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Chinese Religions: Confucianism & Daoism

Human beings are the most refined creation ever created by God; the reason for this excellence is the wisdom that has been bestowed upon them. God Almighty has blessed human beings with the ability to think critically and make the most appropriate decision according to the situation, which makes it outstanding among the other creatures roaming the Planet Earth. However. This does not mean that human beings are free and able to do anything they want. Human beings are bound by some specific rules and regulations that they need to follow in order to be within the moral and ethical boundaries. There exists a predetermined doctrine or set of principles for every person or society, that defines the boundaries for the activities that what is correct or what is incorrect. It defines that guideline that how a person should lead their lives and what should they do or avoid in order to be a good person in the eyes of God and the world.

 There are a number of religions in this world; 4200 according to many estimates. Every religion teaches different values and ways of life to its followers, but the most basic values and norms remain the same in every religion. Some religions believe in the existence of one God or a diety that should be worshipped, however, there are such religions as well, that teach worshipping a number of religions or deities. There are such religions as well that support the concept that there is no God. One of such religions is Confucianism.

Confucius himself was a person who believed in the Chinese concept of the universe. One that is ruled by The Heavens (天 - Tien) (as a kind of omnipotent force that governs the world similar to the strongest power in a pantheon) along with a very detailed spirit world with a celestial bureaucracy of gods, demons, and spirits (Confucius). Although most people will say that Confucianism is not concerned with Gods and the like and is more of a philosophy and way of life, this isn’t strictly true. Confucianism prescribes a way of life and philosophy, but it’s clear this philosophy is grounded in what Westerners might call “The Will of Heaven” and yes, that refers to Tien 天, the supreme being.

Many people have the misconception that Confucians don’t believe in God. Most probably, much of the confusion stems from the Western translation of the word “Tien” which is literally “Heaven.” Westerners don’t equate “heaven” with “God” they equate it more with the sky. But in ancient Chinese mythology “heaven” refers to the Supreme Omnipotent All-Powerful God and Ruler of All. The old name for Tien is “Shangdi” 上帝 (The Emperor Above All) and this refers to Tien 天. There is definitely a concept of a God similar to the omnipotent Judeo-Christian Abrahamic God. Confucianism was for reinforcing the widespread belief and acceptance of the “Mandate of Heaven” (Tienming 天命) to the people. Confucious himself was said to have been blessed by Tien in unlimited ways, according to his disciple Zigong. Confucius was a staunch believer in the “Mandate of Heaven” - the Chinese version of the “Divine Right of Kings” from Europe.

The Mandate of Heaven is a very strong force in Chinese culture thanks to Confucius and Confucianism. There is no doubt that Confucius believed in Tien and the gods, and Confucianism recognized this divine mythology as did centuries worth of Chinese dynasties that followed the Mandate of Heaven (Sim). Confucianism teaches a person how to live life in accordance with the Mandate of Heaven. It is not much different from Moses giving out the Ten Commandments after coming down from Mt. Sinai. Both are rooted in the idea of following the will of a supreme being.

**Daoism (Taoism)**

Tao (or Dao) is the name of the power or the "Way" that Taoists acknowledge makes everything on the planet. It works like the laws of interest. As opposed to contributing a huge amount of vitality endeavoring to explain what the Tao is, Taoists base on continuing with a fundamental and solid way of life in concurrence with nature. This is one of the most noteworthy gauges in Taoism. Every language, culture, and religion has words that pass on more than one fundamental idea. In spite of the way that such words as often as possible have a couple of layers of significance, there will never be any disorder regarding what is being said in the lines.

Regardless of the way that there are various implications of Tao, this single word grants an entire perspective, a frame of mind toward the key thought of life and the universe. The word Tao is nothing not actually a surge of the noteworthy solidarity of the universe and of the manner in which individuals must take to join, rather than upset, that solidarity. By and by the request develops that what is like this, and how might we find it. The route begins with a cognizance of the start of the universe. "Understanding the out of date start is the core of the way," communicated the old Chinese sage Lao Tzu, the maker of the Tao Te Ching. Alluded to in English as The Book of the Way, this ideal gem was created around 2,500 years back (Kohn). Similarly, just like a preeminent work of composing, it has its spot in history as the chief made a record out of the Taoist perspective. So on a very basic level, the Tao Religion or thinking is about the Interdependence of all things. The early Taoist perspective was altogether affected by the impression of nature itself.

Taoism is a philosophical and enchanted speculation of marvelous proximity where the heavenly fuses or has appeared in the material world. The ideal is nature itself. According to legend, Taoism came from nowhere. One day the sage Lao Tsu presented a book he wrote to the King of Zhou and then left the kingdom and disappeared. Like Buddhism, it was originally practical teaching of personal discipline and insight; spiritual but not religious. Like Buddhism, modern Taoism has become infested with superstition and religious doctrine.

The Tao is ineffable because naming is the origin of all particular things. The name is not the thing it names; the particular does not apprehend the universal. But we can only speak with words about particular things. What is not said is as important as what is said. Things are defined by what they are not. A thing and its opposite are still particular things and together they do not combine to give the universal. The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao. The Tao is always present within you, empty but inexhaustible. You can use it any way you want. We use what we have to fashion a cup but it’s the emptiness inside that holds whatever we want. We join spokes together to form a wheel but it’s the hole in the center that makes the wagon wheel move. We work with being but non-being is what we use. That is what Taoism is all about. Hence, in a nutshell, it can be concluded that both these Chinese religions are not merely religions but a complete philosophy or doctrines of life, that teach the making how they should lead their lives and be a more humble and down to earth person.

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