

Lao-Tze and the Tao-teh-Ching

An ancient Chinese classic: its philosophy, authorship and history

The philosophical teachings concerning the absolute and undefinable background of all life were from time immemorial considered an essential in the philosophies of India and China. everything started from That. Logically there has to be That as an eternal but indescribable "background." From It "Spirit" and "Matter" emanated, and into It they will eventually "return." That from which all differentiation emanates was named "Tao" in China and "Sat" in India.

HPB in The Secret Doctrine (Vol. I, p. xxv) states that the Tao-Teh-King is the heart of Lao-Tze's teachings. Today it is the only book that remains of the thousand books he was said to have written (70 were said to have been written on "magic," and the rest were on ethics and religion). It is possible that at a period of declining spirituality, a descending cycle for a race or a nation, certain information was withdrawn for safe keeping. Lao Tze, The "Old Philosopher" is said to have been born in 604 BC at Kwi-te in Ho-nan province. Gautama the Buddha, and Pythagoras were his contemporaries, teaching similar truths, adapted to the peoples they came to in that cycle.

Lao Tze was for many years librarian and historian for the Chou dynasty. His power lies in unobtrusiveness, in the masterful way in which he quietly performed essential duties. He drew attention to the balance of all life, thus, the confusion of many wordy disputes around him were revealed in contrast with his incisive simplicity.

After many years of work he saw the deterioration of the Empire of the Chou was inevitable. It was time for him to leave. He turned his eyes Westward to Tibet where the Great Sages of the Snowy Ranges dwell. To Them he would return. When he arrived at the Empire's North West Gate, Yin Hsi, warden of the gate welcomed him. Knowing he was leaving, he begged Lao Tse to leave him a record of his wisdom. Lao-Tze began writing and shortly put into Yin Hsi's hands the few words of the Tao-Teh-Ching, and with words of mutual esteem he passed on though the gate.

This last treatise survived the "Burning of the Books" which a succeeding Chou Emperor ordered. The Tao-Teh-Ching contains seeds for meditation, and "keys" to moral conduct. The balance of universal law working through evolution is suggested in terse, paradoxical statements.

Some of these may be summarized thus : When Tao is immanent it is the "way of the Universe." It is the One Law of the Universe and of our World. It is ever active.

"The Tao that is spoken of is not the Eternal Tao.
The Name that can be uttered is not the Eternal Word.
Non-existence is called the antecedent of the Universe."

"How clear, how quiet -- I do not know Its Name --
It must be eternal existence, and non-existence !
I shall call it "Tao"

It emanates the Powers and Process which drive all evolution and entrusts their supervision to the "Wise Dragons of Wisdom" (the Dhyani Buddhas -- the primeval "builders"). Tao in one aspect may be said to "assume 'flesh' and "animate" all things. But that is not the ultimate Tao. It deputizes the wise to oversee the causative forces of Life, and the Karma of the past. Lao-Tze wrote:

"Not by Its rising is there Light,
Not by Its setting is there Darkness.
Unceasing, continuous it cannot be defined.
It reverts ultimately to nothingness, yet Is."

Thus out of the old, the new Universe is created and built from materials used before. Tao is "Spirit" rather than "Matter." It is the ordering principle behind all organized life. "The Tao that can be told, is not the Absolute TAO."

As the perennial fountain, it adapts its essence to all beings, it clarifies the universe by its fullness, the more it is drawn on, the more it flows. It is inevitability, Karma. Ultimately, it is benign. It is always graceful, not abrupt, flowing not hesitant, infinitely generous and always compassionate. Therefore it has been called: "the Mother of the World," and "the integrating principle of All. Lao-Tze wrote:

"Before Heaven and Earth existed
There was something nebulous; silent,
Isolated, standing alone, changing not at all --
Eternally pulsing, ever revolving, never falling --
It alone is worthy to be named the Mother of all things."

