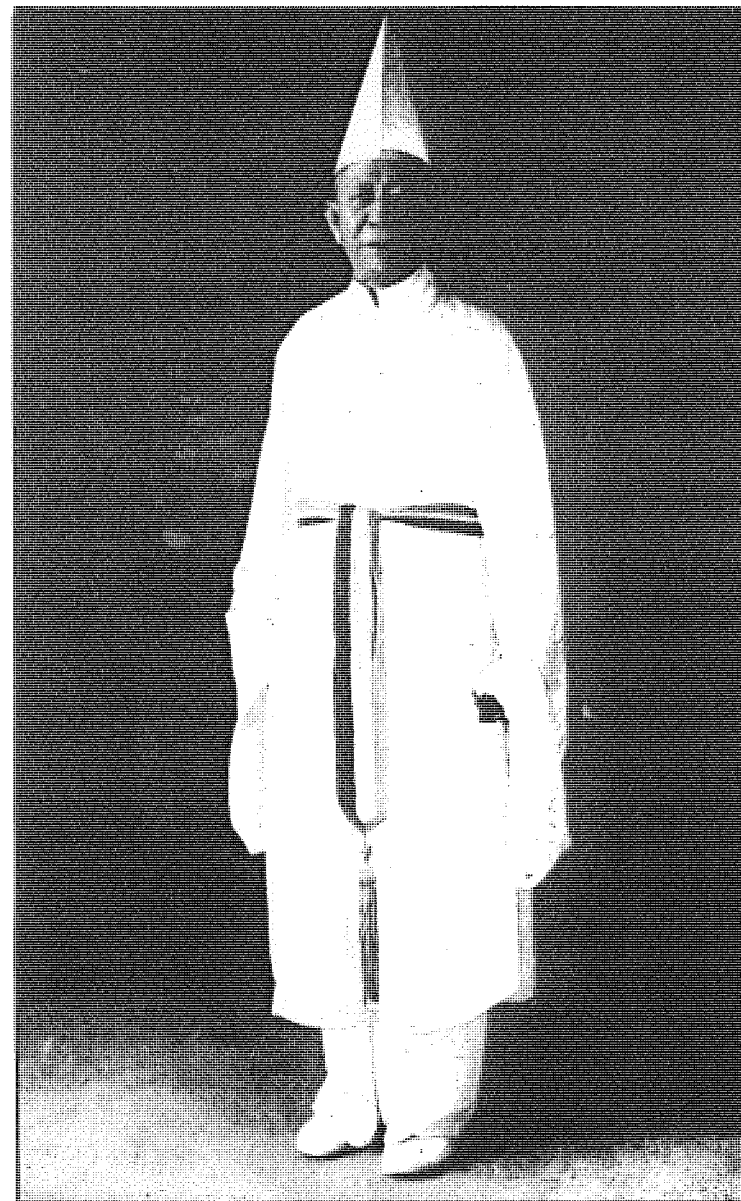
Dress of the Conservator
(for the small ceremony)



Dress of the Director in Secular Affairs
(for the big ceremony)



Dress of the Director in Religious Affairs
(for the big ceremony)



