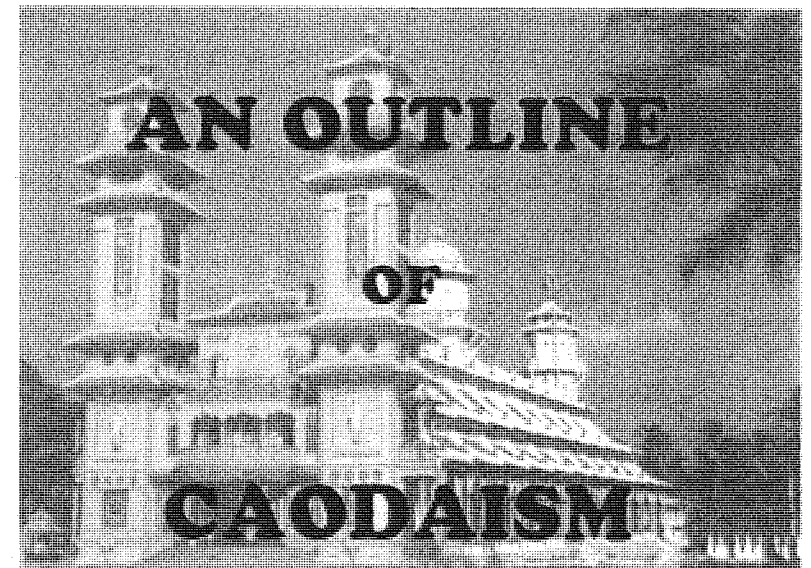


ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỲ PHỔ ĐỘ

THE THIRD REVELATION OF THE GREAT WAY



Publisher **CHÂN TÂM**
FIRST EDITION
1994

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LỜI GIỚI THIỆU

Tôi đã xem qua quyển "AN OUTLINE OF CAODAIISM" của một nhóm Tín Hữu Cao Đài ở hải ngoại biên soạn do nhà xuất bản Chân Tâm ấn hành năm 1994.

Sách biên soạn công phu, rõ ràng, sắp xếp khoa học với hình ảnh phong phú, đã giới thiệu khá đầy đủ những nét căn bản về Văn Hóa Cao Đài tại Việt Nam.

Đây là một tài liệu thật cần thiết bước đầu cho những ai muốn tìm hiểu Đạo Cao Đài, nhất là cho du khách ngoại quốc khi đến Việt Nam thăm viếng Tòa Thánh Tây Ninh, và các công trình văn hóa Cao Đài.

Thật là một việc làm đáng được khích lệ, tôi xin trân trọng giới thiệu.

*Tòa Thánh Tây Ninh, ngày 10 - 8 - 1994
Phối Sư Thượng Thơ Thanh*

INTRODUCTION

I have read this book "AN OUTLINE OF CAODAIISM" realized by a group of CaoDai disciples overseas and published by Chân Tâm publisher in 1994.

Carefully prepared, clearly presented, well organized, richly documented with pictures, this book has effectively outlined CaoDai culture in VietNam.

This book is indispensable especially for foreign tourists and for people who wish to learn about CaoDaiism.

This work merits recognition and I recommend it to you with pleasure.

*Holy See of TâyNinh, August 10-1994
ArchBishop Thượng Thơ Thanh*

INTRODUCTION

I, John Kofi Offeh, Barrister-at-Law, have read this stimulating Holy Book and found it very useful and helpful for the development of the human personality.

I have no hesitating at all in recommending it to anyone who wants to read it in order to develop his/her personality.

*John Kofi Offeh
Ghanaian - London, 16-10-94*

I'm honoured to have received and read this book.

Through this I have had the opportunity to learn about a new religion. The many lively photos in the book enable the reader to visualize the early development of this religion.

"ALL RELIGIONS ONE DOCTRINE" is the key to lasting peace for all mankind.

Many thanks for our special friendship.

Sincerely regards.

*Michael Roberts
Council
Manchester - England*

PREFACE

This English version "AN OUTLINE OF CAODAIISM" was initially realized in 1958 by the "TOURIST SERVICE OF THE TÂY NINH HOLY SEE" from informations given by Mr Hồ Tấn Khoa, Religious Conservator of the Heavenly Union Palace. Under poorly equipped condition, it was presented as a mimeography. In adapting to current needs when the Great Way is to be spread to all human beings in the world, this booklet is revised with the help of Cao Đài disciples from Việt Nam, Canada, Washington DC. and mostly California. Their contribution is greatly appreciated.

This booklet will give an outline of Cao Daiism in Tây Ninh where the Holy See is actually located. You will see the picture of the Cao Đài main temple in Tây Ninh, South Việt Nam, find the reason of the foundation of Cao Daiism, its history, organization, rituals, and particularly its principle "VẠN GIÁO NHẤT LÝ" or "ALL RELIGIONS ARE ONE". In recognizing that "ALL RELIGIONS ARE ONE", human beings would love each other as brothers and sisters of the same Father God. This would lead humanity to a life of harmony, love, peace and justice. You will also find some activities of different Cao Dai sects which were formed because of political situation in the early phase of Cao Daiism formation. In one of the most chaotic circumstances of human society, in a small underprivileged country, a Novel Religion was founded which can potentially bring love and peace to humanity.

Cao Đài Giáo Hải Ngoại

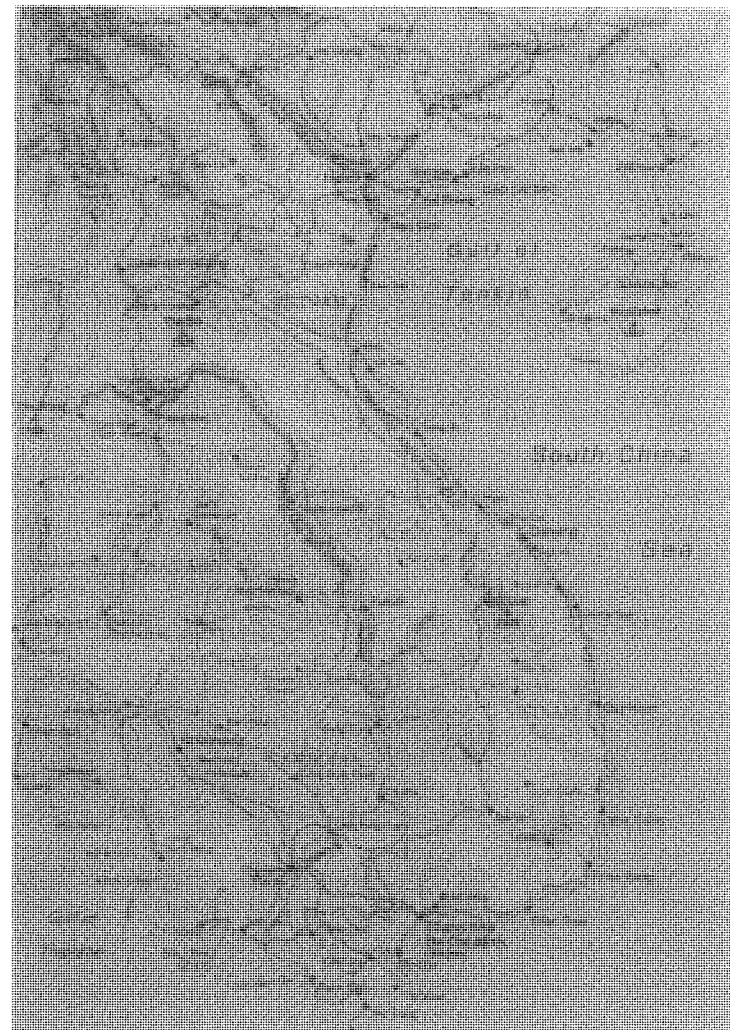
INTRODUCTION

*Humanity lives in sufferings
We suffer as a result of heart-breaking,
Ideological conflicts,
Cruel wars, effete ethics.
We suffer a terrible form of anguish
With a mixture of inferiority complexes,
Moral sterility, and spiritual void.
It is our duty to seek, by all means,
If not to end those sufferings,
Then at least to relieve them.
Religion is our supreme refuge,
Our safest recourse.
There is no true peace, happiness, or human harmony
Unless we restore the eternal light
That makes for serenity of the mind
And joy of the heart
In a fraternal design of life*

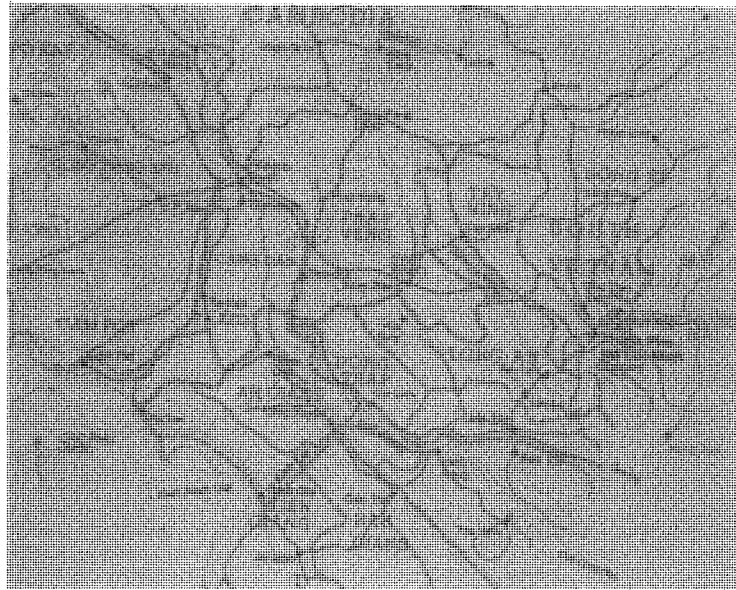
GOD'S MESSAGE

"Formerly, people lacked transportation and therefore did not know each other. I then founded at different epochs and in different areas, five branches of the Great Way : Religion of Humanity, 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, I have been suffering seeing that human beings for almost ten thousand years have been committing crimes and spending their life in Hell for ever. I have now firmly resolved to come Myself to show you the Way"

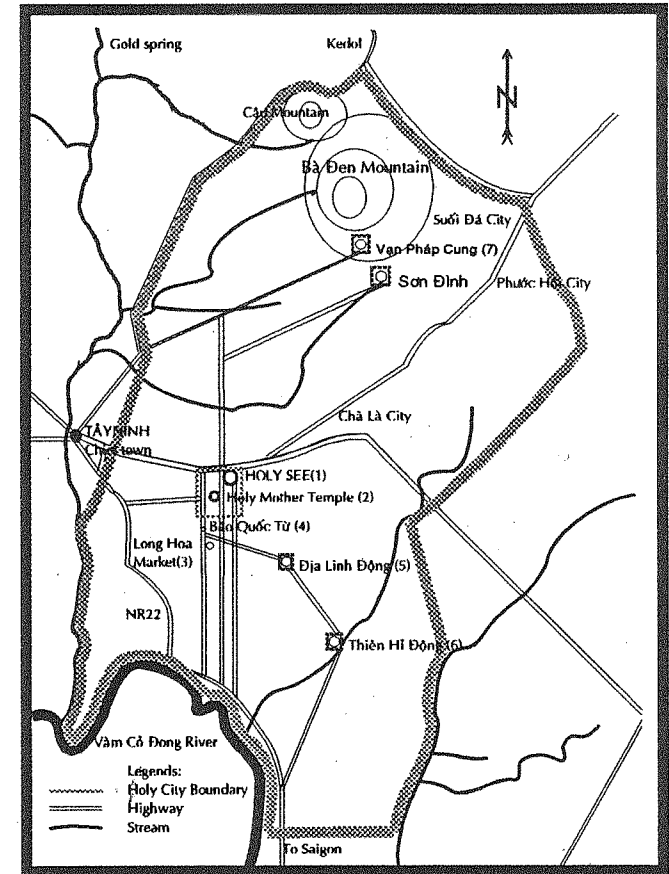
Message transmitted on 4.24.1926.