It is instinct without contrivance. It is purposeful deliberate movement. Lao-Tze says

"These two, the Secret and Its manifestations,
Are in their Nature, the same.
We give them different Names when they appear.

"If forced to give IT a quality, I shall call it Great !
Being "Great" it reaches for out in Space -- infinite --
Infinite, it implies reversion to its origin.
The Tao never acts, yet through it everything is done."

Deliberate, dispassionate and discriminative inaction is the height of efficiency for in a world of contrasts and motion it is the essential harmony of the "part" which melds with full consciousness with the Whole.

"Tao may be looked for, but will never be seen. (yi)
Tao may be listened for, but cannot be heard --(hsi)
Tao may be grasped for, but it escapes being touched, (wei)
Tao is Invisible, Inaudible and Intangible --
These three elude all examination, all isolation --
They blend and are One."

A knowledge of the eternal Tao in every person reduces all intrapersonal and intra-psychic conflicts to a minimum. It can be made into applied metaphysics and practical philosophy. Lao-Tze, considering this, offers:

“All things emerge without an uttered word of instruction. They grow, and no one claims their production. Hence, both results and processes do not disappear.

“To return to the Root of All is true Repose. This is called the fulfilling of one's Destiny. Embodying one's Destiny, one finds the Eternal Law. In the Eternal Law is the Enlightenment of all Wisdom. Not to know the Eternal Law is to invite disaster.”

The Tao-teh-Ching to be correctly interpreted, needs the keys of The Secret Doctrine. Tao, is the Sat of Indian metaphysics. It indicates the One Source--indefinable--of all Nature. The symbol for Teh is a "Path"--a way of life, a way of conducting one's life, taking into account the brotherhood of mankind, his origins, and the goal of living. Defining these, and practicing those in daily life is left to each devotee.

“In manifestation everything carries the yin on its back, And in front will be found the yang.

“He who knows the Eternal Law is tolerant. Tolerant, he is Impartial, Kingly. Being kingly he is fitted to rule all Nature. In accord with Nature, he is in accord with Tao. In accord with Tao, he is truly eternal. Thus is his life preserved from harm.”

Taoism has been compared to modern "quietism," the practice of moderation in living, and with philosophical anarchism. It advocates individual freedom of decision, each has to set their own disciplines of thought and action. Says the Tao-teh-Ching:

“To become again as a little child, constant in virtue, a complete and spontaneous life of primitive simplicity --letting nature manage both processes and results.”

Primitive simplicity, the Tao teaches, gives freedom from useless information and passionate desires. It is humility, a gentle compassion for all living things. It incorporates close attention to the causal side of Nature. Wisdom indicates that law operates in all things, and living a higher life is provable by philosophic questioning and analysis of the potential future.

“Lo ! There is the womb of all Life: transcendent How clear, how quiet-- It must be eternal existence, and non-existence !”

Three prominent virtues are emphasized: brotherly compassion, economy – the simple life – and self-effacement:

“Not to act from personal motive, to conduct the duties of life without worry, to enjoy all things but not to hanker after their flavor, to give to all their rightful place and to repay any injury with kindness.”

The Tao-teh-Ching offers paradoxes. Such as: the eternal abstraction, vs. the activity of formal living. As: Moving with the current of events, yet, attending to their inner meaning. As: a careful preview of potential results before choosing personal duties.

Pointing to the "Way" is the duty of the wise. The Tao resolves all the anxiety of emotional attachment. It recognizes the immortality of the inner Self, and the transitory nature of personal achievements. It draws attention to the essential, the eternal, the permanent, the transcendent and the spiritual continuity of life. This is the essential part of every man and woman, as well as that which is the foundation of all existence, of all creatures. The concept of Karma, the eternal law of justice, and Reincarnation as a process is implied.

“The Sage is known by his actionless activity.
Sitting in the background, yet he is foremost.
Keeping himself uninvolved, yet he is always present.
Striving for no personal end, yet, all
Necessary duties and actions are performed by him.”

