

**DISCUSSION ON THE WAY:  
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**Bảo Pháp Nguyễn Trung Hậu**



**Translator - Hoang Le  
2025**



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## PREFACE

In this book, "Discussion on the Way: Questions and Answers", the author presents a scenario in which an outsider to the faith comes to inquire about the Way from a practitioner of the Third Universal Salvation of the Great Way (Đại Đạo Tam Kỳ Phổ Độ).

The questioner demonstrates a keen understanding of spiritual principles. Although the questions are posed with a certain degree of rigor, they maintain a refined and respectful tone, making the respondent willing to engage in dialogue.

The author, with limited knowledge and understanding, explains the Way to the best of his ability. He hopes that this humble book will provide at least some guidance to newly initiated followers and dispel the dark veil of uncertainty for those still in doubt. This is the author's sincere aspiration.

Cholon, September 2, 1927

**Bảo Pháp NGUYỄN TRUNG HẬU**

## **A RESPECTFUL ANNOUNCEMENT TO FELLOW DISCIPLES**

On the 6th day of the 8th month of the year Đinh Mão, the Holy Assembly officially recognized and warmly welcomed the book "Discussions on the Way: Questions and Answers" by Caodaist Nguyễn Trung Hậu.

The explanations in this book clarify true principles, and the writing is fluid and eloquent, making it easy for all to understand. This book is highly valuable, especially for Heavenly Appointed Dignitaries who bear the great responsibility of spreading the Heavenly Way.

For this reason, I have taken the effort to publish and distribute this book. I sincerely urge all esteemed disciples to read it thoroughly and reflect upon its teachings, so that they may engage in meaningful discussions with those who have yet to fully grasp the principles of the Third Universal Salvation the Great Way.

This book will serve as an important resource within the Way, and the author has graciously granted full copyright to the Sacerdotal Council.

Respectfully,

Thái Phối Sư **LÂM QUANG BÌNH**

## THOUGHTS ON THE TRUE WAY

A person lost in the forest, caught in a dilemma between moving forward or turning back, cannot simply sit idly, waiting to be devoured by tigers or bitten by snakes. Yet, aimlessly wandering from one path to another, turning at every corner, only leads to exhaustion, wasted time, and deeper confusion. So, what should one do? The best course is to keep moving forward—even if the path is uncertain, it minimizes the chance of getting lost. And with perseverance, one may eventually emerge from the deep forest, escaping the dangers of wild beasts and venomous creatures.

The worldly forest is much the same—countless souls have lost their way in it. Many seek the path of the Way to escape, yet they do not know where to find it. Trapped in a dilemma, they cannot simply remain idle, for that would make them people without faith, left to be consumed by the merciless demons of impermanence. But neither should they wander aimlessly, turning in every direction, only to stray into false sects and deviant paths.

So, what should one do? The only way is to walk straight ahead—that is the True Way.



We must understand that the Supreme Creator has given us life, and if we devoutly worship Him, we will never go astray. Even if we do not reach the realms of Bồng Đảo (the Blessed Isles) or Nirvana (Niết Bàn), we will at least free ourselves from the worldly forest and escape the endless cycle of reincarnation.

To truly revere the Supreme Creator, we must also respect His appointed divine administrators—namely, the Saints, Deities, Immortals, and Buddhas.

## THOUGHTS ON THE UNIFICATION OF THE THREE RELIGIONS

When restoring an old, dilapidated house, the first step is to build a temporary shelter to provide a place of refuge. Only then can we dismantle the old house and rebuild it. Without such preparation, where would we take shelter once the house is taken apart?

And when rebuilding, it is neither reasonable nor economical to discard all the old materials and purchase entirely new ones. Instead, we must carefully assess which beams are still sturdy, which tiles remain intact, and reuse what is still in good condition, while only supplementing them with new materials where necessary. This is the wise and prudent way.

The Three Religions (Tam Giáo)—Confucianism (Nho), Buddhism (Thích), and Taoism (Đạo)—have long served as the foundation of our spiritual house. Over countless ages, they have endured storms and hardships, and now their pillars have weakened, their beams have collapsed.

But we already have a temporary shelter—which is our unwavering faith in Heaven, Buddhas, Saints, and Divine Beings.

Now, in this Hạ Ngươn (the final cosmic cycle), it is time to rebuild the House of the Way (Đạo). This means the revival of religion. Are the materials already present—why discard everything and replace it all at great cost? Instead, we should remove only what is rotten and decayed, preserve what remains strong, and reconstruct the spiritual house to be more elevated, solid, and enduring.

The foundation (Nho – Confucianism) must be retained but reinforced, raised to be more stable and resilient. This signifies the revival of Confucian teachings.

The walls and pillars (Thích – Buddhism) should be examined, with rotten beams replaced and new ones added. This signifies the revival of Buddhist teachings.

The roof and framework (Đạo – Taoism) should undergo the same process. This signifies the revival of Taoist teachings.

Once completed, this new and magnificent house will stand tall, strong, and everlasting. This reconstructed spiritual house is the Way of the Supreme Being (Đạo Cao Đài Thượng Đế), known as the Third Universal Salvation of the Great Way (Đại Đạo Tam Kỳ Phổ Độ).

Thus, the Third Universal Salvation of the Great Way is the divine mission of uniting the Three Religions into One. This follows the principle of cyclical return (tuần hoàn).

What is cyclical return (tuần hoàn)?

Everything has a beginning and an end. Just as there is creation, there is completion. The end is not a termination but a return to the beginning. This return to the original source is cyclical renewal (tuần hoàn).