Map of VietNam



Top: Map of South East Asia
 Bottom: Map of South VietNam



The Holy See and its surroundings

THE HOLY SEE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

The Holy See : A region covered with forests transformed into the Holy City with a population of more than 100,000. The City is equipped with hospitals, markets and schools. It is divided into 20 administrative delegations headed each by a **LỄ Sanh** (Student Priest) assisted by a local committee.

1 - **The Great Divine Temple** is situated four km from the chief town of Tây Ninh

2 - **The Holy Mother's Temple**

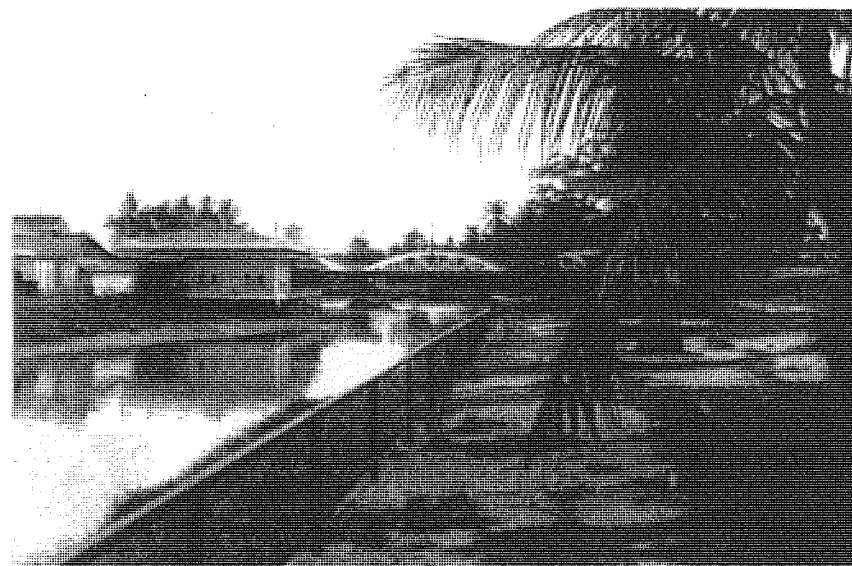
3 - **Long Hoa market** : 2.5 km from the Holy See

4 - **Báo Quốc Tử** : Monument consecrated to Vietnamese patriots.

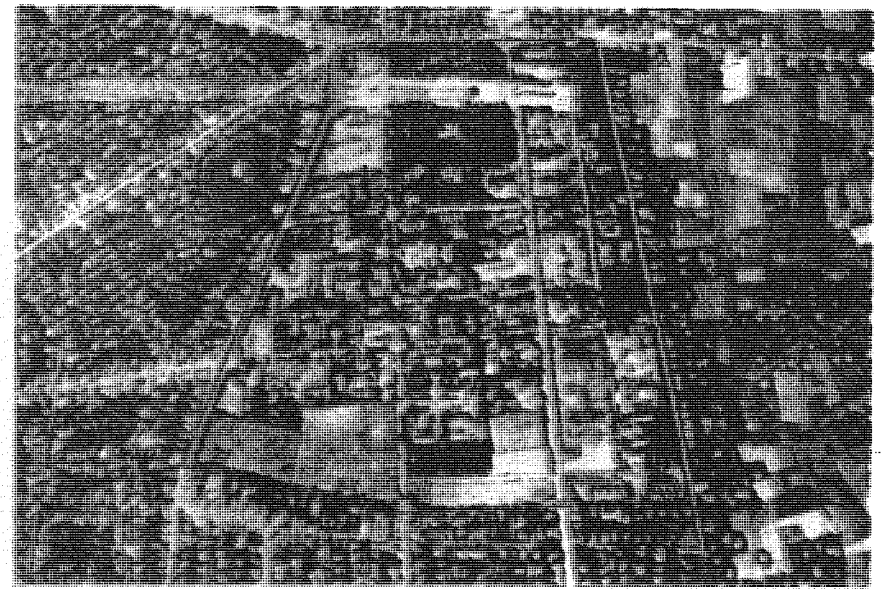
5 - **Trí Giác Cung in Địa Linh Động** : A place for meditation is situated here. It is under the control of the Charitable Body, four km from the Holy See.

6 - **Trí Huệ Cung in Thiên Hỷ Động** : Place of wisdom, a place where we communicate with Divine Spirits.

7 - **Vạn Pháp Cung in Nhơn Hoàng Động** : Meditation center.

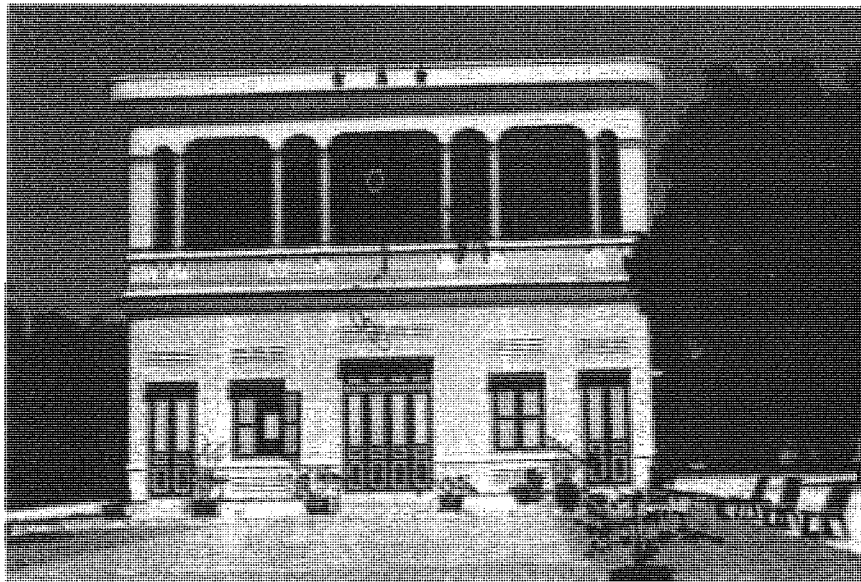
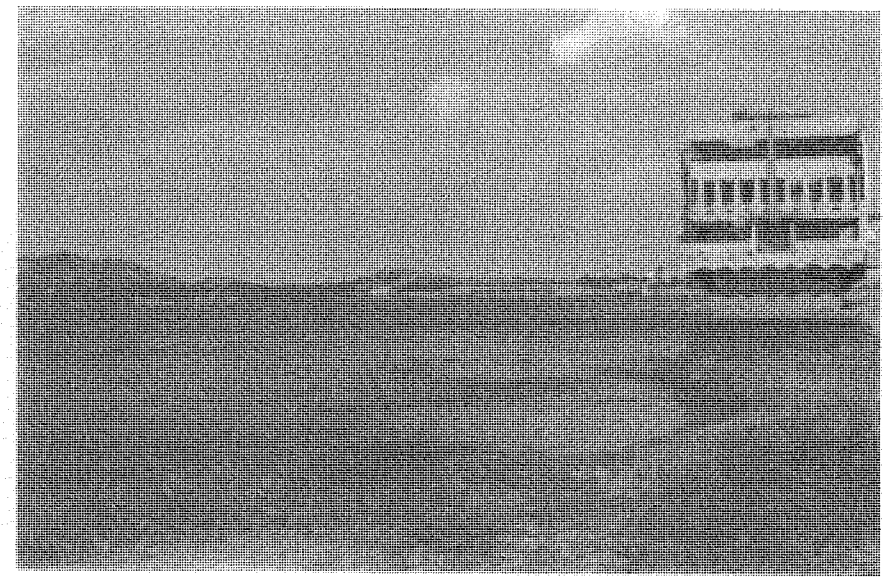


Top: Black Lady mountain
Bottom: Bridge to Tây Ninh town



Top: Lake Động Đình
Bottom: Báo Quốc Tử (Monument consacrated to VietNameese patriots)

Top : Aerial view of the Holy See Tây Ninh
Bottom: Aerial view of Long Hoa Market



Top : Thiên Hỉ Động (Place of Wisdom)
Bottom: Trí Huệ Cung (Meditation Hall)

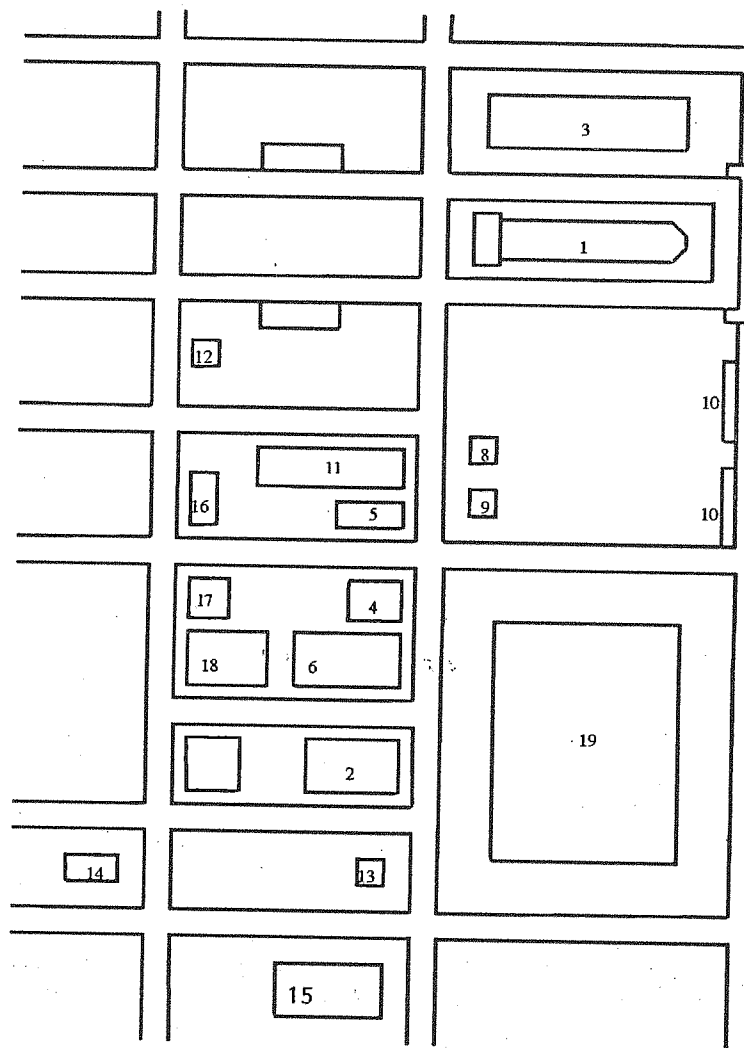
Top & Bottom: Dầu Tiếng dam

DẦU TIẾNG DAM

"DầuTiếng" Dam, a project of Asia economy development, was started in 1954 by Japanese Contractor Nippon-Koei. Because of the war, it was discontinued until after 1975. The dam construction was completed in 1985 by a Russian company. The dam is 60 feet wide, 90 feet high and 3,000 feet long. It creates a lake of 2,400 acres, about 216 feet above the sea level. It is constructed on ĐồngNai river about 30km from the Holy See on the East and has a capacity of 1.5 billions of cubic meters of water, supplying water to GòDầu (HiếuThiện), TrảngBàng (PhúĐức), HócMôn on the East, to HòaThành, ChâuThành, TânBiên, TânChâu on the West.