A Circle indicates the One Source, and, is the symbol of its practice. Since living is the fine line between the "pairs of opposites," the circle was divided into two intertwined, coma-like parts. These are named yang and yin, these are emblems of the physical and the spiritual ever-present interblended realities. The power to choose, the exercise of "free-will" marks man's reason for existence. Since the human Soul progresses through its embodiment of wisdom, accumulated through experience and resulting from cooperation as a volunteer in nature's vast work. The Tao marks one's first vision of wisdom, its study is Nature, and its final realization through efforts continued persistently for many incarnations. Said Lao-Tze:

“Out of Tao, "One" is born;
Out of One, comes "Two."
From Two, "Three" springs forth,
And out of the Triangle (3), develops the Cube (4).
Thus is the known Universe created.”

As philosophical propositions, these were offered by the wise to all who, by their Karma, seek a knowledge of the True. It closely parallels Buddhist philosophy. When Buddhism was brought to China in the 2nd century BC by Nagarjuna it found a ready reception on the field prepared by Lao Tze. The two philosophies were seen by many to be identical.

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The Tao-teh-Ching is applied psychology based on the metaphysics of unity and it is a study of the interaction of all creatures in Nature. In its esotericism, in personal life, it is the simplicity and diligent but passionless application of Wisdom. It teaches the devotee to "search for meaning" within himself. The Tao is there, always present within. It is the "Higher Self." In that inner, permanent center we can verify truth and develop confidence in the Eternal Self. These are presented in the Tao-teh-Ching as: the "Eternal, the Impersonal, and the Universal."

“In life some reap advantages and some disadvantages
The Law of Tao knows how to conquer without strife.
When it rewards vice or virtue it does it soundlessly.
Without being summoned it appears.
All its results are achieved without obvious design.

“The Sage, knowing this virtue of Tao, says:
To those who are good I act in goodness and in sincerity;
To those who are not good I am also good and sincere,
Thus to all I represent only the goodness they desire,
and the sincerity of the honest man they aspire to be.”

Since each one bathes in the universal Space of Unity, each of us is a portion of the Infinite and the Eternal. In essence we never "die." All wisdom is innate and those who seek certainty and stability of mind, are offered key ideas by it.

“The Sage makes no accumulations. He lives for others.
What riches may flow to him he gives away,
And therefore has ever increasing abundance.
He learns that which many leave unlearned.
He restores to life that which the masses have forgotten.
He assists Nature's course and presumes not to interfere.”

Although presented as paradoxes to the ordinary person, they open the mind of those who are devoted to deeper meanings. Those who think deeply on the concepts offered by Lao-Tze grasp the vision splendid of the Ultimate Man--the Man of Universal and unbounded vision. Because of this Lao-Tze did not hesitate to counsel Princes:

“This ancient maxim I also teach:
'The man of violence dies violently.'
I regard this as my true guide in action in life.

“He who teaches the Tao may counsel an Emperor:
'Use Non-violence,' he will say, 'To those who use
arms such things rebound in time.'
Where armies pass, there thorns and brambles grow.
The passage of a great host is followed by starvation.

“The Sage, therefore embraces the One, the Tao.
He becomes a model before the world.
He does not reveal himself, and is therefore luminous.
He does not justify himself, and is therefore renowned.
He does not boast, and therefore his companions respect him.
He shows no pride, and is therefore the Chief of all men.”

Such is the humble but mighty power of Lao-Tze. He shows we can, even as worldly humans, allow our true Spirit Selves to work outwardly through us, and treat all beings as our brothers.

Confucius after visiting Lao-Tzu wrote:

"I know a bird can fly, a fish swim, and animals can run.
All can be caught in nets, but the dragon is beyond my knowledge
to trap. Anon it ascends the heavens on a cloud, wind born.
Today I have visited Lao Tzu. He is a dragon."