*QUESTION 1: I heard that you practice the Way of the Immortals, is that correct?*

ANSWER: Many people, seeing the spirit writing, assume that I follow the Way of the Immortals, because spirit writing originated from that tradition. However, the Way that I truly revere is the Way of the Supreme Being, ĐứC Cao Đài Thượng Đế, known as the Third Universal Salvation of the Great Way.

*QUESTION 2: I have always heard of Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế. Why do you now refer to Him as Cao Dai Supreme God?*

ANSWER: Each time the Way is established, the Jade Emperor adopts a different sacred name:

- During the early Zhou Dynasty, He descended in China to establish Taoism and took the name Laozi.
- Around the mid-Zhou period, He descended in India to establish Buddhism and took the name Shakyamuni Buddha.
- During the Han Dynasty, He incarnated to establish the Saint Way and took the name Jesus.
- This current era is the Third Universal Salvation in the East. Unlike before, He does not physically incarnate but instead uses the Divine spirit-writing to transmit

the Way. This time, He has taken the sacred name Cao Dai.

Moreover, Cao Đài is an abbreviated form of His full title: Cao Đài Tiên Ông Đại Bồ Tát Ma Ha Tát.

1. Cao Đài (High Tower) – Symbolizing the lofty principles of Confucianism.
2. Tiên Ông (Immortal Sage) – Representing Taoism.
3. Đại Bồ Tát Ma Ha Tát (Great Bodhisattva Mahāsattva) – Representing Buddhism.

This sacred name embodies the unity of the Three Religions, bringing them back into one. Although He has been known by different names: Laozi, Shakyamuni, Jesus, and Cao Dai, they all refer to the same Divine Spirit of the Supreme Being.

**QUESTION 3:** *Spirit writing is a very serious matter. You claim that the Supreme God descends through spirit writing to teach the Way, but how can you be certain? What if it is Saints, Deities, or even demons impersonating Him? After all, would the Supreme Being truly consented to descend into this impure and heavy-laden mortal world?*

ANSWER: Yes, spirit writing is indeed of the utmost importance. To fully grasp its mystical nature, one must dedicate time to studying it thoroughly, frequently attend

séances, and carefully examine the sacred from beginning to end with deep contemplation.

I should also explain to you that many of the Sacred Teachings received through spirit writing contain profound and mystical doctrines. Aside from the Supreme Being, no Saint, Deity, Immortal, or Buddha dares to reveal these divine secrets to humankind.

Spirit writing is of utmost importance. Without a deep understanding of the Way and regular attendance at spiritist séances, one cannot accurately distinguish between truth and falsehood.

The movement of the spirit writing is like music—those who have never studied it cannot simply listen to a melody and immediately discern whether it is good or bad. Although they may hear the same sounds as others, the depth of the rhythm, the rise and fall of the tones remain beyond their grasp.

Without expertise, one can never truly comprehend its meaning. The spirit writing process is like gold or jade—until one uses and examines it, one cannot truly understand its value.

As the saying goes: *“One who has never known gold, how can they judge its worth?”*

Saints, Deities, Immortals, and Buddhas are beings of high attainment and great virtue. How could they dare to



take the divine laws lightly and falsely claim the Supreme Being's name?

Even if the Divine descends through spirit writing to teach the Way, it is only by His mandate. If so, then the name proclaimed is true, so why would there be any need for deception that would violate the Heavenly Law?

Furthermore, if one fears that demons might infiltrate the séance and falsely claim to be the Supreme Being, such a thought is even more mistaken. Demons belong to the realm of dark spirits; they thrive in impurity, despising righteousness and embracing wickedness. Why would they labor to descend and guide humanity toward righteousness and the correct path? Would that not go entirely against their nature? And even if they were to teach, what wisdom do demons possess to impart about the Way?

Let us reason together: regardless of which invisible spirit manifests, if their teachings promote virtue and are followed by people, leading to peace and harmony in the world, then should we not venerate such the spirit?

The distinction between righteousness and falsehood is quite clear. Look at Christianity, Taoism, and Buddhism—each is a true religion, which is why millions have embraced them.

The Cao Dai religion, though newly established for just over a year, has already drawn hundreds of

thousands of devoted followers. Is this not an undeniable proof of its legitimacy as a true religion?

Furthermore, when it comes to the Divine Law, only the Supreme Jade Emperor has the authority to establish it. If not Him, then no one else can do so. And if it is successfully established, then it must be by His will.

You have also questioned whether the Supreme Being would deign to descend into this impure and turbulent world. This question makes it clear to me that you do not yet understand what the Way truly is. You perceive the Supreme Being as though He were a mortal, needing to be physically present in order to manifest.

However, the Supreme Being is infinitely transformative; whenever He wishes to communicate through spirit writing, He does so merely by sending forth His sacred radiance to transmit His message. There is no need for Him to physically descend, so why should you be concerned about the impurity of the earthly realm?

*QUESTION 4: You say that the Supreme Being is infinitely transformative, but how do you envision Him?*

ANSWER: We cannot use our mortal minds to imagine His form. The Supreme Being does not have a fixed form like human beings. If He incarnates in the West, He assumes

the form of a Westerner; if He incarnates in the East, He takes the form of an Easterner.

The Supreme Being is an infinite and boundless essence of divine radiance. It is through this radiance that all beings—humans, animals, and plants—are sustained in life.

- The brilliant light of the stars is His manifestation.
- The towering mountains and dense forests reflect His presence.
- The depths of the ocean and the vastness of the seas embody Him.
- The flourishing trees and abundant vegetation are expressions of His essence.
- The instincts of animals are guided by Him.
- The spiritual consciousness of humanity is a part of Him.