THE HOLY SEE AND ITS MONUMENTS

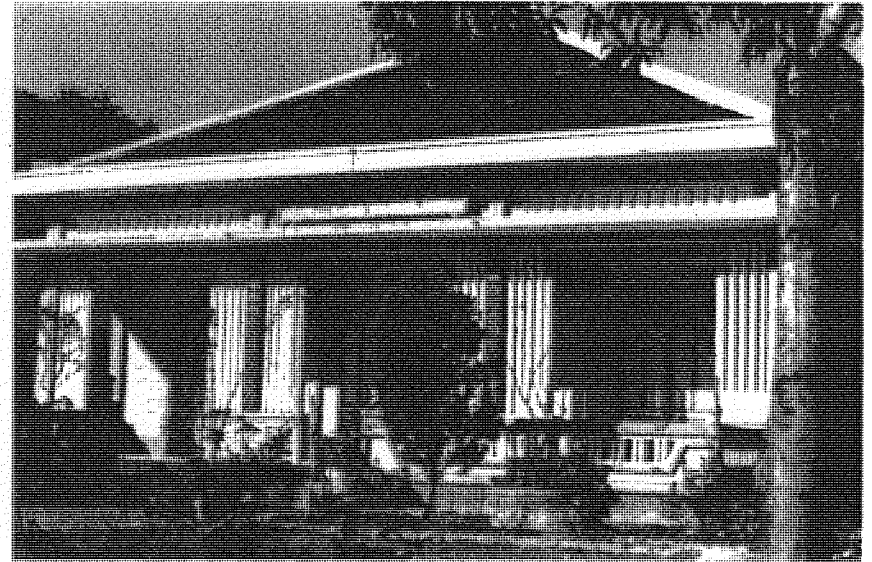
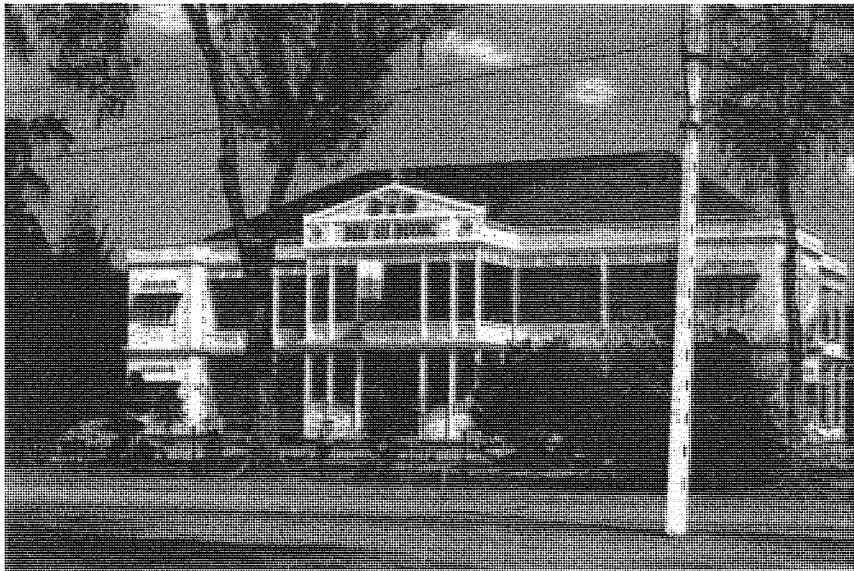
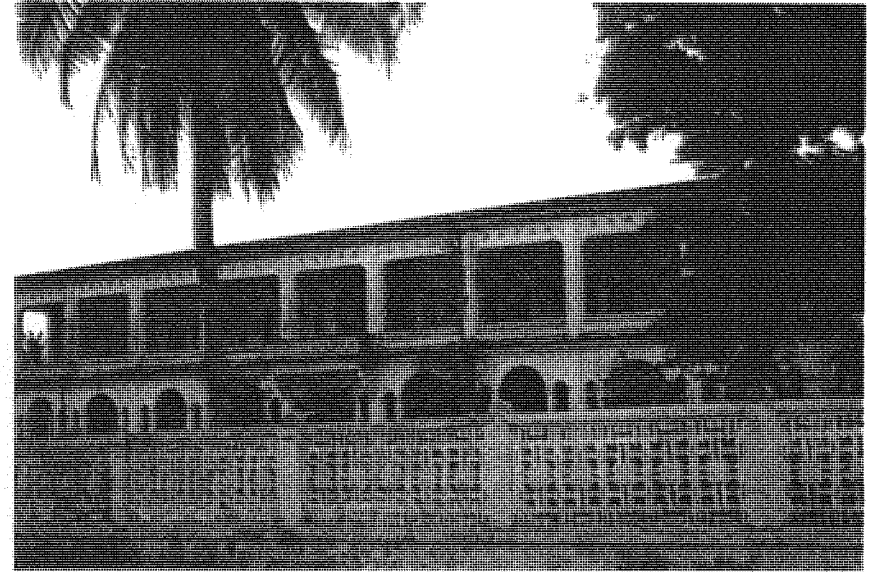
- 1 - The Holy See
- 2 - The Holy Mother's Temple
- 3 - Executive body office.
- 4 - Legislative body office.
- 5 - Pope's office.
- 6 - Ho Phap's office.
- 7 - Congregation hall.
- 8 - Female Cardinal's office.
- 9 - Lecturing hall.
- 10 - Refectory.
- 11 - Guest's house
- 12 - Tourist house.
- 13 - Foreign mission.
- 14 - Mortuary.
- 15 - Infirmary.
- 16 - Charitable body (Male)
- 17 - Charitable body (Female)
- 18 - Infirmary.
- 19 - Botanic Garden.



Map of the Holy See and its monuments

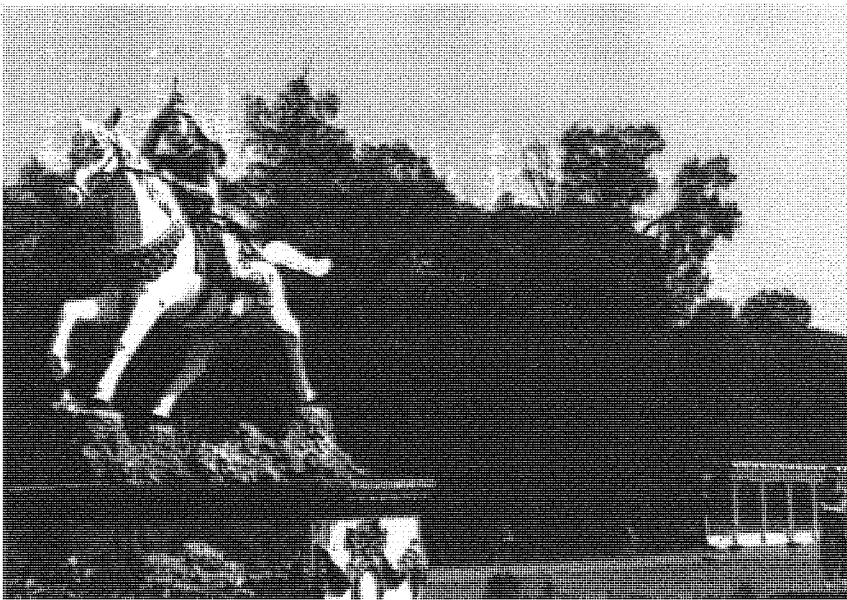
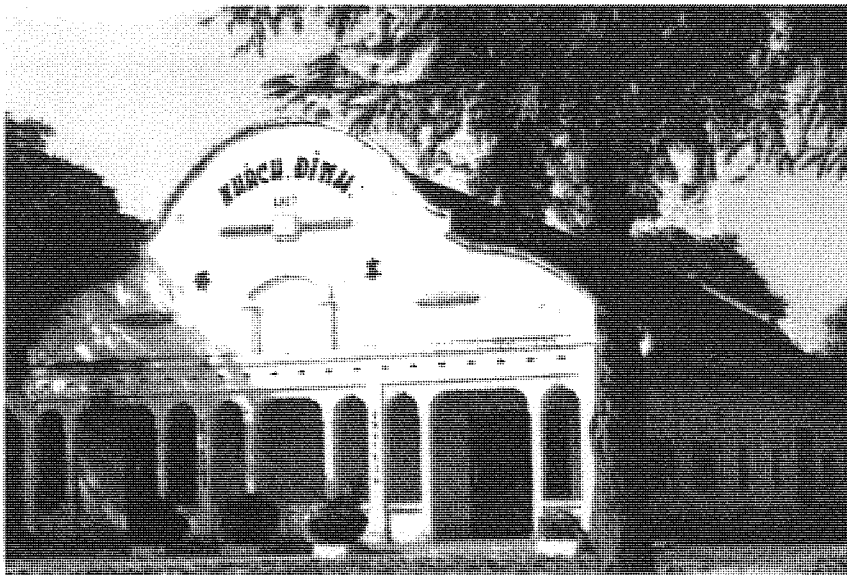


Top : Hộ Pháp's office
Bottom: Pope's office



Top : Female Cardinal's office
Bottom: Cardinal's office

Top: Office of the Executive Body
Bottom: Office of the Heavenly Union Place



Top: Mortuary
 Bottom: Statue of Sakya Muni
 leaving his father's royal Place seeking for the "Đạo"

1 - THE COMING OF GOD.

It was the middle of the year Ất Sửu (1925). A little group of Vietnamese scholars amused themselves by dabbling in spiritism (or divine writing). The questions they put to the Spirits received surprising answers. Their dead parents and friends showed themselves to discuss family affairs and to give counsel. These sensational revelations taught them of the existence of an occult world.

No doubts were raised concerning the nature of the conversations. First, because it was equally new to all, it was impossible to suspect one another of connivance; and later, because certain communications from the correspondent of the occult world revealed such lofty sentiments, scientific knowledge, and depth of philosophy, none among the participants could be capable of being the author.

One of the communicating Spirits became particularly noticeable by His high level of moral and philosophic teachings. He signed under the pseudonym "A Ầ Ậ" (A Ầ Ậ are the first three vowels of Vietnamese alphabet) and did not wish to reveal Himself despite the entreaties of His listeners.

Only on Christmas Eve, the 24th of December 1925, did this Spirit A Ầ Ậ finally reveal Himself as the "Supreme Being", coming under the name of CAODAI to teach truth to VietNam. He said :

"Rejoice this day, the 24th day of December. It is the anniversary of My coming in Europe to teach My doctrine. Your allegiance brings much satisfaction. This house will be filled with blessings. Time is about coming, wait for My orders. You will see more miracles which will lead you to further honor and love Me."

2 - THE PROPHECIES.

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 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.

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 TỈNH KINH" of Taoism there is an sentence "Thanh Tĩnh Kinh hữu di tích. Công viên quả mãn chỉ thọ đơn thơ. Thiên mạng phương khả truyền Đại Đạo Tam Kỳ Phổ Độ" which means : "Upon completion of your duties toward humanity and paying off all debts of your life (including the previous lifes), 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 novel religion, CaoDaism, in VietNam in 1926.

3 - A NOVEL RELIGION

The novel religion came out of its limited circle to spread among the people in 1926, after an official declaration to the Government on October 7, 1926 by a group of 247 disciples.

At the head is enthroned the Giáo Tông (Pope) whose titular is Saint Ly-Tai-Pé's spirit (Ly-Tai-Pé was for China what Homer was for Greece and Ossian was for Scotland).

The temporal Pope was Lê Văn Trung appointed by Spiritual Pope Ly-Tai-Pé in 1930 through spiritism. Since the creation of the religion, the late Lê Văn Trung (disincarnated in 1934) has been the only person who has received the title of Quyền Giáo Tông (Acting Pope). There has been no successor. Later, the Hộ Pháp Phạm Công Tắc became Superior of CaoDaism by the popular council and the sacerdotal council.