The history of "Taoism" after Lao-Tze is as usual a sad one. There were many popular "sects" in China that enjoined ceremonies, rites, rituals, and festivals. Later, many, recognizing the importance of the Tao-Teh-Ching chose to use the "umbrella" of Taoist metaphysics as a basis for their continued operation. Some used alchemical formularies, and searched for the "Elixir of Life eternal." Others sought to link its paradoxes to divination. Others used it to explain "spiritism," "animism," and "the vital meridians" of the body. Sadly, it also suffered many alterations and was re-codified in the 17th-18th century under the Manchus. They attempted to bring it back to its original writing, but many of the older books had vanished.

Lao Tse

The Chinese, a wonderful and ancient people are said (in The Secret Doctrine) to be of only slightly less antiquity than the Indians. Both countries adopted an almost simultaneous beginning for their current era, which, the Chinese set 4,700 years back at 2,697 B.C. Their accuracy in science shows they used inventions thousands of years ago that have been adopted as a base for the progress of our present civilization. These include: paper, printing, porcelain, the compass, gun-powder, mathematics, hydraulics, all phases of engineering and astronomy.

Their legends, traditions and myths go back to the age of the dinosaurs (dragons) and of the deluge that overwhelmed the Atlantean continent. In philosophy and Cosmogony they show a wisdom similar to that of the Hindus. From Lao-Tze down to Hiouen-Tsang their literature alludes frequently to the wisdom preserved by the Himalayan adepts, of the "Great Teachers of the Snowy Mountains," and of the "Sacred Island." [HPB Articles III 332-3]

It is said that Lao-Tze refocused the ancient teachings concerning the incommensurable Tao. The Tao stands for Absoluteness--an essential background of abstract, a life-giving eternal Existence, from which all manifestation springs. Its symbol was the Circle, the cipher. All Chinese philosophy and art is based on the Ten, the perfect symbol that unites heaven and earth through the soul-mind of understanding.

Lao-Tze is said to have written a thousand books – now lost to us. [The last of the Chou Emperors, c. 221 BC, who succeeded the era of Lao Tse spent much of his time destroying ancient records by burning them systematically.]

The only book by Lao Tze that remains, is the last. It was written when, as a very old man when he paused, at the Western Gate of the Empire, on the Path to the Himavat. At the request of Yin-His, the Warden, he briefly recorded the essence of the Tao. The Tao-teh-Ching we now have has passed through the hands of translators and interpreters of the mystic symbols used by Lao Tzu. The original text is no longer extant. In the

17-18th century under the Manchus attempts to restore it from ancient manuscript were attempted. But the Tao-teh-Ching we have is only this last attempt at restoration.

In the Tao-teh-Ching each verse is but the brief opening of a door, whose closing swing gives us a glimpse out upon the eternal quest. We have a fugitive vision, and that glimpse makes us visionaries in our turn. The true Sage, in the depths of our soul, taking its stand upon the timeless beauty and the harmony of the Universe, pierces in time to the principle of all things. This was "Taoism."

Its three most Precious Jewels are "weakness, emptiness, and humility." Their earthly counterparts being "water, space and flowers." To understand and embody these attributes was to be a Taoist, a follower of Wu-wei (the "true way;" the path of natural life, of least resistance and of the maximum effectiveness in assisting others). The dragon, symbol of boldness in wisdom and discrimination, was chosen as the symbol of the human soul in its divine adventure.

When Tao is immanent it is the "way of the Universe--its Laws. It is the: "Powers" and "Forces" which intelligently and cooperatively drive evolution. It "assumes 'flesh' and animates all things." It is "Life universal and eternal." It is Spirit but transcends even that. It is also "Matter." But in the popular mind it is closer to Spirit than to matter, as the ordering principle, the builder and creator that organizes all and is "behind" all life.