In short, all living things possess the essence of life, and this essence is but a fragment of the Supreme Being's Sacred Light—thus, He is present in all. I have only given you a brief explanation to provide a glimpse of understanding. To grasp this truth fully would be as impossible as explaining the color red to someone who has been blind since birth.

*QUESTION 5: You say that Saints, Deities, Immortals, and Buddhas would not dare to impersonate the Supreme Being and I agree. However, I still have one concern—what if the mediums who hold the pen (chấp cơ) are not truthful?*

A follower of the Way asks: Have you ever attended a séance?

- The other person replies: ... A few times.

The follower asks: ... Each time you attended, how much did it cost you?

- The other person replies: ... The séances are open to all; anyone may attend freely, as long as they dress respectfully. There is no cost at all.

ANSWER: If that is the case, then what benefit would a fraudulent medium gain? If it were only once or twice, one might argue that a deceptive medium could have some motive. But the séances are held continuously, year after year—who would go to such great effort for deception?

And if we assume deception, wouldn't it make more sense for the mediums to claim divine authority for themselves? But why would they foolishly risk impersonating the Supreme Being? Besides, there are many ways to deceive people—who would dare take the grave risk of falsely invoking the name of the Supreme Being just to stage a mere performance?

*QUESTION 6: You just mentioned that Christianity, Taoism, and Buddhism are true religions. If the Three Religions already exist, why is there a need to establish another religion?*

ANSWER: The Way has existed since the creation of Heaven and Earth. Wherever life exists, the Way exists.

- The Void is the Way.
- Yin and Yang are the Way.
- Heaven and Earth are the Way.
- All living beings are the Way.

The Three Religions have long been the true faiths. However, over time, human interference has altered them, distancing them further from the original sacred teachings and turning them into worldly doctrines.

The Supreme Being is deeply grieved. He witnesses humanity falling into sin, leading to suffering and eventually descent into hell. Therefore, He has resolved to unite the Three Religions into one and restore true faith.

His purpose is to rekindle the divine light, to guide those who are devoted to spiritual practice yet have lost their footing and strayed from the right path.

*QUESTION 7: If the Supreme Being wants to unite the Three Religions why does He not establish the Way in powerful nations, where it would be easier? Why did He choose Vietnam, a small and weak country? Are all people not His children? Does this not seem unfair, as if He favors the Vietnamese over others?*

ANSWER: It is precisely because of divine fairness that He has chosen to establish the Way in Vietnam. For so long, our people have endured a lowly and oppressed fate. If not for this Heavenly religion, who knows when they would escape the darkness?

*QUESTION 8: Vietnam is not the only small and humble nation—aren't there other countries that are even weaker?*

ANSWER: That is true, but those nations still lack moral and spiritual development and have not yet reached the time to receive divine blessings.

Though Vietnam may be small and humble, it has preserved its moral foundations and ethical traditions. The Supreme Being is the Father of all nations, and all countries are His children. However, a nation that upholds moral principles and cultivates righteousness will naturally receive greater blessings.

From a worldly perspective, consider a father with several children. Though he loves them all equally, if he must entrust an important responsibility to one, he will naturally choose the child who is most virtuous and trustworthy.

Likewise, Vietnam has been chosen by the Supreme Being as His entrusted child.

*QUESTION 9: Why did every séance in the past involve spirit writing, but now it has stopped?*

ANSWER: In the early days, we had yet to fully understand the Way. The Supreme Being descended through spirit writing to guide us, teaching about the dissemination of faith and the establishment of order within religion. Now that everything has been set in place and the laws of the Way have been established, we simply follow them in practicing our faith.

At the beginning, we were like children learning to walk. The Supreme Being used the mystical means of spirit writing to steady our steps. Now that we have gained strength and stability, He allows us to walk on our own and become self-sufficient. If He were to continue descending through spirit writing indefinitely, where would human effort and responsibility come into play?

*QUESTION 10: Most of the Heavenly Appointed Dignitaries in the Third Universal Salvation have wives and children and engage in regular work like others. How can they properly cultivate the Way under such circumstances?*

ANSWER: If practicing the Way meant abandoning one's wife and children, then that would indeed make cultivation difficult, because forsaking one's family is a violation of the Human Way. And if one cannot fulfill the human Way, how can they hope to attain the Heavenly Way?

Furthermore, practicing the Way and having a family are two separate matters. Cultivation means refining one's virtues, returning to righteousness, and correcting one's faults—this is a right that everyone has, regardless of their marital status. If one were to follow your reasoning, would that mean those with families are forbidden from reforming themselves and walking the righteous path?

Spiritual cultivation follows a gradual process. In the beginning, one practices according to the lower level, then progresses step by step toward the higher level. Eventually, when the time is right, one may completely sever worldly attachments and reach the stage of enlightenment. But that time is still far away. For now, we



take each step as it comes—neither rushing ahead excessively nor falling behind.

If one were to neglect all human relationships and worldly responsibilities for the sake of the Heavenly Way, thus failing in human Way, how could they ever hope to achieve the Heavenly Way?

*QUESTION 11: I have observed that among the Heavenly Appointed Dignitaries, there are still many whose character is not particularly virtuous. Their past lives have left behind many stains and impurities.*

ANSWER: Who in this world is entirely free of flaws? Even Confucius, the Most Sacred Sage, examined himself daily! I believe that not only among the Heavenly Appointed Dignitaries but also among those of high status and noble ranks, many have not been entirely free from mistakes in fulfilling their duties. The difference is merely whether their faults are exposed or remain hidden.