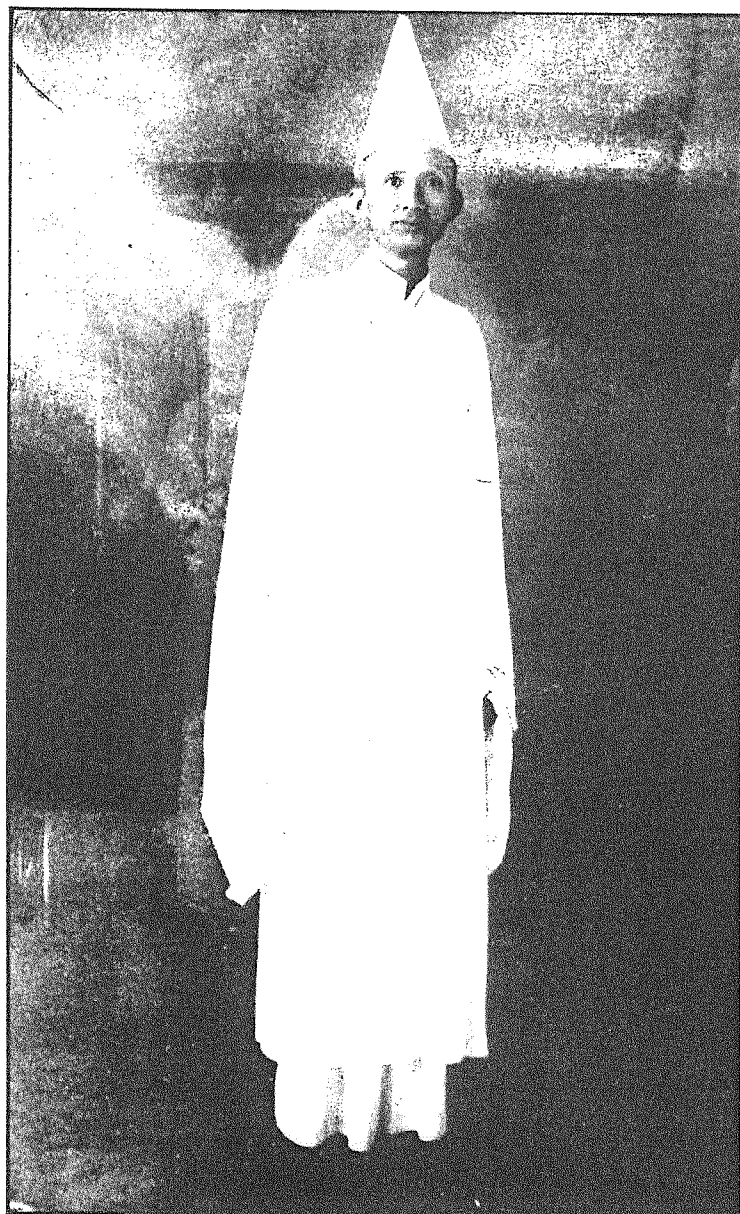
Dress of the Juridical Reformer
(for the big ceremony)



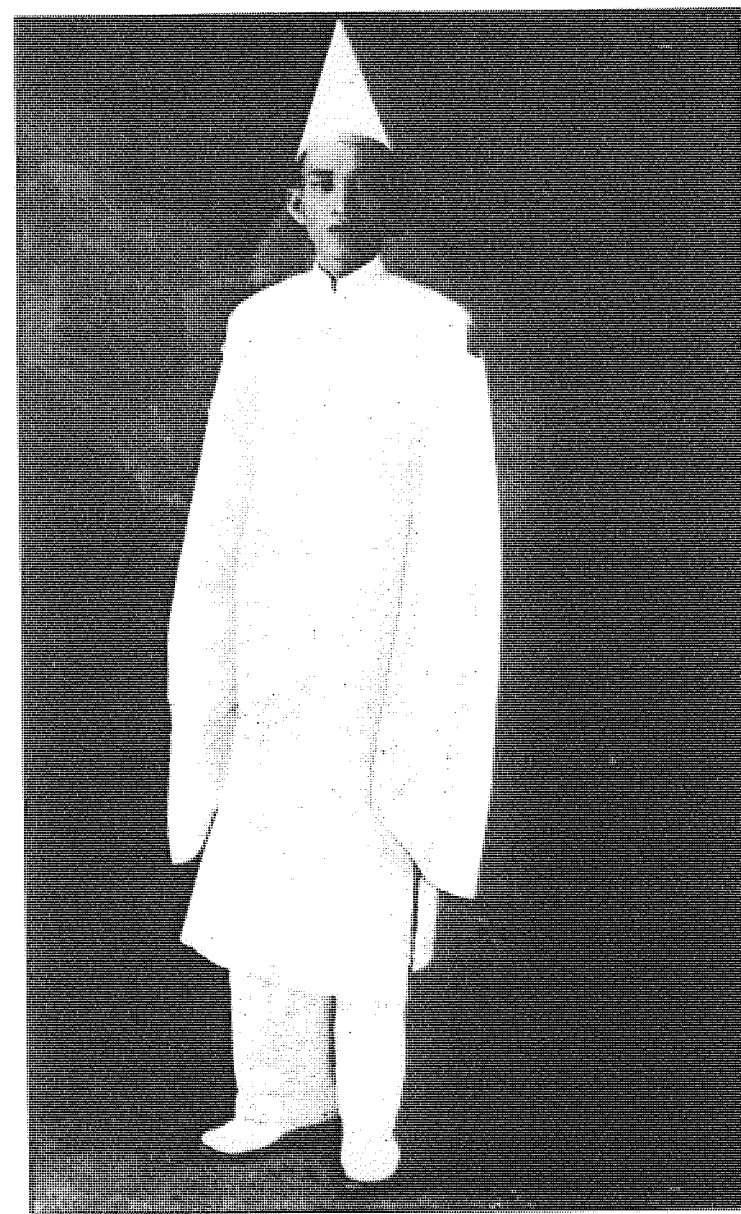
Dress of the Religious Legislator
(for the small ceremony)



