

An analysis of taoism and its theories philosophy essay



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Taoism has many profound theories which for the common person can be difficult to understand. In general Taoism is a balanced relationship between humans and nature. The most basic concept is the Tao. This originally refers to the road extending in one direction. The Tao is unseen and unheeded, yet it is the Tao that is truly and constantly useful, like the space in a vessel or a window. (Choice)Tao refers to the rules governing behaviors in human beings and objects. In order to make this theory become more clear Taoism draws a Taiji Diagram: This is a curve dividing a circle into two parts, one half is in white representing Yang (the bright side) while the other is in black, representing Yin (the dark side). There is a black dot in the white part, while a white dot is in the black part representing the Yin and Yang of each other and can transform into the counterpart. The original name since it looks like two fish end to end is called Diagram of Yin Yang Fish.

There is no greater illusion than fear, no greater wrong than preparing to defend yourself, no greater misfortune than having an enemy.

(Mitchell)Taoism wants peace and stability like many other religions. Taoism thinks people must perform according to rules in order to gain a harmonious and orderly world where everyone is equal and kind to each other. With this belief there is more the world should exist without wars; this only brings disaster and suffering. Taoist's should live in peace harmoniously with nature; they should also protect nature instead of destroying it.

Taoism is one of the great philosophical and religious traditions that originated in China. Taoism and Confucianism began at about the same time, around the sixth century B. C. E. The goal of Taoism is to achieve tao, to find the way. Tao is the ultimate reality, a presence that existed before the

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universe was formed and which continues to guide the world and everything in it. Tao is sometimes identified as the Mother, or the source of all things. That source is not god or a supreme being, as Taoism is not monotheistic. The focus is not to worship one god, but instead on coming into harmony with tao. Tao is the essence of everything that is right, and complications exist only because people choose to complicate their own lives. Desire, ambition, fame and selfishness are seen as hindrances to a harmonious life. It is only when a person rids himself of all desires can tao be achieved. By shunning every earthly distraction, the Taoist is able to concentrate on life itself. The longer the person's life, the more saintly the person is presumed to have become. Eventually the hope is to become immortal, to achieve tao, to have reached the deeper life. This is the afterlife for a Taoist, to be in harmony with the universe, to have achieved tao.

The Tao has been compared with Nirvana with its similarities. Both have beliefs in an inner light that will guide a person into the right direction. Taoism is traditionally pointed back to Lao-tzu. There is not much known about him and some scholar's doubt he existed. (Hopfe)The Tao Te Ching is one of the most influential books in Chinese literature and was supposedly written by Lao-tzu. The comparison that comes to my mind first with Taoism is Hermetic philosophy and how they coincide. My infatuation with this religion and philosophy has been a long process of study. I enjoy the fact that these beliefs make sense and show how a person can live a fair and balanced life by following basic concepts of reality. This relates to my thinking because I value life as much as the Taoist. Another interesting factor of this religion is they kept deities at a distance. The balance follows many

aspects of Christianity with the Yen Yang concept. The Tao though does not distinguish between good and evil. Many people would at first glance seem to believe this is a lazy religion because doing nothing almost seems to be the main goal. The first chapter of the book talks about basic aspects of religion. I see how Taoism fits in with nature worship, and ancestral worship. (Hopfe)

The benefit for society if Taoism is practiced would be largely living in peace without war. The value of life itself, and living in unison. The belief of valuing life itself has a great appeal to the public. The old Taoist's helped rulers rule a peaceful country that was very successful. I also feel that the Yen Yang explains the balance of human life. There is no good without evil or vice versa, light requires darkness, wisdom requires folly, and so on. The concept of center living would take out one major problem of power out of the equation for people. The ultimate goal for the Taoist is to achieve immortality through meditation and balance.

Taoism gained popularity when China was going through much civil strife, and along with Confucianism, Taoism gave many people answers to their difficult existence. No two Taoist believe exactly alike this is why it has been hard to explain as a religion. Taoists worship and pray to several different entities. In addition to the thousands of various lower gods. There are the Three Pure Ones and the Eight Immortals. The Eight Immortals were once human beings; they became spiritual beings either by being tested by the gods or by other mysterious and extraordinary means. There are several legends about each of them seven men and one woman.

Chuang-tzu is one of the most significant interpreters of Taoism; his work is considered one of the most definitive texts of Taoism. Chuang-Tzu taught what can be understood of the Tao. Chuang-tzu is famously known for his tale of his wife's death. His disciples sought to comfort him in his time of mourning but found him singing and beating time on a wooden bowl. (Hopfe) He was also known for being the "genius of the absurd."