WHAT IS CAODAIISM?

CaoDaism believes that God has come and expressed Himself in a new Way, Đại Đạo Tam Kỳ Phổ Độ or CaoDaism in 1926 in VietNam. CaoDaism encompasses the philosophy of Confucianism, Geniism, Christianity, Taoism, and Buddhism. CaoDaism derives from the word CaoDai which literally means high palace or Supreme Palace (where God reigns). Figuratively, the word CaoDai is used as God's symbolic name. God, in adapting His teachings to the progress of the human spirit, manifested Himself through spiritism, and taught human beings that all religions despite their different forms are ONE, and that all human beings are brothers and sisters of the same FATHER GOD.

ĐẠO TAM KỲ PHỔ ĐỘ ? OR THE THIRD REVELATION OF THE GREAT WAY ?

The Third Revelation of the Great Way or CaoDaism is a novel religion encompassing the philosophy of Religion of Humanity, Geniism, Christianity, Taoism, and Buddhism. This religion was created by CaoDai or God in 1926 in VietNam. As father of the universe, CaoDai has communicated with human beings and 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 Religion of Humanity, 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, CaoDai 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 all different religions, and who manifested Himself differently in times and spaces.

GOD'S MESSAGE :

"Formerly, people lacked transportation and therefore did not know each other. I then founded at different epochs and in different areas, five branches of the Great Way : Religion of Humanity, Geniism, Christianity, Taoism and Buddhism, each based on the customs of the race. In present days, transportations 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 dicided 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. I have been suffering seeing that human beings for alomost ten thousand years, have been coomitting crimes and spending their life in Hell for ever. I have now firmly resolved to come Myself to show you the Way and to save you. . . "

Message transmitted on 4-24-1926

TABLE I

THE THREE REVELATORY PERIODS OF THE HISTORY OF RELIGION

	Religions	Founders
1st Revelation	Buddhism Taoism Christianity (Judaism)* Geniism Religion of Humanity	Niên Đẳng Cổ Phật Thái Thượng Đạo Quân Moses Phục Hy
2nd Revelation	Buddhism Taoism Christianity Geniism Religion of Humanity	Sakya Muni LaoTse. Jesus Christ, Mohammed, Khương Thái Công Confucius
3rd Revelation	CaoDaism	God or CaoDai

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

6 - SPIRITISM

Spiritism or Spiritualism involves receiving communication from the spirit world through some form of mechanical device like ouija board, table tipping (xây bàn), basket with the beak (ngọc cơ) . .

The latter is the most commonly used in CaoDaiism. 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 mediums 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 of about one inch long which does the writing. 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.

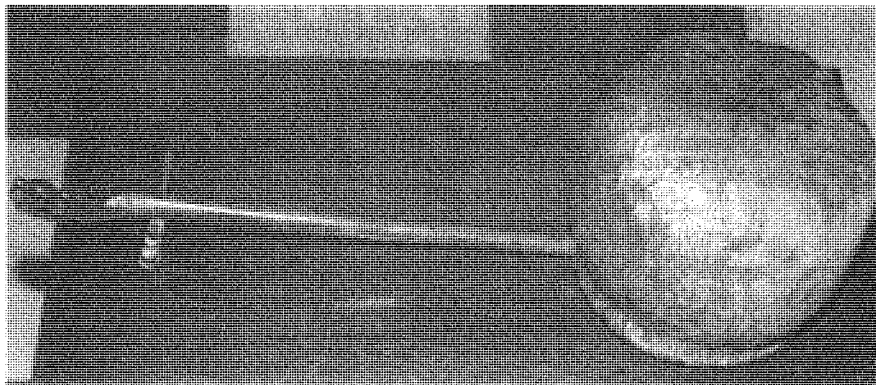
Sacred message : "Because of attachment of the physical body it is very difficult for the spirit of a human being to get out of his physical body. A human being, when he purifies himself well, may become enlightened and then, his spirit may get out of his body and travel in the universe until that time, this spirit may be allowed to come to see ME. 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 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 a pure and advanced spirit so that the seance will be miraculously 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 to humanity. The medium is considered as one of My assistants in the propagation of "the Great 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 hand write. This writing may not be correct. One should be cautious in setting up sessions and in distinguishing the authenticity of the writings".

After each spiritism seance, do not implement any instruction until receiving My orders.

Message transmitted on January 3rd, 1926.



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

Bottom : Ngọc Cơ, basket with beak

7 - WHO IS GOD ? WHO CREATED GOD ?

In Đạo Đức Kinh, Chapter I, Lao Tse says :

*"The Đạo that can be told is not the universal Đạo
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".*

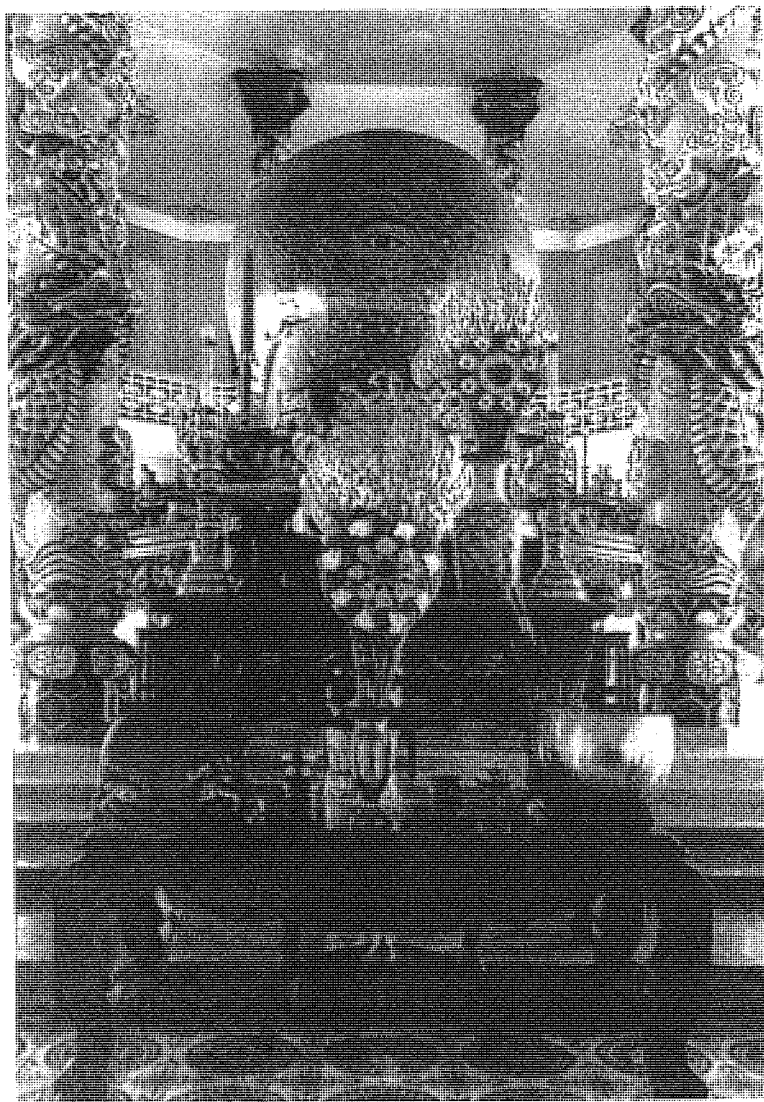
Here, the word Đạo is temporarily used to indicate an absolute principle which has no name and which is God. According to CaoDaism, at the beginning, there is nothing but one principle, one monad, no heaven, no earth, no universe. This monad is Đạo or God. God has no name, no form, no color, no beginning,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

HOW DOES CAODAISM 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 the Universal and Individual Conscience.

God's message :

*"The Eye is the principle of the heart,
From which comes the light which is master.
Light is the spirit,
The spirit itself is God.
God is Me".*



Divine Eye (Thiên Nhãn)

8 - THE PRINCIPLE OF CAODAISM

CaoDaism's principle is "VẠN GIÁO NHẤT LÝ" or "ALL RELIGIONS ARE ONE"

According to CaoDaism, all religions come from one origin, God, who manifested Himself differently through times and spaces.

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

God's message :*"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 a 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 the 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, CaoDaiism 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 teaching that shall enable them, by a process of spiritual evolution, to reach the ecstasies of felicity.

In brief, all humanity are in reality brothers and sisters of the same FATHER GOD and all religions, despite their different forms, are ONE. People should no more see each other different, love and help each other as brothers and sisters of the same family. This would lead humanity to a life of harmony, love, peace and justice.

9 - ORGANIZATION OF CAODAISM

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

A - The spiritual power : This power is seated at the Octagonal Palace (Bát Quái Đài) 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

Ly Tai Pe, Taoism

Quan Thánh Đế Quân, Confucianism.

B - The earthly power : This power consists of the Nine Sphere Palace (Cửu Trùng Đài) or the executive body headed by the Pope (Giáo Tông) and of the Heavenly Union Palace (Hiệp Thiên Đài) or legislative body headed by the Hộ Pháp. To avoid dictatorship, God committed the earthly power into executive and legislative bodies. The Nine Sphere Palace is in charge of the administration of the religion. The Heavenly Union Palace communicates with Cao Dai via seances and has the right of jurisdiction and of control.

Besides the two above bodies, there is also the Charitable Body placed under the supervision of the Hiệp Thiên Đài.

10 - THE STRUCTURE OF CAO DAISM EARTHLY STRUCTURE OF CAO DAISM

Hiệp Thiên Đài Legislative body	number	Cửu Trùng Đài Executive body	number
Hộ Pháp 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		Đầu Sư Cardinal	3
Tiếp Dẫn Đạo Nhơn Instructor	unlimited	Phối Sư Archbishop	36
Chưởng Ấn Chancelor	unlimited		
Cải Trạng Lawyer	unlimited	Giáo Sư Bishop	72
Giám Đạo General Inspector	unlimited		
Thừa Sử Historian	unlimited	Giáo Hữu Priest	3,000
Truyền Trạng Investigator	unlimited		
Sĩ Tải Archivist	unlimited	Lễ Sanh Student Priest	unlimited
Luật Sự Student of law	unlimited	Chức Việc Subdignitaries	unlimited
Tín Đồ Followers	unlimited	Tín Đồ Followers	unlimited

The first step of a CaoDaist is to become a follower (Tín Đồ). He will enter either the Cửu Trùng Đài or the Hiệp Thiên Đài in becoming dignitaries

THE HIỆP THIÊN ĐÀI THE HEAVENLY UNION PALACE

The Hiệp Thiên Đài is the sacred place where God manifests Himself to give spiritual direction to the Great Way and where the Pope communicates with the thirty six Heavens, the three thousand worlds, the sixty seven planets and the Ten Courts of Hell to ask for the salvation of humanity. It is under the authority of the Hộ Pháp (Head of the legislative body). He is assisted by the Thượng Sanh (Director in secular affairs) and by the Thượng Phẩm (Director in spiritual affairs)

The twelve zodiacal dignitaries.