Moreover, recognizing one's mistakes and repenting is the mark of a virtuous person. A person of high status and great power today—who knows if they were once of humble or lowly origin? A cruel and violent person now—who can say they will not one day become virtuous and upright? (\*1)

Circumstances and the ever-changing nature of the world often transform people's character and alter their hearts. If we judge a person's present actions solely based on their past, I fear that would not be entirely just.

(\*1) If Cao Cao (Tào Tháo) had been killed by Dong Zhuo (Đổng Trác) when he attempted to assassinate him, wouldn't people today regard him as a loyal and righteous hero? And if Guan Gong (Quan Công) had stayed with Cao Cao at that time but then soon after fallen ill and passed away, wouldn't people today see him as a traitor to his sworn brothers?

*QUESTION 12: Spiritual practitioners should wear simple coarse clothing—why then do the Heavenly Appointed Dignitaries dress in colorful silk robes, with tall crowns and elegant headscarves? Doesn't this diminish the humility and virtue of a true practitioner?*

ANSWER: The Way is of great importance, and it requires an organized system to guide and support its followers. There must be order, with senior members leading and juniors following, ensuring harmony and discipline. Since formal structure is necessary, distinct ceremonial attire helps differentiate the ranks accordingly.

The three robe colors—red, yellow, and blue—represent the three branches of the Three Religions:

1. Red corresponds to the Confucian branch.
2. Yellow corresponds to the Buddhist branch.
3. Blue corresponds to the Taoist branch.

Meanwhile, all general followers wear white robes. The white color symbolizes purity, reminding them that once they have set foot on the spiritual path, they must cultivate a heart as pure as their garments in order to advance toward higher ranks within the faith.

The sacred vestments are worn only during ceremonies and serve the same purpose as ritual attire in other religions. They are not intended for display.

*QUESTION 13: I often see people who have just entered the faith, without any significant merit or service, being granted the rank of Heavenly Appointed Dignitary. Doesn't this make Heavenly titles seem too cheap and easily given?*

ANSWER: When a new religion is first established, it is natural that the requirements are initially more lenient. Over time, these leniencies will gradually be replaced with stricter criteria. If we were to wait until individuals had fully accumulated their merits before appointing clergy, then in the beginning, who would carry out the work of the faith?

Furthermore, many of those granted Heavenly Appointments have past karmic ties and prior spiritual ranks that have made them worthy of receiving such Divine grace.

However, a Heavenly Appointed Title is merely a temporary grant—a position entrusted for the purpose of cultivating the faith. If those who receive it fail to guide and enlighten others, fail to accumulate merit, and fail to prove themselves worthy of their assigned rank, then in the end, what honor or glory will remain in that Heavenly title?

*QUESTION 14: This is an era dominated by wealth and power, where the strong prevail, the weak suffer, and survival depends on wit and strength. The world is fiercely competitive, with the torch of Western civilization shining brightly over America and Europe. Our country is small and weak—shouldn't we urgently follow their lead? If everyone in our nation simply engages in meditation and recites Buddhist prayers with half-closed eyes, wouldn't we be abandoning worldly affairs, ultimately leading to our downfall?*

ANSWER: I have previously explained that spiritual cultivation occurs in stages. Those at the lower level still engage in daily work and economic activities as usual, but they do so with a virtuous heart, maintaining honesty

and sincerity. If an entire nation were to uphold such virtues, there would be peace among the people, harmony among all, no jealousy or resentment, no deceit or fraud in business, and everyone would act with honesty and goodwill. In such a society, what would it matter who is clever or foolish?

Competition is a natural part of life. It drives commerce, advances industry, and fuels progress. However, competition must be based on intelligence, knowledge, fairness, and morality. If competition relies on brute force, where the strong oppress the weak, then society falls into barbarism—how can that be called civilization?

The day humanity fully understands morality and learns to love one another as children of the same Divine Father, strength and weakness will become irrelevant. When people cease to kill one another, how could extinction be a concern?

Our nation may be weak in military power and scholarly achievements, but not necessarily in morality. While we must accept our disadvantages, why not focus on strengthening the virtue in which we may surpass others? Should we not devote ourselves to refining and cultivating moral excellence?

Only a small fraction of spiritual practitioners reaches the highest level, renouncing worldly ties completely.

Consider a school: although hundreds of students enroll, how many actually go on to become government officials? If every student were to pass the exams and enter public service, who would handle other societal duties?

Although many study, some will succeed, and others will not. Likewise, if an entire nation engages in spiritual practice, not everyone will reach the highest level. Each person will progress according to their own capacity, just as students advance through different levels of education. The collective benefit is that if everyone cultivates the Way, then everyone attains at least some degree of virtue—just as all students who study gain some knowledge.

Thus, even if the entire nation engages in spiritual practice, worldly affairs will not be neglected.

*QUESTION 15: Why did the Creator not create humanity to be entirely good from the start? Why create both virtuous and wicked people, only to then make effort to teach and guide them?*

ANSWER: Every human being is born inherently good—this pure nature comes from the Divine spark granted by the Creator. However, as life unfolds, some nurture and refine this sacred essence, while others neglect it,

leading to the distinction between the virtuous and the wicked.

The Creator is the Universal Father, and all of humanity is His children. What father would not wish for his sons to be noble and his daughters to be virtuous? Yet, even if a father desires this, what happens if his children rebel and refuse to follow his guidance?