Dress of the Historian (Thừa Sứ)
(for the big ceremony)

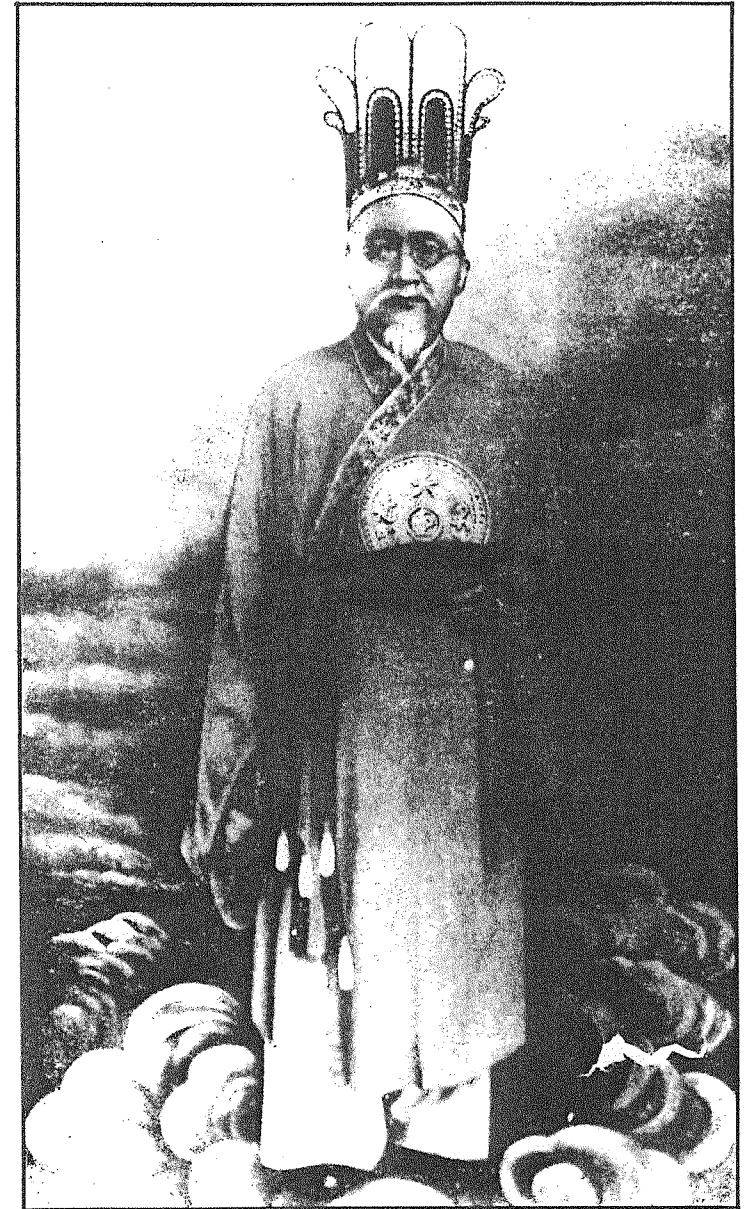


Dress of the Investigator (Truyền Trạng)
(for the big ceremony)



