

Taoism by confucius – my research

Philosophy



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When first deciding to write my term paper on Taoism I thought it would be just another religion. In my research I found so many different translations that my head started spinning. There are really no known facts about the founder of Taoism, Lao Tsu, except that he was possibly a contemporary of Confucius.

He was searching for a way that would avoid the constant feudal warfare and other conflicts that disrupted society during his lifetime. Religious Tolerance, 2007) Since there are many aspects to Taoism in this paper I will do my best to explain what Taoism is and also explain some of its main concepts.

Taoism is described as a Chinese religious and philosophical system aimed at assisting its followers to achieve harmony within themselves and with the energy of the universe. (Von Dehsen, 1999, p. 113) As I have found in all my research Tao, translated to English, means " the way. " Individuals that follow Taoism don't concern themselves with society and with how much wealth or power they possess. They value their own life above everything else.

Taoists become one with nature and the universe. As I understand it, they live their life not concerned with what others think of them, they do not want praise for good deeds they may have done. When an individual is able to accomplish this mind set they are said to have reached Tao. Reaching the Tao and becoming one with nature requires the individual to clear their mind of all the things they have been taught. This takes a deep commitment and is very hard to do. Taoists believe in keeping their bodies healthy in order to stay in balance with the Tai Chi. Chi is a physical exercise that focuses the mind while conditioning the body.

The chi isn't the only way Taoist keep their bodies healthy, they also meditate and rely on herbal remedies. Taoist have spent thousands of years studying and experimenting with herbs and they have developed hundreds of formulas to cure or prevent illnesses. The herbal experimenting started because some Taoist believed that certain herbal formulas could guarantee immortality. I am not sure if there are any documented cases of immortality but being a believer of holistic medicine and acupuncture I can see the benefits herbs in my life today. Yin and Yang is the most universally recognizable symbol for Taoism. The symbol is a circle with one half black and the other half white. Both halves have a spot with the opposite color which represents being part of the other.

Yin and Yang are two complementary, interdependent principles or phases alternating in space and time; they are emblems evoking the harmonious interplay of all pairs of opposites in the universe. (Taoism, 2007) Taoist believe yin and yang exist in all aspects of life. Some believe the white represents good and the black represents evil. If there is good there is bad, if there is wealth there is poverty and if there is woman there is man. In other words there is an opposite to everything. The universe flows in harmony without ever stopping. In chapter 42 of the Tao-Te-Ching there is a reference about yin and yang.

The Tao is one, from the one come yin and yang, from these two creative energy (chi), from energy, ten thousand things, the forms of all creations, all life embodies yin and embraces yang, through their union achieving harmony. Tao-Te-Ching, Ch. 51) This brings us to our next concept, the five elements. The five elements are earth, metal, fire, wood and water. This <https://assignbuster.com/taoism-by-confucius-my-research/>

theory is as important as the yin and yang. It is believed that these elements are part of a constantly moving cycle. An example of this cycle would be the way these elements can create or destroy each other; water puts out fire, earth absorbs water, from metal we get water when heated by fire.

These elements are also used when determining medical illnesses in Chinese medicine. Each element listed above represent an organ in our body. For example, fire represents the heart and small intestine; earth represents the stomach and muscle; metal represents the lungs and large intestine; water represents the bladder and bones; and wood represents the liver and gallbladder. If the energy within an organ is not balance and because all of these elements work in a cycle it will affect other organs in your body. To give you a better example, in traditional Chinese medicine, a person may complain of trouble with the lungs and weeping or grief, and as these are classified as metal characteristics earthly herbs with a metal boosting nature may be employed and foods classified as fire would be restricted, as fire destroys or hinders metal. In this way the balance of energy in the body will be regained. (Taoist and Taoist Arts, 2007, p.

2) The concepts I have listed in this report are only a small picture of what this religion is about. In this world of conflict and unrest, a world that is nevertheless interdependent, Taoists still search to provide natural ways of solving problems. They gain the strength to transform their own lives and thereby to fulfill their mission. They try to help individuals as well as societies to transform from a way of life based on conflict to a harmonious way of life.

(Chung, 2007) In today's world followers of Taoism would be environmentalist, naturalists and natural food advocates to name a few. There <https://assignbuster.com/taoism-by-confucius-my-research/>

are many people in today's world that may not even be aware that they are actually practicing Taoism or its beliefs. I have learned a lot researching Taoism and I plan to educate myself more especially the practices of the Tai Chi.

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