Thus, divine justice necessitates reward for virtue and punishment for wrongdoing through the law of karma and reincarnation. This is the sacred and impartial law of the Creator.

Moreover, out of His boundless compassion, the Creator does not wish to see souls suffer the consequences of their misdeeds indefinitely. That is why He has established the Way, a path to guide living beings toward liberation, helping them transcend the cycle of reincarnation and karmic retribution.

*QUESTION 16: Are you certain that reincarnation and karmic retribution (quả báo) exist?*

ANSWER: I have ample evidence to firmly confirm the existence of reincarnation and karmic retribution. However, to fully explain this concept, a brief discussion would not suffice. A proper explanation would require extensive discourse, taking up much of our valuable time.

Therefore, I suggest that you refer to the book "Tiên Thiên Tiểu Học" (Pre-Heaven Elementary Study) on pages 21 and 22 (section 15 on Reincarnation), as well as the book "Luân Hồi Quả Báo." (Reincarnation and Karmic Retribution). These texts will provide you with a clearer and more thorough understanding.

*QUESTION 17: The Creator possesses infinite power—if He used His Supreme Mystical Power wouldn't the Way be fully established in just one day?*

ANSWER: If He were to use His divine power in such a way, then wrongdoers would only follow the Way out of fear of His authority, rather than from genuine faith and devotion. But is someone who lacks sincerity and true belief truly worthy of salvation?

Furthermore, the Heavenly Way operates through both the seen and unseen, the real and the illusory—it is designed to encourage deep contemplation and discernment. The Supreme Being desires that people reflect carefully, recognize their own faults, and repent with sincerity. Only those who awaken and transform from within are truly deserving of His salvation.



*QUESTION 18: You define spiritual practice as refining one's virtues and transforming wrongdoing into righteousness. But I have always lived a good life—I have never harmed anyone, committed any acts of cruelty, or stolen from others. Why should I need to cultivate the Way?*

ANSWER: As I have said before, no one can claim to be entirely virtuous. Even the sages of the past examined themselves daily. Today, you may be a person of virtue, but who can say that circumstances in the future will not change you into someone cruel or unjust?

To practice the Way is to bind oneself to the precepts and laws. Only with such spiritual discipline can one maintain purity and righteousness at all times. Furthermore, those who naturally do good and avoid wrongdoing—though they may not actively engage in religious practice—already possess the Way within them. However, they may be unaware of it simply because they have not actively sought to understand it.

I have stated before: Wherever life exists, the Way exists. A human being is born with a Divine spark from the Creator—this is the Heavenly Way. The physical body is inherited from one's parents—this is the Way of Parent and Child. Living under the governance of a nation—this is the Way of King and Citizen. Learning under the

guidance of a teacher—this is the Way of Teacher and Student.

Thus, one who understands the Heavenly Way and follows it, while also upholding the human Way, is truly a complete person. On the other hand, one who fulfills the human Way but remains distant from the Heavenly Way is still lacking something essential.

*QUESTION 19: Is spiritual practice guaranteed to lead one to become an Immortal or a Buddha?*

ANSWER: Doing good merely to seek recognition, or acting righteously solely to gain blessings, is not the way of a true practitioner.

To practice the Way is to recognize the grace of Heaven and Earth, to uphold the principles of morality, and to fulfill one's duty as a human being. If one engages in spiritual cultivation solely with the expectation of becoming an Immortal or a Buddha, then one has not yet understood the essence of true cultivation.

However, if one wholeheartedly follows the Way, diligently practicing virtue without attachment to rewards, then even without seeking it, the attainment of Immortality or Buddhahood will naturally come as a result of one's pure and complete spiritual practice.

*QUESTION 20: According to your explanation, spiritual practice seems to be a good thing. However, practicing the Way requires reciting scriptures every morning and evening, attending temple ceremonies on the full moon and major festivals. Wouldn't this be a waste of time? Moreover, wouldn't it interfere with work and eventually lead to poverty? Who would be willing to endure such a life?*

ANSWER: Worship and prayer are conducted outside of working hours—setting aside a small portion of one's free time for devotion does not cause any real harm. The most important thing is sincerity and reverence in one's worship. As for attending temple ceremonies on full moon days and major festivals, this is a personal choice—if one is free, they may go; if not, they may worship at home. There are no rigid obligations. In fact, a sincere heart at home is better than a distracted mind in the temple.

You also suggest that worship interferes with work. This is a misconception. As I have explained, worship is worship, and work is work; they do not overlap. Wealth and poverty are determined by one's destiny and personal habits—whether one is diligent and frugal or indulgent and wasteful.

To fear that spiritual practice leads to poverty is an unjustified concern. The only ones who might fear that

practicing the Way will make them poor are those who live by greed and deception. They worry that if they truly follow the path of righteousness, they will no longer dare to exploit or deceive others, and in doing so, they will lose their ill-gotten gains.

*QUESTION 21: If everyone in the world practiced the Way, and all eventually became Immortals and Buddhas, wouldn't that leave the Earth empty and abandoned?*

ANSWER: If the Earth were to be left empty in the way you describe, wouldn't that actually be something to hope for rather than fear? Unfortunately, this is not the reality. The truth is that such an outcome is nearly impossible.

Those who cultivate the Way are like cultivated grains of rice—no matter how much rice is planted, has there ever been a surplus? Those who do not practice the Way are like wild grass—no matter how much is cleared away, has anyone ever seen the world run out of weeds?

If you fear that the world will be empty due to too many people attaining enlightenment, it is no different than fearing that the world will run out of weeds.