It is the perennial fountain: it adapts its essence to all beings, it clarifies the universe by its fullness, the more it is drawn on, the more it flows, it is inexhaustible. It is inevitability--Karma. Ultimately it is benign. It is always graceful, not abrupt. It is flowing not hesitant. It is infinitely generous and compassionate, and has been symbolized as "the Mother of the World." It is thought of as: "the integrating principle of All. It is instinct without contrivance in its deliberate purposeful movement. It has been symbolized as "The Great Breath," and that which is behind that Breath the ever unseen and incognizable Life.

Immanent in the world it is said to be deliberate, dispassionate and discriminative, the height of efficiency. Being inherent in the part and the whole it is harmonious movement. Considered as the intelligence of any one of its many "parts," it is supreme in that which is able to meld with full understanding and consciousness with the Whole. Grasping the concept that it is the immortal Life in all beings, in mankind intrapersonal and intra-psychic conflicts may be reduced to a minimum. It is action in which applied metaphysics and philosophy are made active through the understanding, and the passions and appetites are subdued and placed under control by the Divine Spirit within.

Taoism as a religion

In the course of five centuries the metaphysical teachings of Taoism became degraded and was incorporated into existing sects which for long had codified rituals and practices. Taoism was adopted by older cults as a kind of legitimizing umbrella, a certain mysterious esotericism, while they maintained and pursued their own special objectives. Some are designated:

Alchemical: as the symbols of alchemy were employed to describe psychological and mental disciplines and their results. The search for the philosophical "Elixir of Life," was mirrored exoterically by the search for an elixir that would prolong physical life. To these were attached some of the principles of chemistry, manufacture and other practical sciences.

Divination had always been of deep interest, as the ancient Chinese knew of the astral light, of karma and of the potential of the future being reflected there. The great text named the I-Ching, attributed to Emperor Wen, (13th century BC) founder of the Chou dynasty, was as puzzling as are the mysterious verses of Nostradamus, and that study was incorporated into Taoist sects. So too was Geomancy, or the orientation of a fixed structure with relation to the magnetic and pranic lines of force of the area, and the purpose for which a building was to be used.

A knowledge of the entities (elementals, kamarupas and elementary beings, devatas, etc...) that live on the Astral Plane was a part of Chinese lore. And some sects developed practices that made use of those astral denizens, and invoked their powers. Those so fascinated added their practices to Taoist sects and the "worship" of ancestors was reinforced in popular rituals.

The Chinese had always been aware of the interaction of Nature spirits who rule the elements from within the invisible Astral realms, being responsible for certain Natural laws and collective Karma. This has been compared by Western scholars with aspects of polytheism and animism. Often and without understanding the symbolical nature of the designations employed, these scholars and the various kinds of symbolisms used in the records of which are to be found in those religions and myths prior to the Christian unification.

Chronology & References in Theosophical Literature

3,100 BC c.	Fu-H'si - The Krishna of China 1st Ruler of China; also Po H'si	. T 308 v. 14
2,700 BC c.	Hwang Ti 3rd Ruler Kings of China Bamboo Books	. T 19 v. 15; 318 v. 14 . T 308 v. 14; 258 v. 15 [<u>Glos. 49, SD I xxv fn</u>]
2,800 BC c.	<u>Yih King</u> , or The Kabbalah of China Book of Changes	T 318 v. 25 [<u>Glos. 81-2, 324, 379</u>]
2,200 BC c.	<u>Shu King</u> ancient volumes,	<u>SD I xliii, xxvfn, Isis I, 11, T</u> 310 v. 14
1,850 BC c.	<u>Chung Ki</u> book Chinese Esotericism	. T 34 v. 14 . T 558 v. 47
1,200 BC c.	<u>Kung Wen</u>	I-Ching first written by Wen, the founder of the Chou dynasty 1220 BC
b. 604 BC	<u>Lao Tse</u> Eternal Principles	T 437 v.21; T 18, 70 v. 15; T 261 v. 20 T 351, 395, 491 v. 20; T 81 v. 5 T see series in v. 45, v. 46
	<u>Lao Tse's Tao-teh-king</u>	TM 29 v. 22 <u>SD I xxv</u> [<u>Glos. 186, 320</u>]
551-479 BC	Confucius, The Codifier Confucius to his Chelas	T 351 v.14; T 393 v. 14 TM 135
517 BC	Confucius	several meetings with Lao Tzu
6-5th cent. BC	Lao Li	The first of Lao Tse's disciples (a contemporary of Confucius) wrote 15 essays on the <u>Tao Teh King</u>
4-3rd cent. BC	Chwang Tzu	<u>SD II 219</u> T213 v. 15 disciple of Lao Tzu - commentaries dialectician - codified and methodologized - philosophical school established - never become a "governor or administrator" - consider all contradictions/paradoxes - developing concentration, discrimination - abandoning attachment to the senses - "fasting the mind" - yielding to natural changes - acceptance of the death of our personality
371-288 BC	Mencius (disciple of Confucius)	T 113 v. 15
470-391 BC	Mo Tzu	on social conduct and moderation - a critic of Confucian ritualism - doctrine of Universal Love - Karma - the "Will of Heaven"
4th cent. BC	Yang Chu	(Phil. School of ethical egoism)
300-230 BC	Hsun Tzu	(Phil. School based on man born with original sin (Confucian) - transform by moral training