Under the religious branch headed by the Thượng Phẩm there are :

Bảo Đạo : Religious Conservator
Hiển Đạo : Religious Renovator
Khai Đạo : Religious Reformer
Tiếp Đạo : Religious Legislator

Under the legislative branch headed by the Hộ Pháp there are :

Bảo Pháp : Juridical Conservator
Hiển Pháp : Juridical Renovator
Khai Pháp : Juridical Reformer
Tiếp Pháp : Juridical Legislator

Under the secular branch headed by the Thượng Sanh there are :

Bảo Thế : Temporal Conservator
Hiển Thế : Temporal Renovator
Khai Thế : Temporal Reformer
Tiếp Thế : Temporal Legislator

These 12 zodiacal dignitaries are assisted by 12 technical academicians :

Bảo Huyền Linh Quân (Theosophy), Bảo Tinh Quân (Astronomy), Bảo Cô Quân (Orphanage), Bảo Văn Pháp Quân (Culture), Bảo Học Quân (Education), Bảo Y Quân (Health), Bảo Vật Quân (Sciences and Industries), Bảo Sĩ Quân (Literature), Bảo Sanh Quân (Social), Bảo Nông Quân (Agriculture), Bảo Công Quân (Public works), Bảo Thương Quân (Economics).

Under the secular branch, there is BAN THẾ ĐẠO. BAN THẾ ĐẠO is a body which consists of professional specialists among followers. They are serving the society with their professional talent. To be admitted to the secular body, they have to be introduced to the Sacerdotal Council by two dignitaries. The admission is accepted only after investigation by the Sacerdotal Council and approval by the Hộ Pháp or the Spiritual Pope. The BAN THẾ ĐẠO has ranks as follows : Hiền Tài, Quốc Sĩ, Đại Phu and Phu Tử. Members are classified according to the importance of their function in secular life. After completion of their duty toward the society, they may ask for investiture as a dignitary.

THE CỬU TRÙNG ĐÀI THE EXECUTIVE BODY OR NINE SPHERE PALACE

The executive body is responsible of the administration of the earthly power in CaoDaim. Its hierarchy consists of nine ranks,:

Giáo Tông	Pope
Chưởng Pháp	Censor Cardinal
Đầu Sư	Cardinal
Phối Sư	Archbishop
Giáo Sư	Bishop
Giáo Hữu	Priest
Lễ Sanh	Student Priest
Chức Việc	Subdignitaries
Tín Đồ	Followers

THE THREE BRANCHES OF THE EXECUTIVE BODY

MALE DIGNITARIES

For male dignitaries of the executive body, from the rank of *Chưởng Pháp* (Censor Cardinal) to that of *Lễ Sanh* (Student Priest), each echelon is subdivided into 3 branches corresponding to the 3 principal religions : Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism.

a - Buddhist branch (Phái Thái)

Whose dignitaries are dressed in yellow, the color of virtue.

b - Taoist branch (Phái Thượng)

Whose dignitaries wear azure, the color of tolerance, pacifism.

c - Confucianist branch (Phái Ngọc)

Whose dignitaries are clothed in red, symbol of authority.

The branch which the dignitary belongs to may be only revealed by God.

These 3 branches form the tricolored banner of CaoDaim.

The dignitaries of the same echelon, either Confucianist or Taoist or Buddhist have the same attributes.

Suppose Mr John Smith is appointed Student Priest. By divine revelation, he belongs to the Buddhist branch (Phái Thái), his religious name would be "Thái John Thanh" and he wears a yellow gown. Mr Scott belonging to the Taoist branch, would bear the name of "Thượng Scott Thanh" and wear an azure gown. Mr Burne belonging to the Confucianist branch would bear the name of "Ngọc Burne Thanh" and dress in red.

During the papacy of the Spiritual Pope LY TAI PÉ, all the dignitaries of the executive body bear the particle "THANH" (limpid, pure) after their names. The dignitaries will conserve his religious name whatever the rank he may be except for the Cardinals.

Subdignitaries and followers are dressed in white, symbol of purity. The males wear black turban which means that they still have social and family life.

FEMALE DIGNITARIES :

There is no branch for female dignitaries. They all dress in white. Each of them would bear only the particle "HƯƠNG" (Perfume) before her maiden name (ex. Hương Margaret) whatever the rank she may be.

NOMINATIONS AND PROMOTIONS

Nominations and promotions in the episcopal hierarchy are first submitted to the Popular Council (Hội Nhơn Sanh), made of Student Priest, Subdignitaries, and Followers. Then, they are submitted to the Sacerdotal Council (Hội Thánh), made up of Priests, Bishops, Archbishops and Principal Archbishops. They are also submitted to the High Council (Thượng Hội), made up of Cardinals, Censor Cardinals and the Pope, and finally must be approved by God or by the Spiritual Pope LY TAI PÉ. Sometimes, a follower may be directly appointed by God through spiritism.

Female dignitaries reach the rank of Cardinal only.

THE CONSTITUTION OF CAODAIM

The regime is fundamentally democratic. Three councils govern the Holy See :

a - Popular Council (made up of Student Priest, Subdignitaries and representatives of followers in the ratio of 1 delegate per 500 members) makes plan for the future.

b - Sacerdotal Council (made up of Priests, Bishops, Archbishops and Principal Archbishops) examines the plan of the Popular Council.

c - High Council (made up of Cardinals, Censor Cardinals and the Pope). Finally the plan is submitted to this Council for approbation.

When these three councils are not one, the plan must be submitted to God who arrives at a decision.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

A - CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - (at the Holy See)

Three Cardinals of the executive body control the administration of the religion. They are assisted by 3 Principal Archbishops in charge of 9 religious ministries (Cửu Viện) according to their branches :

a - The Principal Archbishop of the Buddhist branch (Phái Thái) takes care of Hộ Viện (Finances), Lương Viện (Supply), Công Viện (Public Works).

b - The Principal Archbishop of the Taoist branch (Phái Thượng) takes care of Học Viện (Education), Y Viện (Health), Nông Viện (Agriculture)

c - The Principal Archbishop of the Confucianist branch (Phái Ngọc) takes care of Lại Viện (Interior), Lễ Viện (Rites) and Hoà Viện (Justice)

B - PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

The provincial administration consists of :

a - Region (consisting of several provinces) headed by a Khâm Trấn Đạo (chief of region) ranking among the Giáo Sư (Bishop)

b - Province headed by a Khâm Châu Đạo (chief of province) ranking among the Giáo Hữu (Priest). This latter is placed under the control of the chief of region.

c - Delegation headed by a Đầu Tộc Đạo (chief of delegation) ranking among the Lễ Sanh (Student Priest). This latter is placed under the control of the chief of province.

d - Village, unit of administration, headed by a Đầu Hương Đạo, chief of village who is a Chánh Trị Sư (Subdignitary). He is assisted by a Phó Trị Sư representing the executive body and a Thông Sự representing the legislative body. A local committee helps them.

11 - CAODAI RITUALS

During ritual services, followers join their 2 hands together.

The follower puts 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 "TÝ") and the other fingers wrapping around the thumb. This symbolizes Heaven (positive logos) 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 "DÂN"). This symbolizes the human beings (negative logos) being created in the year of the tiger. CaoDaiism was founded in 1926 corresponding to the year of 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.

Besides, the teachings of the prophets of the first period (Nhiên Đấng Cổ Phật, Moses . . .) are compared to the buds, those of the prophets of the second period (Jesus Christ, Sakya Muni, Confucius . . .) to the flowers. (so we remark that religious men of this period joined flat hands representing flower petals). At last the teachings of CaoDaiism are compared to the fruit, symbol of reproduction, fructification (with hands so joined as to form fruit, both thumbs being hidden inside).

There are 4 daily ceremonies devoted to the worship of CaoDai in temple as well as in private homes.

Tý thời : between 11 PM and 1 AM

Mão thời : between 5 AM and 7 AM

Ngọ thời : between 11 AM and 1 PM

Dậu thời : between 5 PM and 7 PM

High masses are celebrated at the temple at midnight on the 14th and 30th days of each month (lunar month).

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 hand joined together (as described on page . . .) 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 CaoDai, 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 adepts make spoken greetings to CaoDai, the three lords of the earth (representing three main religions) and 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 Ma Ha 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 adepts bow at the end of each prayer.

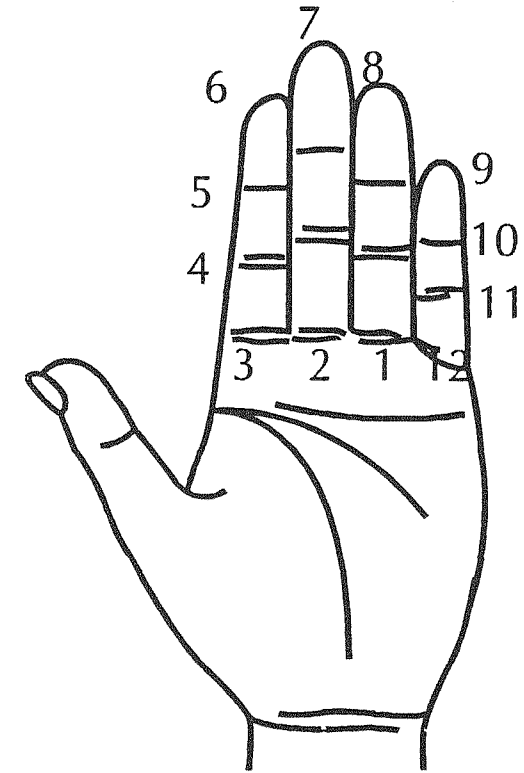
5 - Chants are next sung for incense offering.

6 - Chants are sung for prayer opening.

7 - Prayers are sung to CaoDai, 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).



Cycle of 12 lunar years and their positions on the hand

According to the lunar calendar, each year corresponds to an animal :

1 - Year Tý : Mouse

2 - Year Sửu : Buffalo

3 - Year Dần : Tiger

4 - Year Mão : Cat

5 - Year Thìn : Dragon

6 - Year Tỵ : Snake

7 - Year Ngọ : Horse

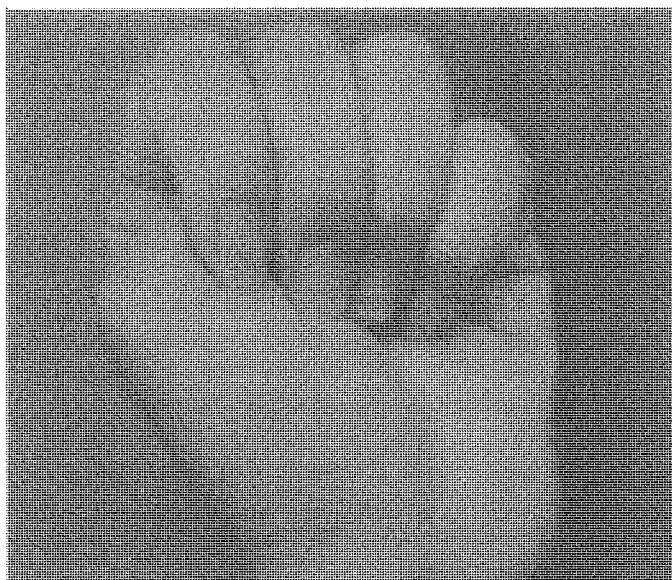
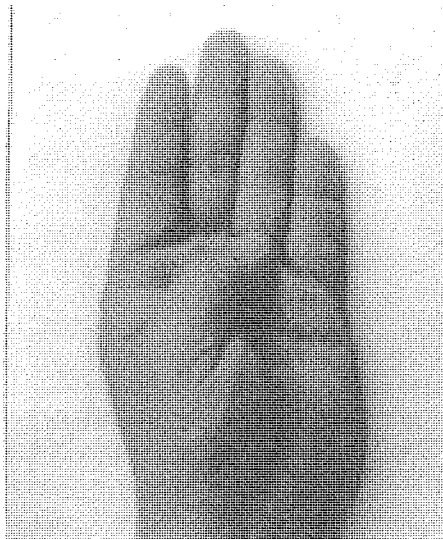
8 - Year Mùi : Goat