*QUESTION 22: According to what you say, practicing the Way means worshiping Heaven venerating Buddhas and upholding moral principles. If that is enough, then why is it necessary to follow a vegetarian diet? If vegetarianism leads to enlightenment, then shouldn't an ox, which eats grass its entire life, also become an Immortal or a Buddha?*

ANSWER: Vegetarianism is an essential discipline within the laws of the Way. To fully explain this would take a long discussion, so I recommend you read the book “Trai Kỳ” (The Practice of Vegetarianism) for a more detailed understanding.

As for the ox—yes, it eats grass all its life, but it does not attain enlightenment because it lacks a spiritual essence and does not cultivate the Way like humans do.

Consider this: If you wish to build a house, you need bricks, tiles, wood, mortar, sand, and stone. But if you simply pile them up in a heap without construction, can a house ever be formed? Likewise, if one seeks to attain Immortality or Buddhahood, one must actively cultivate the Way.

*QUESTION 23: You previously explained that if one fully follows the Way, then one will naturally become an Immortal or a Buddha, even without desiring it. But now, you say that one must cultivate and refine the Way. Isn't cultivating the Way an act of striving to attain Immortality or Buddhahood? Aren't your statements contradictory?*

ANSWER: How can that be contradictory? I have said that if one fully practices the Way, even without desiring it, one will naturally attain Immortality or Buddhahood. However, cultivation is an essential discipline within spiritual practice. One must cultivate—without cultivation, one's practice is incomplete.

For example, when you eat, you may not be eating just for the sake of feeling full, but rather because you are hungry, and hunger compels you to eat. Yet, once you eat, fullness naturally follows. Similarly, a practitioner does not cultivate the Way solely to become an Immortal or a Buddha. The laws of the Way require cultivation, and once cultivation is complete, attainment naturally follows.

If a person practices the Way but does not cultivate deeply, they have not fully adhered to the spiritual discipline. Thus, after passing from this life, their soul will be reborn in a higher position, experiencing wealth and nobility in their next human life, enjoying worldly blessings. Those with greater merit and virtue may

ascend to become Deities or Saints, but they will not yet reach the exalted ranks of Immortals or Buddhas. These two ranks are the highest and most sacred rewards reserved only for those who have upheld the complete discipline of spiritual practice.

*QUESTION 24: What does it mean to cultivate the Way? And how does one cultivate to become an Immortal or a Buddha?*

ANSWER: That is something I cannot fully explain, as it is a sacred and mystical aspect of the Way. To truly understand it, one must engage in spiritual practice; only through personal experience and dedication can one gradually perceive and comprehend it.

*QUESTION 25: The Way was established to save all beings not just a select few. But you call it a mystery and refuse to explain it. If it remains a mystery, how can it truly save all beings?*

ANSWER: When the government establishes schools, its goal is for students to study diligently and eventually graduate with honors. However, if some students fail to reach this goal, it is not because the school failed them, but because they neglected their studies and refused to learn.

The Way is established to save all beings until they attain the "Graduation Certificate of Immortals and Buddhas." If one does not achieve this, it is because they are unwilling to cultivate themselves. Heaven and Buddhas desire this, but if one does not, what can be done?

If you refuse to endure ascetic practice and cultivation but demand to be shown the profound wonders of the Way, it is no different from a lazy student begging the government to grant them a "Graduation Certificate."

*QUESTION 26: I often see many people joining the Third Universal Salvation, yet they still do not understand spiritual teachings. If they enter the Way but remain ignorant, simply performing daily offerings without understanding, what benefit does that bring?*

ANSWER: Offerings and rituals are external expressions of sincerity and reverence. It is natural for newcomers to the Way to lack understanding of its principles. Just as a child entering school cannot immediately master the classics, one must learn and study gradually to attain comprehension.

Since the number of people entering the Way reaches tens of thousands, it is impractical to teach each



individual separately. For this reason, the Sacerdotal Council has decided to compile books and translate scriptures to make the True Way more accessible to all..

*QUESTION 27: I have seen many people who have entered the Way yet still indulge in drinking, tea, and smoking. How can they be considered practitioners of the Way?*

ANSWER: It is not accurate to say, "many people"; it would be more appropriate to say "a few." Even if there were seventy or eighty such individuals, which would still not be considered many, for when compared to the tens of thousands who have entered the Way, how significant is that number?

As for those who still drink, smoke, or indulge in tea gatherings, while they may not have completely abandoned these habits, they have at least reduced them to some extent. It is better to lessen and eventually quit than to be like others who make no effort to change and instead increase their indulgence.

Human determination exists in varying degrees. Those with great resolve can reform themselves instantly, turning away from evil and following righteousness. Ordinary people, however, must gradually repent and improve themselves over time.

*QUESTION 28: The number of people entering the Way has reached tens of thousands. How can they possibly know one another well enough to support and help each other?*

ANSWER: It is not only tens of thousands; the Heavenly Way continues to expand, and the number of followers continues to grow. In the future, there will be hundreds of millions. For this reason, each locality establishes its own community, and within each community, there are leaders who guide the faithful in both worldly and spiritual matters.

All communities follow the same principles and regulations, so though there are many, they function as one. Regarding mutual assistance, it is not limited to helping fellow followers of the Way. Regardless of a person's background, whether they share our faith, follow another path, or even oppose us, if they are in distress and we have the means to help, we must extend our hand. Loving others as we love ourselves, this is what it truly means to care for humanity.