Dress of the Student of Law (Luật Sứ)
(for the big ceremony)

RELIGIOUS DRESS
OF THE DIGNITARIES OF THE
CỬU TRÙNG ĐÀI
(NINE SPHERE PALACE)



Dress of the Cardinal
(for the big ceremony)



Dress of the female Cardinal
(for the big ceremony)



Dress of the female Principal Archbishop
(for the big ceremony)



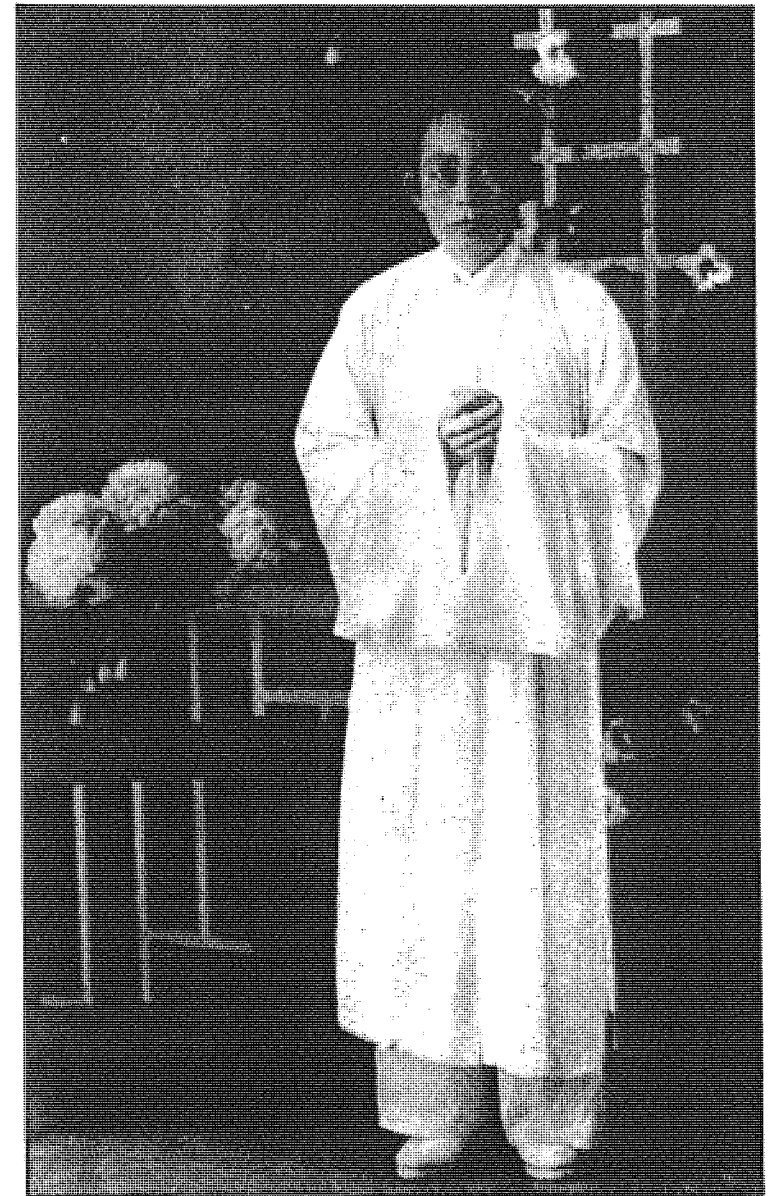
Dress of the Archbishop of the Taoist Branch
(for the big ceremony)



Dress of the female Bishop
(for the big ceremony)



Dress of the Priest
(for the big ceremony)



Dress of the Priestesse
(for the big ceremony)



Dress of the Student-Priest
(for the big ceremony)



Dress of the Student-Priestesse
(for the big ceremony)



Dress of the Chánh Trị Sự (Sub-dignitary)
(for the big ceremony)



Dress of the female Chánh Trị Sự
(for the big ceremony)



Dress of the Phó Trị Sự
(Subordinate to the Chánh Trị Sự)
(for the big ceremony)

Page 70



Dress of the female Phó Trị Sự
(Subordinate to the Chánh Trị Sự)
(for the big ceremony)

