

World religions – buddhism

Religion



The idea of a "union of opposites" pervades Taoist writings and exerts a tremendous influence over the root philosophical concepts of Taoism, encompassing issues which may be considered metaphysical or even mystical, but also influencing issues of applied ethics and personal behavior.

The idea of conjoined opposites begins at the root, metaphysical level of Taoist thought which asserts that "being and non-being give rise to each other"; a stark departure from Christianity which posits that God is eternal and so has always been (Chen, 1989, p. 55).

This metaphysical assertion continues from the macrocosmic (universal) to the microcosmic (personal) levels, where opposites are seen to give rise to the world of motion and being: "The difficult and easy complement each other, The long and short shape each other, The high and low lean on each other, Voices and instruments harmonize with one another, The front and rear follow upon each other" (Chen, 1989, p. 55).

Following up on the universally derived union of opposites from a macrocosmic level, the Taoist asserts a union of opposites, also, within the self and in regards to personal conduct: "the sage manages affairs without action," and therefore should practice "creative quietude" in pursuit of personal wisdom and even ambition. The idea that opposites are, in nature, united through the Tao means that moral divisions are also damaging and artificial.

The true sage accomplishes merit "without claiming merit" and since "he does not claim merit, His merit does not go away" (Chen, 1989, p. 55). Such seeming paradoxes are often difficult for Westerners to understand The idea

that the universe itself could be comprised of a union of opposites, rather than a pervading and omnipotent single-Creator is not compatible with idea of Christianity which elevates a dualistic vision of the universe with good and evil at odds with one another and a single, benevolent God.

Taoism seems to reflect a much more organic and complete of vision, at least in my opinion although the extension of Taoist philosophies into western religion is probably not something which will happen any time soon, such a " union of opposites" would provide a rich synthesis of spiritual and philosophical ideas. References Chen, E. M. (1989). *The Tao Te Ching: A New Translation with Commentary* (1st ed.). St. Paul, MN: Paragon House.