9 - Year Thân : Monkey

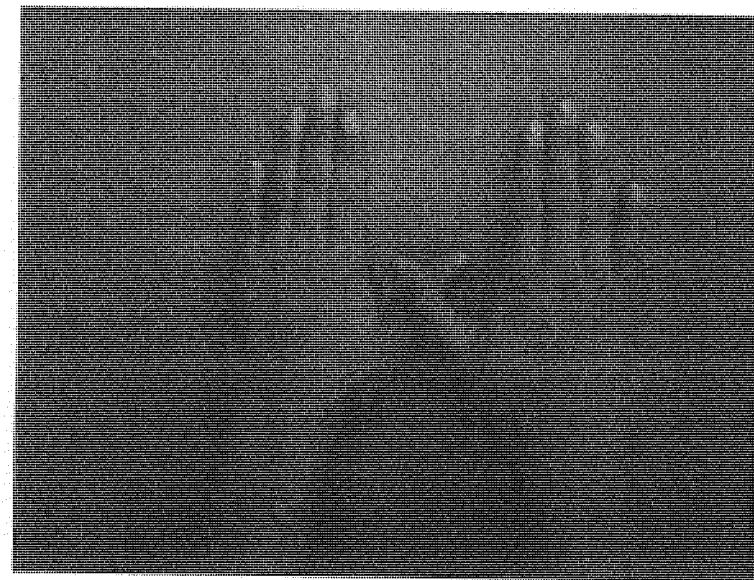
10 - Year Dậu : Rooster

11 - Year Tuất : Dog

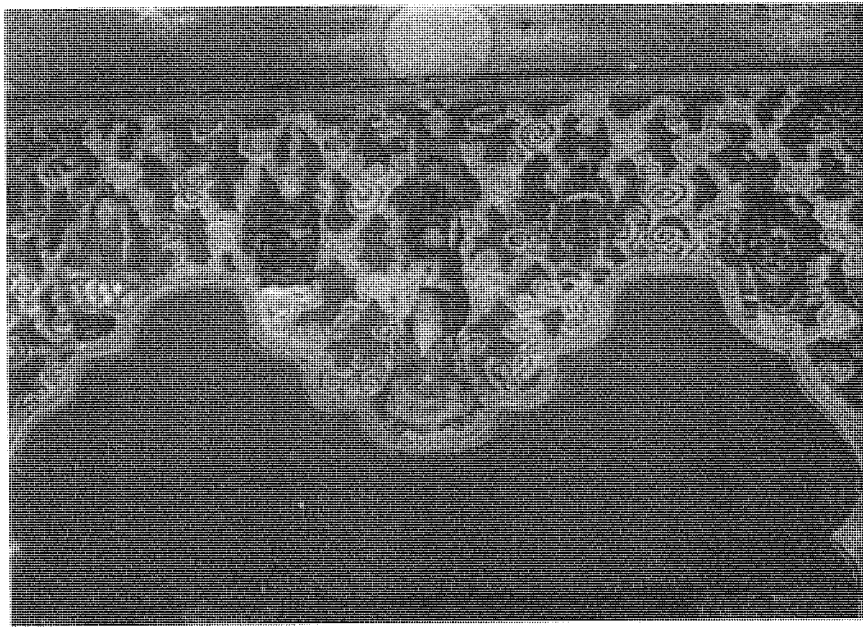
12 - Year Hợi : Pig



Position of fingers of left hand



Top : Position of two hands joined
Bottom : Position of two hands on the floor
when the follower prostrates self before the altar



**FRONTON ABOVE GOD'S ALTAR
(Interior of the temple)**

Lao Tse	Sakya Muni	Confucius
(1) Bodhisattva Kwan Yin	Spiritual Pope Ly Tai Pe	Quan Công
	(2) Jesus Christ	
	Khương Thái Công (Chief of Genies)	

(1) Bodhisattva Kwan Yin, Ly Tai Pe and Quan Cong are the present Spiritual Governors of this world. Ly Tai Pe was for China what Homer was for Greece or Ossian was for Scotland. He reformed Chinese literature under the 13th dynasty Tang.

(2) Jesus Christ is a hyphen between Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. He is placed below Far Eastern Divinities, because he came down on earth many centuries later.

ARRANGEMENT OF GOD'S ALTAR

		1		
	3	2	4	
5	6	7	8	9
10		11		12

1 - Divine Eye
 2 - Lamp
 3 - Fruit
 4 - Flowers
 5 - Cup of tea
 6, 7, 8 - Three glasses of wine
 9 - Cup of pure water
 10, 12 - Candle
 11 - Vase for 5 sticks of incense

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 three offerings :

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

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

Tea : representing the spirit (Thần)

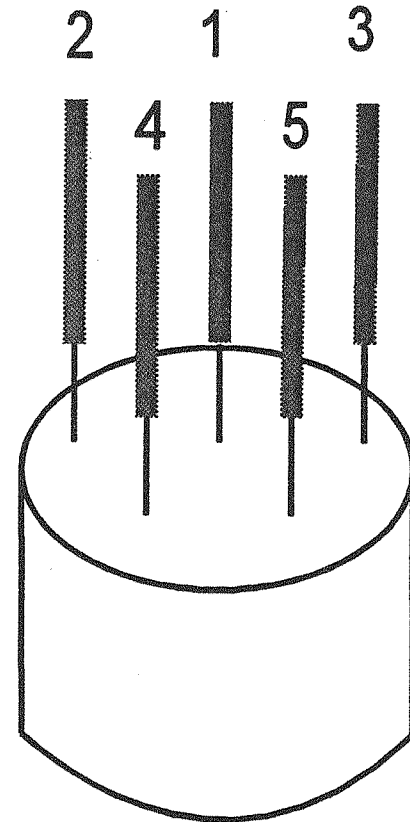
They are the three best elements of human beings.

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.

At each ceremony, the 5 sticks of incense are fixed into the vase following this above order 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.



Vase for 5 sticks of incense

EXPLANATION OF THE 5 LEVELS OF INITIATION :

To be admitted to the threshold of initiation, the first condition for the worshipper is purity in all its forms : purity of body, action, language and thought. This is the level of purity.

Once the threshold is passed, he sets himself to meditation. By this spiritual exercise the believer whose thoughts and feelings stand aloof from the material world, lifts his soul toward God. The human soul seeks to identify itself with the universal soul. Truth will shine little by little into the worshipper's spirit which will no longer be lured by anything in the material world. This is the level of meditation.

At the highest degree of ascension, he feels in his being the full wakening of the superior knowledge that permits him to perceive all eternal truth and embrace without the least effort, all the past and the future. This is the level of wisdom.

In this state of supreme wisdom, he can contemplate without being dazzled, the Divine Light, a Light that purifies, illumines and beautifies. This is the level of universal knowledge.

Before him, the way of salvation is now open :
The Karmic Liberation.

12 - SACRAMENTS

1 - Baptism

2 - Marriage with previous publication of ban. Concubinage forbidden. But when the first wife has no issue, the husband might marry a second wife with the consent of the former. Divorce forbidden.

3 - Cure.

13 - CAODAI ESOTERISM

Any follower who can observe ten days or more of vegetarian diet per month may be accepted to the meditation cell for meditation training and practice. After 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. There are three meditation centers in Tây Ninh : Vạn Pháp Cung, Trí Giác Cung, and Trí Huệ Cung

14 - DUTIES OF THE DISCIPLES

For the followers : The CaoDaist shall obey rules and regulations of CaoDaim

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 (be obscene)
- d - Do not get drunk
- e - Do not sin by word

3 - Participate in ritual acts of devotion and worship to Cao Dai : There are four daily ceremonies at 6:00AM, noon, 6:00PM, and midnight. A minimum of one service per day at home is required.

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

Followings 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.

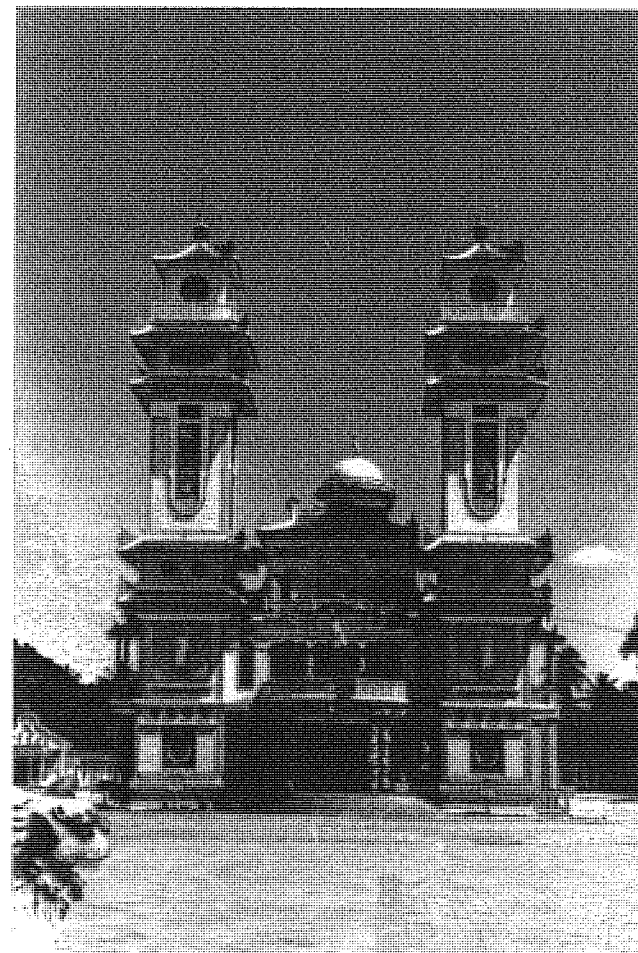
d - Be polite to every body, to the superior as well as to the subordinate in teaching and counseling. Respect people even in their absence. Try to conciliate all quarrels. Do not abuse your authority to obstruct talented people.

15 - THE HOLY SEE

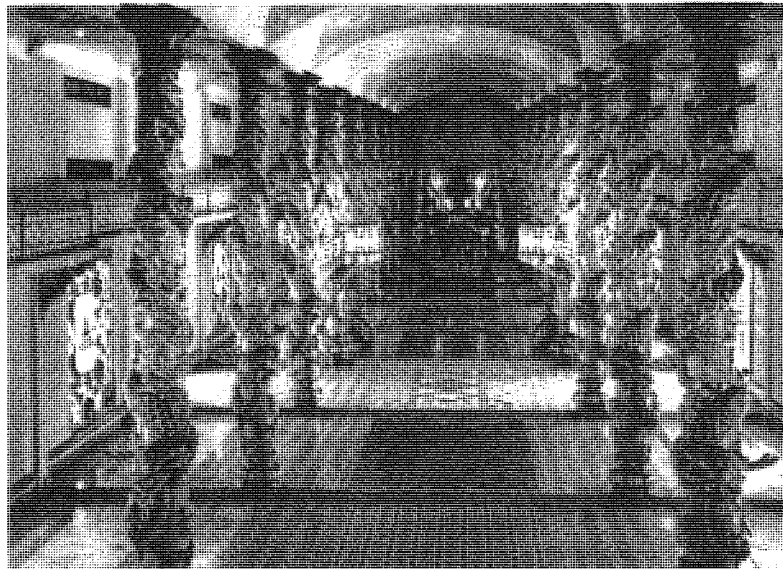
(Started in 1933 - Achieved in 1941)

The Holy See shows the fusion of the three principal religious architectures : The Buddhism is marked by its horizontality, the Catholicism by its verticality, and the Islamism by its sphericity.