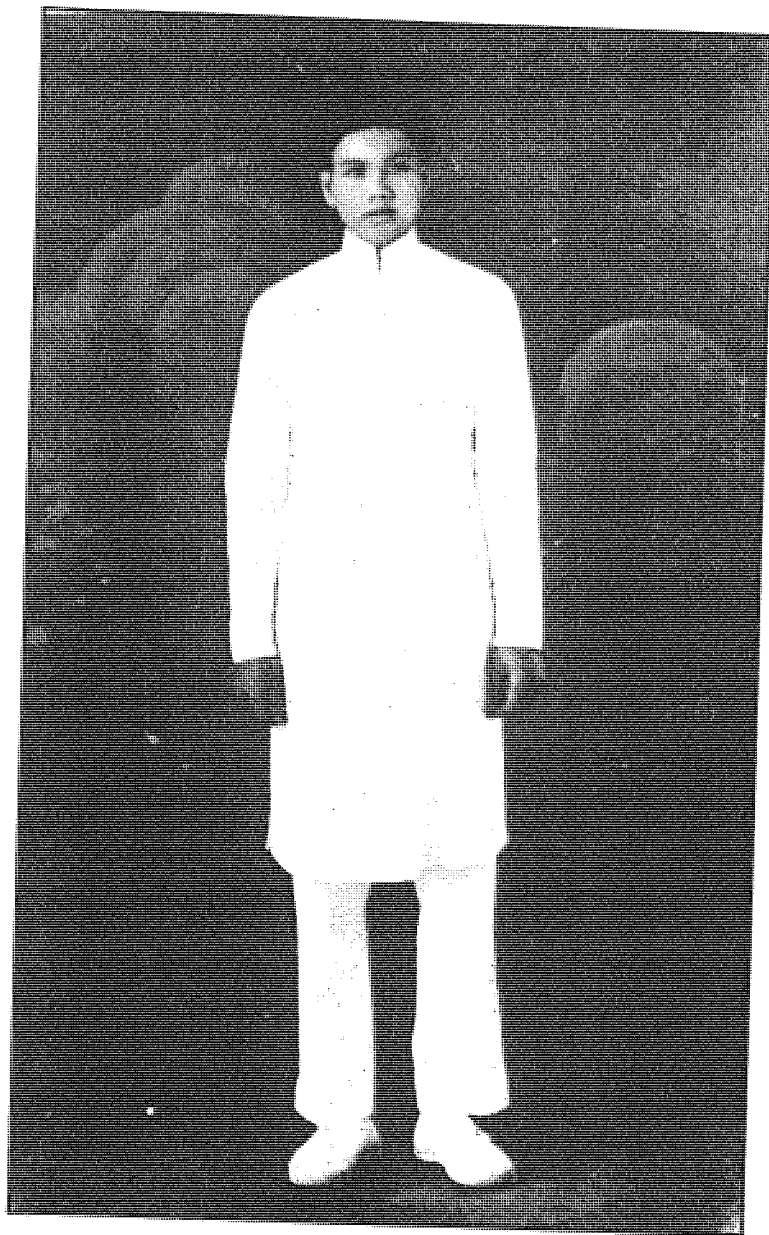
Page 71



Dress of the Thông Sự
(Subordinated Sub-dignitary of the Legislative Branch)
(for the big ceremony)



Dress of the female Thông Sự
(for the big ceremony)



Dress of a male follower



Dress of the female follower

CONCLUSION

CaoDaism recognizes God as creator of the universe, father of all beings, origin of all religions and who manifested Himself differently at different times and spaces. God has come again to the world and by spiritism has founded CaoDaism or Đại Đạo Tam Kỳ Phổ Độ, a novel religion that unifies five branches of the Great Way, Confucianism, Geniism, Christianity, Taoism, and Buddhism. It is a universal religion with two sects, exoterism and esoterism, which despite the differences in their way of practice, teach all human beings who have come from the same father who is God to live in harmony in universal fraternity, to cultivate themselves and to escape from the reincarnation cycle for the heavenly union with God in Nirvana.

Hùm-Đắc Bùì