*QUESTION 29: After entering the Way, one is required to perform Four Daily Offerings. Why is this obligation so frequent? Wouldn't it take up too much time?*

ANSWER: Four Daily Offerings serve as a form of spiritual discipline, a way to gradually train oneself to endure hardships. Spiritual practice requires enduring many challenges, and to be able to withstand such hardships, one must train little by little.

Moreover, worship benefits the practitioner, not the Supreme Being. Daily worship helps cultivate the virtuous heart, they stimulate movement in the limbs, refresh the mind, and awaken the spirit. If one neglects worshipping, the virtuous heart may gradually weaken, and sincerity may fade, leading to carelessness and disrespect.

*QUESTION 30: If one's heart of the Way is strong, why worry about neglect?*

ANSWER: That applies to only a few. The real concern is for those who are new to the Way. Those with unwavering faith and a steadfast heart in the Way, no matter how much hardship they endure, will not waver or lose determination. In general, they would not even hesitate to sacrifice themselves for the Way if necessary.

QUESTION 31: Why do we worship the Divine Eye to revere the Supreme Being?

ANSWER: The Divine Eye is worshiped for several reasons:

1. Worshiping the Divine Eye means seeing it every day as we go in and out. Whenever we harbor wrongful intentions, it feels as though that the Divine Eye is watching over us, reminding us: "The Master is always beside you, keeping His gaze upon you, do not entertain unrighteous thoughts." This serves as an effective way to refine our hearts and cultivate our virtues.
2. The Supreme Being is an infinite and boundless Divine light that encompasses the entire Universe. He exists everywhere, but most importantly, He resides within our hearts. Since the eye governs the heart, worshiping the Eye is, in essence, worshiping Him. The Supreme Being has taught:  
"The Eye governs the heart,  
Its twin lights rule all,  
Light is Spirit,  
Spirit is Heaven,  
And Heaven is Me."
3. Since the closure of the Way, cultivation alone has not been sufficient to attain enlightenment. Many

practitioners dedicated themselves to refining their essence (Tinh) into energy (Khí), but they failed to merge energy (Khí) with spirit (Thần), which is essential. Spirit (Thần) is the missing key to the profound mechanism of the Way, and spirit resides in the eye. Therefore, worshiping the Divine Eye symbolizes uniting Spirit (Thần) with Essence (Tinh) and Energy (Khí), completing the Three Treasures (Tam Bửu), which is the sacred path to transcending the mundane and attaining sainthood.

*QUESTION 32: Then why do we not worship both eyes?*

ANSWER: Everything originates from the One and ultimately returns to the One. ("All things begin from Unity and return to Unity.") The number One is the primary number of the Supreme Being, which is why we worship only one Eye.

This also relates to the profound mechanism of Spirit cultivation. Since you are an outsider to the Way, I am not permitted to explain everything in full detail, but I will offer a brief explanation.

During worship, when practicing Spirit cultivation, one must focus intently on the Divine Eye without allowing their own eyes to waver or blink. Maintaining this focus

for at least the duration of a single incense stick will bring calmness to the mind and stability to the spirit

If there were two Eyes, part of the mind would be drawn to the right Eye, and part to the left, making it impossible to maintain spiritual concentration.

*QUESTION 33: Why are the positions of Li Bai, Guan Yin, Guanyu established alongside the Supreme Being? Would this not violate the principle of hierarchy between ruler and subject? I am concerned that it may contradict the saying: "The ruler and ministers do not sit together".*

ANSWER: In this era of the Third Universal Salvation, Li Bai represents the Taoist Way, Guan Yin represents the Buddhist Way, and Guan Yu represents the Confucian Way. They serve as the Three Majestic Lords to guide sentient beings and unify the Three Religions into One. This structure applies to the home altars of believers, whereas in larger temples, the full representation of the Three Religions is worshiped: Shakyamuni Buddha, Laozi, and Confucius.

Invoking the phrase "*The ruler and ministers do not sit together*" in this context is a serious misunderstanding. That principle refers to the fact that a ruler and his ministers do not sit together as equals at the same mat during formal gatherings. However, in religious worship,

everything follows proper order and solemn hierarchy. The Supreme Being is positioned at the highest level, while the Three Majestic Lords are placed below Him. How, then, could this be considered a violation of that principle?

*QUESTION 34: Are we allowed to worship other Immortals and Buddhas in addition to those already venerated in the Way?*

ANSWER: The Three Majestic Lords are central to the Third Universal Salvation, so every follower is required to enshrine and venerate them. Beyond that, followers are free to worship additional Immortals and Buddhas according to their personal devotion. However, only legitimate Divine Beings should be venerated. It is strictly forbidden to worship false spirits or supernatural entities, such as: Military generals, Legendary scholars, Folk deities like Cô Hai (Miss Hai), Cô Ba (Miss Ba), and similar figures.

Additionally, ancestor worship remains unchanged, following traditional customs. However, the altar of the Supreme Being and the Three Majestic Lords should always hold the highest place of honor, as it is natural and proper for ancestors to also venerate Heaven and the Buddhas.

*QUESTION 35: Worshiping and making offerings require financial resources. What if someone is too poor to afford elaborate ceremonies?*

ANSWER: I have already explained that the true value of worship lies in sincerity, not material offerings. For those with genuine devotion, even something as simple as a twig from a tree or a cup of clean water is sufficient for Heaven and the Buddhas to witness one's sincerity.

Offerings are merely an external expression of reverence—what truly matters is the heart. The Supreme Being and Buddhas do not judge based on elaborate rituals, but rather on the depth of sincerity.