The Temple with its audacious conception and scope was realized by H.H. PHẠM CÔNG TẮC under the most unfavorable circumstances. He was inspired by God and the Spiritual Pope LY TAI PÉ. H.H. PHẠM CÔNG TẮC is neither an architect, nor an engineer.

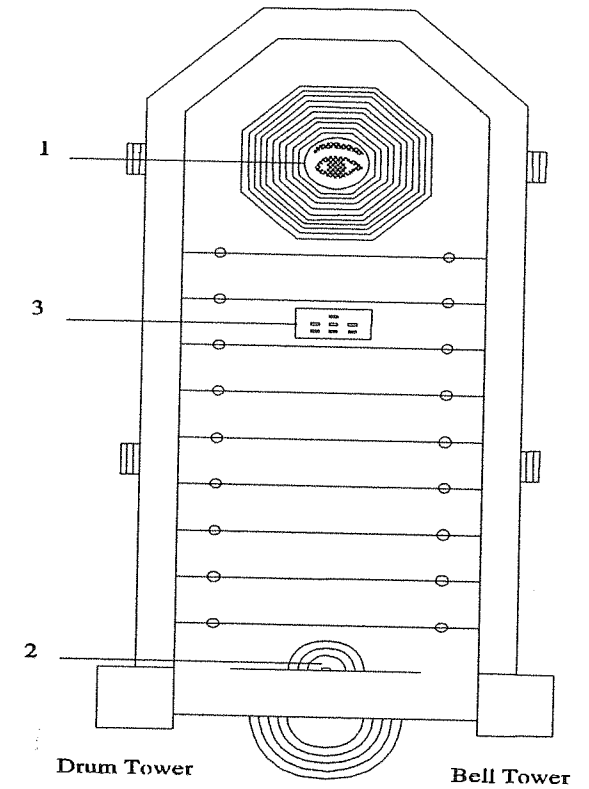


The Holy See front view



Top: The Holy See (Side view)
 Bottom: The Holy See (inside)

16 - FLOOR PLAN OF THE HOLY SEE

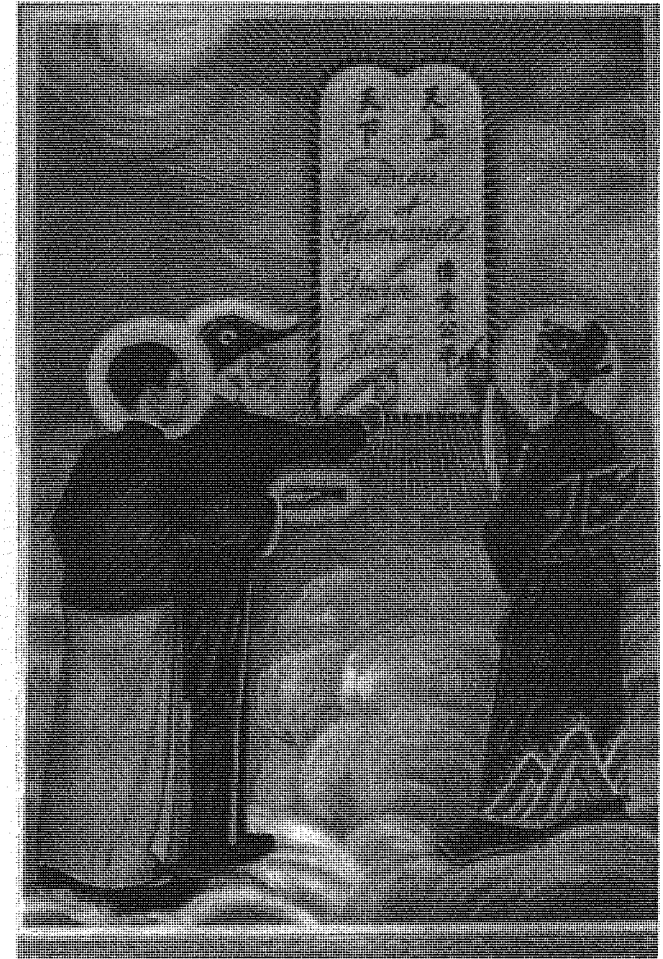


- (1) Globe with DIVINE EYE
- (2) HỘ PHÁP THRONE
- (3) Seven thrones :
 one for the Pope
 three for the Censor Cardinals
 three for Cardinals.

HỘ PHÁP'S THRONE



- Chinese character meaning KHÍ (breath, air, vital energy) behind the statue of Hộ Pháp.
- Statue of Hộ Pháp in the middle
- Statue of Thượng Phẩm on left holding a fan guiding spirits to Nirvana.
- Statue of Thượng Sanh on right who looks after men and brings them toward the TRUTH. He holds a sword, symbol of Karmic liberation.
- The seven heads of the cobra represent seven human feelings:
above: Love, Joy, Beatitude
below: Lust, Fury, Aversion, Sadness



THE THREE SAINTS
Signatories of the 3rd Alliance between God and Mankind

17 - THE THREE SAINTS

(Picture on previous page)

Left to right :

SUN-YAT-SEN (1866-1925), leader of the Chinese Revolution in 1911.

VICTOR HUGO (1802-1885), French's famed poet, full of compassion for the miserable, revealing himself through spiritism under the name of CHUÔNG ĐẠO NGUYỆT TÂM CHƠN NHƠN (Superintendent of Monasteries).

NGUYỄN BÌNH KHIÊM (1492-1587) commonly called TRANG TRINH by the Vietnamese, first poet-laureate and famous prophet, revealing himself as the Master of a Heavenly Lodge named BẠCH VÂN ĐỘNG (White Cloud Stanza) with many Saints for disciples, among them are Victor Hugo and Sun-Yat-Sen.

THESE SAINTS BEING ENTRUSTED WITH THE MISSION OF REALIZING THE 3RD ALLIANCE BETWEEN GOD AND MANKIND (the first by Dipamkara, Phuc Hy, Moses, the second by Sakya Muni, Lao Tse, Confucius and Jesus Christ), GIVE SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE AND ASSISTANCE TO THE CAODAISTS IN SPREADING THE NEW HOLY DOCTRINE.

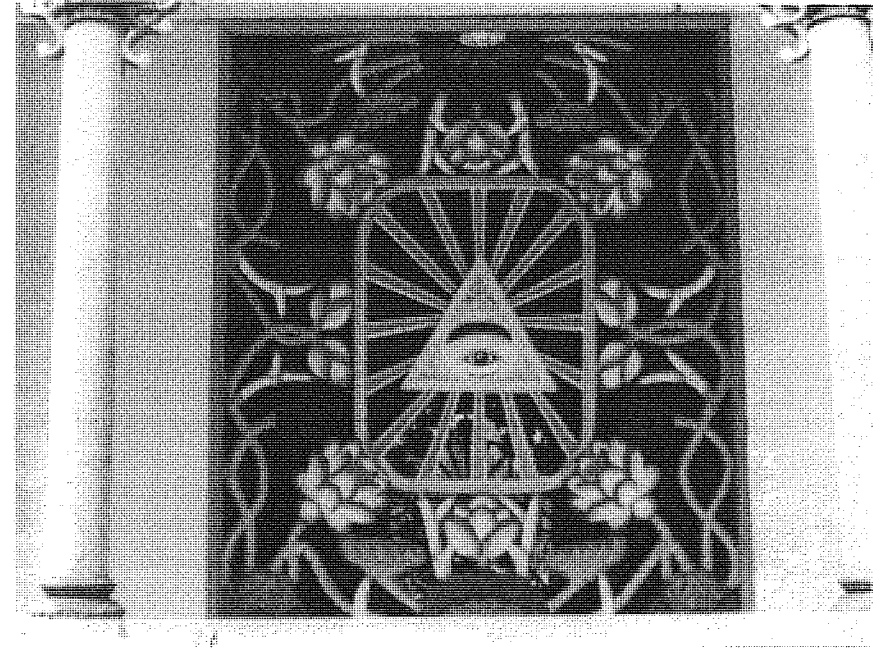
VICTOR HUGO IS THE SPIRITUAL CHIEF OF THE FOREIGN MISSION OF CAODAISM.

SUN-YAT-SEN is shown holding an inkstone, symbol of Chinese civilization allied to Christian civilization, giving birth to CaoDaist Doctrine, Victor Hugo and Trang Trinh are shown writing the words : "GOD and HUMANITY" (CaoDaist Doctrine), "LOVE and JUSTICE" (Law and rule of Doctrine), the first in French, and the second in Chinese characters.

18 - SOME DECORATIONS

OPEN WINDOW : The Divine Eye at the center darts its beams on a cosmic globe.

The triangular form is the scale of Justice. Lotus flowers symbolize purity.