		- "Heaven" as Karmic laws - skeptical of "spirits of the dead" and their worship.
	Lieh Tzu	dies 122 BC
	Liu An	T 161 v. 15 Added Alchemical terms and procedures to Taoism - circumstances determine man's progress - search for "elixir of life"
2nd cent. AD	Nagarjuna brings	Buddhism to China Buddhism and Taoism shown to have much in common and both religions co-existed peacefully.
55 to 18 BC	Yang Hsuing	(Philos. Man a mixture of good and evil)
1st cent. AD	Thang Tao Ling	a "magician" Shaman introduced talismans and magic potions for life-prolon- gation. Some parallels with Buddhism
1 AD	<u>Lang-Shu</u>	- Translation of Nagarjuna [<u>Glos. 186</u>]
27 - 97 AD	Wang Ch-ung	developed alchemical and mystical explanations of Lao Tze - A <u>vital fluid</u> pervaded the body and its harmonic balance was to be looked after medicine, herbs, and channels of the meridians and senses defined.
226-249 AD	Wang Pi	Commentator on <u>Tao-te-King</u> - <u>Wu</u> (Non-being) source of all things "functions" though <u>Yu</u> (beings) - <u>Ch'ing T'an</u> (Pure speech) - used for metaphysics and philosophy
1130-1200 AD	Chu Hsi	[Confucianist] divination by use of the <u>I-Ching</u> emphasized <u>I-Ching</u> first written by Kung Wen the founder of the Chou dynasty 1220 BC
1472-1528 AD	Wang Yang-ming	[Back to Lao Tzu]
17th cent. AD	Manchu Dynasty	<u>Tao-Te-King</u> - interpretation and revision