As the sacred texts say: *"Heaven and Earth are impartial, and Divine Beings observe all in silence. They do not bestow blessings merely because of grand offerings, nor do they bring misfortune simply due to a lack of ceremonial rites."*

The Supreme Being Himself once revealed this verse:

"The Jade Palace has always been My dwelling,

I do not require palaces built in the secular world.

Wealth and poverty do not concern Me—only the heart matters,

For the heart itself is the lotus throne upon which I sit."



From this, it is clear that true devotion is measured by sincerity, not by the extravagance of offerings.

*QUESTION 36: If sincerity is what truly matters, then why is worship necessary?*

ANSWER: You are asking too much! I have already explained that worship is an outward expression of inner sincerity. If one truly cannot perform it, then so be it, but if one is capable, one should not neglect it.

Consider this example: Filial piety toward one's parents comes from within, but how does one outwardly express that reverence? If you claim to honor your parents yet never greet them, never ask about their well-being, never serve them meals, fan them in the heat, or warm their blankets in the cold. If, when asked, you simply say, "My sincerity alone is enough"—then is that truly enough?

*QUESTION 37: I have seen certain religious ceremonies where musical instruments are played while reciting scriptures. Why is this necessary?*

ANSWER: Ritual music is a tradition from Confucianism, preserved as part of our national culture and spiritual practice. Additionally, the sound of musical instruments serves an important purpose in worship: It enhances

spiritual energy, creating an uplifting atmosphere. It maintains rhythm for those reciting scriptures, just as Buddhist monks use bells and wooden fish during chanting.

*QUESTION 38: Why is an oil lamp kept burning at all times on the altar, both day and night?*

ANSWER: That is the Thái Cực Lamp (Supreme Ultimate Lamp). Before Heaven and Earth were formed, the energies of Yin and Yang energies collided, generating a primordial flame, which symbolizes the Supreme Being. The Supreme Ultimate Lamp represents this Divine fire.

*QUESTION 39: Why are two additional lamps placed on either side of the altar?*

ANSWER: These represent the Yin and Yang lights

*QUESTION 40: Why are wine, tea, flowers, and fruits included in the offerings?*

ANSWER: The offering of five-colored fruits symbolizes the Five Elements. However, if someone is unable to gather five colors due to financial constraints, adjustments can be made.

Flowers represent Essence. Wine represents Energy. Tea represents Spirit. Essence, Energy, and Spirit are the Three Treasures of a human.

*QUESTION 41: Why do we burn five incense sticks during offerings?*

ANSWER: Burning incense purifies the surrounding energy and cleanses impurities in the air. The three inner incense sticks symbolize the Three Powers: Heaven, Earth, Humanity. The two outer incense sticks complete the set of five, representing the Five Universal Energies. Together, these five incense sticks correspond to the Five Fragrances that must be cultivated within oneself:

1. Purity Fragrance – Cleansing worldly attachments purifies one's being.
2. Concentration Fragrance – A focused mind and stable spirit emit true fragrance.
3. Wisdom Fragrance – Enlightenment brings inner radiance.
4. Self-Knowledge Fragrance – Understanding oneself creates inner harmony.
5. Liberation Fragrance – Mastering the Yang Spirit allows transcendence.

*QUESTION 42: Why do we not press our hands together as before when bowing? Why introduce a new gesture where the right hand is placed over the left, forming a circular shape?*

ANSWER: Every action in worship carries deep meaning. If one does not seek understanding, it is easy to assume that these gestures were arbitrarily invented. Allow me to explain:

Now that the Way has been widely proclaimed, it is like a lotus flower that has bloomed and borne fruit. This symbolizes the completion of spiritual cultivation, hence, the gesture of forming a circle with both hands, resembling a fruit. However, once the fruit has ripened, it must not be kept for oneself alone; it must be shared with all beings. This is called Universal Salvation. Therefore, when bowing, the hands are spread open at the end of the gesture, symbolizing the sowing of seeds for all to receive.

Furthermore, this bowing posture is deeply tied to the creation of Heaven and Earth: The right hand covering the left represents the union of Yin and Yang, (the right symbolizes Yin, and the left symbolizes Yang). The union of Yin and Yang gives birth to the Supreme Ultimate which is represented by the two hands forming a circle. The two thumbs crossing each other form the character 十

symbolizing "the Two Principles dividing into the Four Symbols." The remaining eight fingers extending outward represent the Eight Trigrams.

This sacred gesture signifies the infinite transformation of the Way, enabling many souls to transcend the mundane and attain sainthood.

*QUESTION 43: Why must we make a marking on the forehead before bowing, then mark the left and right sides?*

ANSWER: Marking the forehead signifies reverence for the Buddha. Marking the left side signifies reverence for the Dharma. Marking the right side signifies reverence for the Sangha (Humanity). This is known as the Threefold Refuge.

*QUESTION 44: Why do we bow three times, and why must we nod four times during each bow?*

ANSWER: Nodding three times, four times each result in a total of twelve nods, symbolizing the twelve prostrations in worship.

Bowing twelve times is a gesture of reverence to the Supreme Being because He is the Lord of the Twelve Heavens and the Sovereign of the Universe. He governs

the Twelve Divine Time Cycles: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Cat, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, Pig. Thus, twelve is a sacred number belonging to the Supreme Being.

I have explained quite a bit to you already, and I will conclude here. I hope you reflect with a calm mind and seek understanding through reason, so that my efforts in answering you are not in vain. However, as for those who reject reasoning and merely claim others are wrong without knowing why, I have nothing more to say to them.







**DISCUSSION ON THE WAY:  
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**Bảo Pháp Nguyễn Trung Hậu**



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