THE FOUR SYMBOLICAL ANIMALS

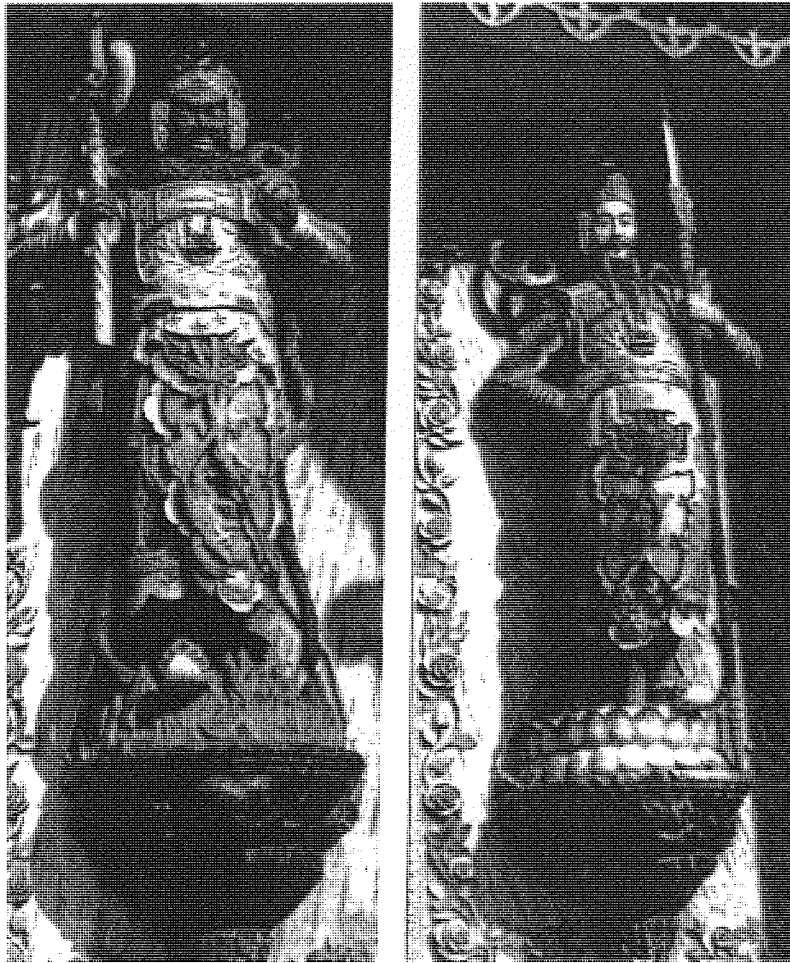
Dragon : symbol of wisdom

Tortoise : symbol of longevity and perfection

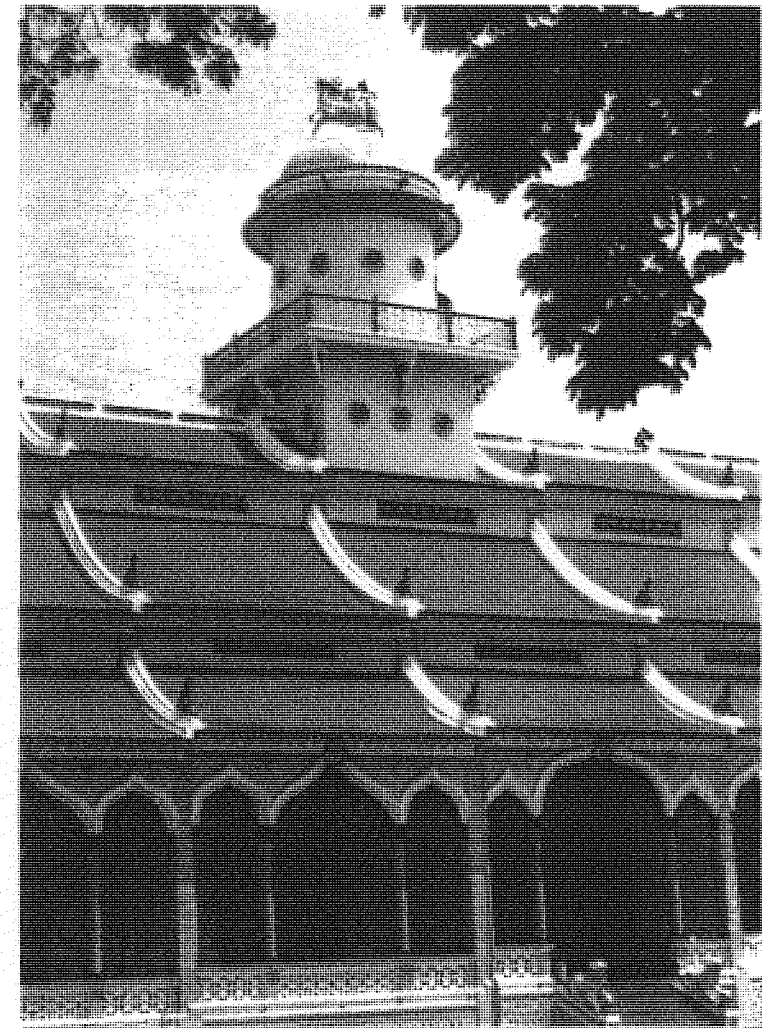
Unicorn : symbol of peace and perseverance

Phoenix : symbol of prosperity (the coming of Machohan)

According to traditional beliefs, the quartette have the power to scare away the evil spirits.



Left : Personification of Evil (Statue in front of the Holy See)
Right : Personification of Good (Statue in front of the Holy See)



The dragon horse

The dragon horse symbolizing the civilization of mankind, is carries on its back the first sign of the Chinese Zodiac (the graphic combination of Lạc Thu diagram representing the repartition of Yang and Yin principles in the universe).

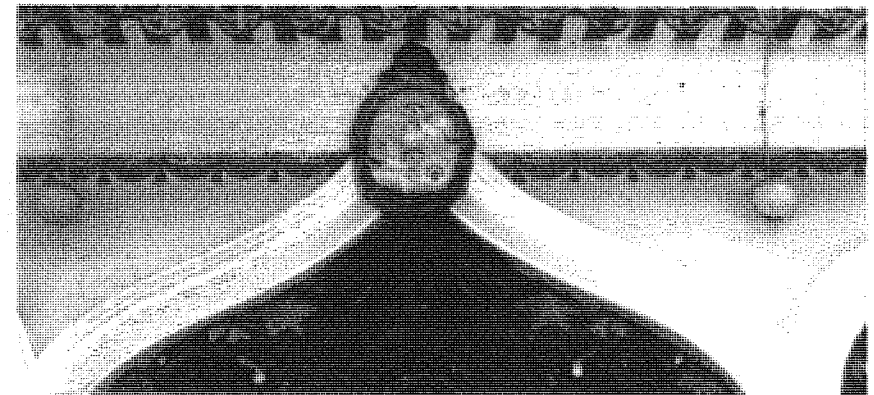
Its head turned back to the Orient symbolizes the origin of man's civilization (The Orient was the craaadle of man's civilization).



Brahmanist Trinity

Brahma, (faces West), Civa (faces North) and Krishna (faces toward South)

- Brahma, riding on a phoenix, represents the cycle of creation.
- Civa, riding on a cobra, represents the cycle of progress. He uses his flute to appeal mankind to the Great Way.
- Krishna, riding on a dragon, symbolizes the cycle of renovation or conservation.



Top : Maitreya riding on tiger

Bottom : OGEE ARCH WITH GRAPES (at the circular veranda)

Vine and grape represent matter or material body (the TINH)

Grape juice represents vital energy or Astral (the KHÍ)

Wine is the spirit of the vine and the grape: it then symbolizes the Divine Spirit (the THẦN)

19 THE MOTHER'S TEMPLE

The Holy Mother is not God's wife. In chapter I of Đạo Đức Kinh (Tao Te Ching) Lao Tse says :

*"The Đạo that can be told is not the universal Đạo
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 Đạo is God, the Monad, the nameless. He gives part of His spirit which is eternal to all beings."

The Holy Mother, the named, also comes from God, forms the soul and the body of man.

In the Holy Mother's Temple representing the home, the family, all children are equal in the eyes of Mother. Thus, they do not observe the hierarchy and they all dress in white (ordinary costume) during ceremony.

But, in the Holy See, representing the Court where the hierarchy is strictly observed, the dignitaries must wear their religious gowns according to their ranks.



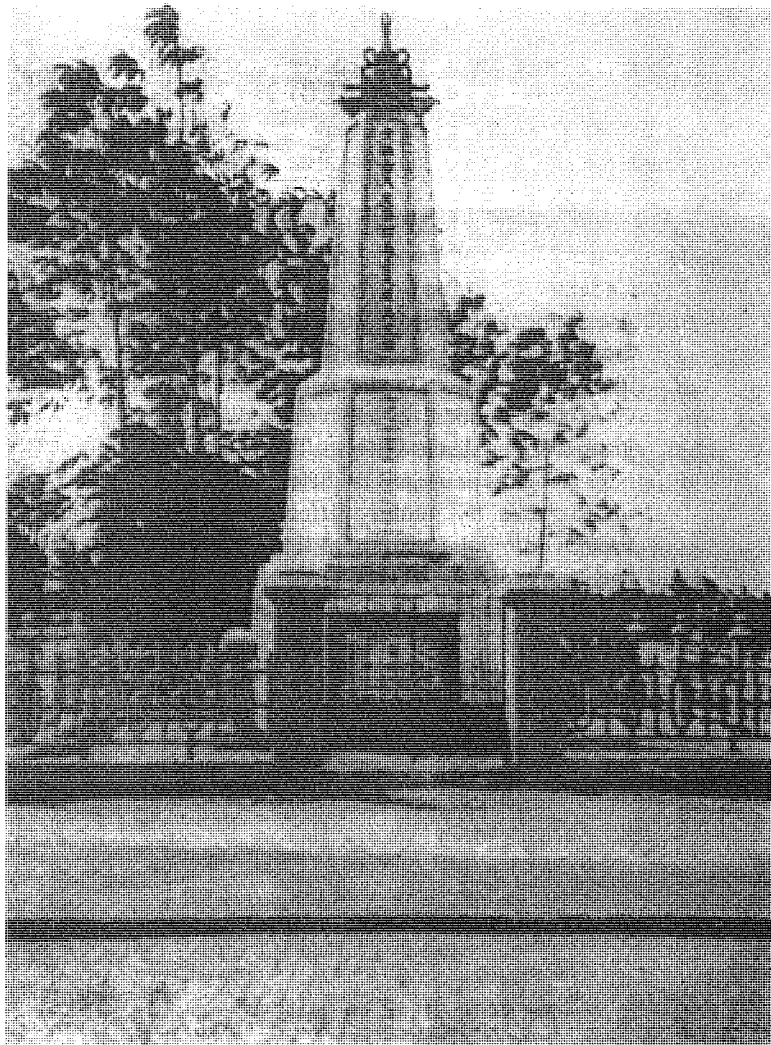
Holy Mother's Temple

20 - CAODAI SECTS

In the early phase of the foundation of CaoDaiism, the French colonial government oppressed all population movements of which CaoDaiism was thought to be a resisting one. Thus, CaoDaists divided themselves in different groups to be least visible. Those groups became sects scattered in different regions of the country under different names. French colonial government thought that it had successfully divided CaoDaiism in easier to control small heterogeneous sects.

There were twelve among them some still persist

- Minh Chơn Lý at Định Tường
- Ban Chính Đạo at Bến Tre
- Tiên Thiên at Châu Minh
- Chiếu Minh Đàn at Cần Thơ
- Cầu Kho in Sài Gòn
- Cơ Quan Truyền Giáo Trung Việt at Đà Nẵng.



Tomb of Mr. Ngô Văn Chiêu, the first disciple of CaoDai



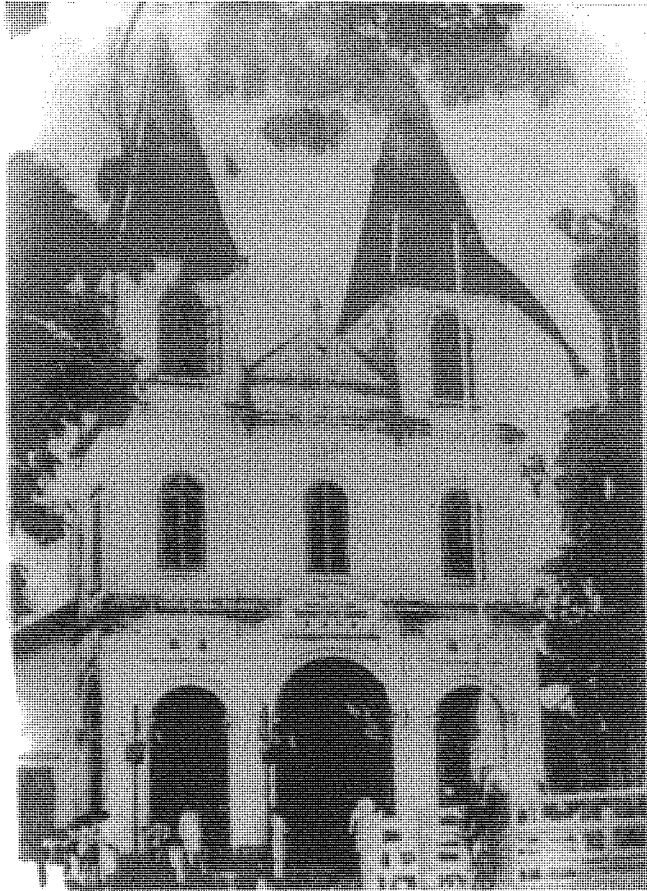
Top : Dinh Cậu (Phú Quốc) where the Divine Eye Frist manifested
Bottom: CaoDai Temple (Thánh Tịnh Thiên Trước at Cần Thơ)



Top & Bottom: CaoDai Temple (Chiếu Minh Đản Sect at Tây Ninh)



Top: CaoDai Temple Trung Hung Bửu Tòa Sect at Đà Nẵng
Bottom: CaoDai Temple Ban Chính Đạo Sect at Tây Ninh



CaoDai Temple An Hội at Bến Tre



CaoDai Temple (Thánh Tịnh Ngọc Minh Đài, Sài Gòn)

CONCLUSION

CaoDaism, a novel religion, recognizes God as Creator of the Universe, Father of all beings, origin of all religions, and who manifested Himself differently at different times and places.

It is a universal religion considering all other religions as ONE. It teaches human beings who have come from the same father GOD to live in harmony, in love, in justice and in peace in universal fraternity, to cultivate themselves to find God and to be united with God, deep in their heart.

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