Articles & Notes

Lao-Tzu

Japanese Sects	<u>SD I 173</u>
Esoteric School disappeared	<u>SD I xxiii</u> <u>HPB II 81</u> <u>HPB III 332-3</u>
Mysteries based on 10	<u>SD II 603 301-2</u> (3rd eye)
Works disappeared	<u>SD I xxv xxxlv</u> <u>II 692</u>
Seven Jewels of Taoists	<u>SD I 173</u>
Kwan-Yin, Kwan-Shi-Yin .	<u>Glos. 183</u>
[Kwan Shi Yin (Logos):	<u>SD I 71-2 136 452 471 -3</u>
[Kwan Yin (Divine Voice);	<u>SD I 72 136fn-7 288fn 451-2</u> <u>SD I 431</u> <u>SD II 179</u> <u>HPB Art III 341-44</u>
Hoang Ty "The Great Spirit" -- His "sons" are identical with the reincarnating Egos esoterically	<u>Glos 143</u>
About Ancient China - HPB ..	<u>TM 36</u> v. 15
Ancient and Honorable China ..	<u>T 306</u> v. 15
The Six Honored Ones of China ..	<u>TM 188</u> v. 12
Cosmology, Cosmogony	<u>Isis II 49 554</u> <u>SD I 356 658</u> <u>SD II 54 554</u>
Cycles & Civilizations	<u>SD II 280fn 620-1</u>
Antiquity of China	<u>SD II 280-1 311-2 364 203 425 603</u> <u>SD I 366</u>
Philosophy of China	<u>Isis I 18 214 323 560</u> <u>Isis I 571-2 580 602</u> <u>Isis II 49 239 344 554 576-9</u>
Three Aspects of Universe	<u>SD I 128</u> <u>HPB II 348</u>
Spirit emanates ethereal life	<u>SD II 36-7</u>
Circle as Symbol	<u>SD I 271 fn II 554</u> <u>Isis II 159 I 600</u>
Astronomy in China .	<u>SD II 624 766</u>
Divine Dynasties . .	<u>SD II 365 368</u>
Dragons of China	<u>SD I 408-9 II 54 205-6 209-10,</u> <u>SD II 280fn 364-5 486 713</u>
Magnetism in Ancient China	<u>TM 70</u> v. 51
Chinese Spirits, HPB . . .	<u>HPB Art II, 348</u>
Three-fold Man and Elementaries	
Deluge traditions . .	<u>SD II 365 371-2 425</u>
Writing symbolism .	<u>SD I 307 & fn</u>
Lolo aborigines . .	<u>SD II 280fn 195-6fn 425</u>
Old China and the New .	<u>T 258</u> v. 15
China and the Chinese (repr.)	<u>TM 131 171</u> v. 43

Key

Glos	Theosophical Glossary, 1892, by H.P. Blavatsky & others
HPB Art	Articles of H.P. Blavatsky, 3 volume set from Theosophy Company, Los Angeles, Calif, USA.
Isis	"Isis Unveiled" (volumes I & II, followed by page nos.)
SD	"The Secret Doctrine" (volumes I & II, followed by page nos.)
T	"Theosophy" (page, vol.) a magazine published by Theosophy Company, Calif, USA.
TM	"The Theosophical Movement" (page, vol.) a magazine published by Theosophy Co., India.

Taoist Sects & Practices

Alchemy, Geomancy, Divination

I-Ching interpretations

Kung Wen Chou

Spiritualism and spirit worship - marauding evil spirits

Polytheism of various kinds

Religious (popular) Taoism

- abuse of the power of belief and credulity
- hypnosis
- abuse of psychic powers "miracles"
- "To be, to know, to act – is to rise above the superficial – the wisdom of gnosis

Vitalistic Taoism -- self-help -- not "organized"

Ch'i - breath - vitality - prana -- the Power of Tao.

- medicine, herbs and their powers of restoration
- study of bodily meridians, their blockage and release
- life-giving enterprises -- beaming of life-energy to others (Ch'i)
- perfect physical health and cleanliness, serenity of mind, mildness of temper, attention to all duties of life benevolence, tolerance, compassion, assistance to others, subduing the affections and emotions, installing harmony in mind and feeling, returning them to their original purity--as issued from the One Cosmic TAO, selflessness

Philosophical Taoism

- deposits of psychic errors conceal the SELF from what it is meant to be seen. Our perceptions are limited by our own self-made organs.
- to purify and direct daily life with virtue
- creative quietude

Other cults

adopted Taoism as a kind of legitimizing umbrella, while maintaining and pursuing their own objectives.

From an edited version of a post by Dallas TenBroeck, October 28, 2001
<http://www.theosophy.com/theos-talk/200110/tt00461.html>

The “Tao Teh King” is the being studied in the 7 pm study class each Wednesday.

The United Lodge of Theosophists, 62 Queens Gardens, W2 3AH <http://www.theosophy-ult.org.uk>