The factor of converting to Taoism is really quite simple to obtain. If you believe you are Tao then you are. It is as simple as that but yet grasping the writings and teachings are a matter of interpretation. For anyone looking for a religion I would say this would be a more simple to achieve process than most other religions that exist today. The teachings are profound but comforting in the simplest form. Taoism is both a religion and a philosophy. It is a philosophy when it is discussed as such; it is a religion when its teachings are adopted as a way to live. (Zenith)

The focus of Tao is utilized in many aspects of our daily lives. I consider it almost comparable to Confucianism in ways. Live a good life try to obtain the best and do to others only what you wish to be done to you. I have done this in my normal life a great deal in the past five years. When I was much younger I was foolish and did some horrible things. I felt that I have paid for everything in my past more than seven fold. I have chosen to do the best I possibly can and to not lie, or do wrong with ill intentions to achieve a greater result. I will attest that this process has worked with tremendous results in my personal life and each day I aspire to improve myself whether it be in education, self-improvement, focusing on my flaws to correct them, or any other problem I see that I can repair. Many people would argue that we <https://assignbuster.com/an-analysis-of-taoism-and-its-theories-philosophy-essay/>

do not utilize Tao belief in our daily lives but that is also a matter of interpretation. I chose this religion because of my interest in how its philosophy works. I will admit it is hard to pinpoint and dictate exactly what Tao means universally because people choose what the Tao is to them.

The philosophy of the Tao is easy to understand why people grasped on so quickly to its teachings. The belief that all human nature wants harmony and peace is definite for the majority. Happiness is dictated by government and how well the ruler balanced the Tao. I wonder how the world would currently be if everyone grasped the teachings of Taoism and practiced it within their own religions. We would have a much happier place we live in with less violence and corruption. There is much that can be learned by Chinese religions even in the midst of their turmoil in the People's Republic of China where religion is shunned they have found inner peace grasping on to these teachings.

Today Taoism is mainly practiced in China and Taiwan. It has also spread to other parts of Asia and even around the world. There are about 20 million followers worldwide. Most of them live in Taiwan. About 30, 000 North Americans practice Taoism. One thing that keeps Taoism popular is its flexibility. Many followers practice Taoism in conjunction with other religions. The diversity is the real treasure of this religion. Many of the ancient martial arts also implement the Tao into their practices and teachings. The path of water also needs to be noted since it is a core Tao belief to take the path of least resistance. (James)

I understand the goal to achieve a peace in a chaotic world that surrounds us. Taoism has surpassed hundreds of years of survival and condemnation since its founding. I will say I believe the only reason many would not grasp this religion and run with it is simply because their heart has ill intentions or individual gain is more important. Taoism is easy to conceal because its mere practice but yet many seek to obtain the secrets it holds in its teachings. To everything there is an opposite and yet the Tao teaches us to accept these mere things and balance our lives. No matter how dark life becomes there is always that speck of light or in my eyes hope. The same is for no matter how great things become there is always that speck of darkness or corruption.

This is Taoism explained and yet not explained. I have covered its history and its teachings but yet told you nothing at all. There are many religions in the world but they are not fully dictated by the individual like Taoism. Even with its questionable history and authenticity just like some of the bible Dead Sea scrolls it has survived. There are many books that focus on this religion including Tao Te Pooh, and Tao Te Piglet that are quite fun to read. They have used the characters of Winnie the Pooh to depict some of the Tao teachings. These are good places to start and to understand how the Tao works and how it can apply to your life. It has brought comfort to me in many forms even during depression I was able to contrast its teachings in my own life.

One of my largest fears is death itself. The death I fear is that of the body. We know nothing else for certain. So maybe the fear is not of death itself but of the mystery of what it leads to. (Stenudd) Taoism being its diverse nature
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can easily be implemented into a current religion with all positive results. I strive for improvement each and every day the day this ceases I have died in the mind which has killed my spirit. Then I have ceased to learn and settled for less than my own potential.

True words are not pleasing. Pleasing words are not true. Those who are right do not argue. Those who argue are not right. Those who know are not learned. Those who are learned do not know. The sage does not hoard. The more he does for others, the more he has. The more he thereby gives to others, the ever more he gets. Heaven's Way is to benefit and not to harm. The sage's way is to act and not to contend. (Stenudd)