

Daoshi Bushido, by Dr. Daniele Trevisani

Principles and Origins of the Martial Art

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Daoshi

Daoshi (道士) refers to a priest in Taoism. According to legend, these Taoist recluses would practice alchemy and austerity in the mountains, with the aim of becoming xian, or immortal beings. The activities of the *daoshi* tend to be informed by materials which may be found in the *Daozang*, or Daoist canon; however, *daoshi* generally choose, or inherit, specific texts which have been passed down for generations from teacher to student, rather than consulting published versions of these works. *Daoshi* practices can include various ceremonies, including fortune telling.

Today there are two priesthoods. The Quanzhen School, which is dominant in the northern half of the People's Republic of China, have priests that resemble Buddhist monks in that they are celibate, vegetarian, and live in temples. Their headquarters is the White Cloud Temple in Beijing.

In contrast, the Zhengyi Dao priests can marry, eat meat, and live in their own homes. They are only priests part-time and hold other jobs. They are dominant in southern China. They are led by a hereditary Celestial Master based in the Republic of China (Taiwan) since fleeing after the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949. Since he is beyond the PRC's control, all mainland priests are supposed to register with the Communist government's Chinese Taoist Association to break their bonds with him. Many have not joined.



Taoist monk



Soothsayer outside of Changchun Temple,
Wuhan.

Xian (Taoism)

Xian (Chinese: 仙/仚/僊; pinyin: *xiān*; Wade–Giles: *hsien*) is a Chinese word for an enlightened person, translatable in English as:

- "spiritually immortal; transcendent; super-human; celestial being" (in Daoist/Taoist philosophy and cosmology)
- "physically immortal; immortal person; immortalist; saint" (in Daoist religion and pantheon)
- "alchemist; one who seeks the elixir of life; one who practices longevity techniques" or by extension "(alchemical, dietary, qigong) methods for attaining immortality" (in Chinese alchemy)
- "wizard; magician; shaman" (in Chinese mythology)
- "genie; elf, fairy; nymph" (in popular Chinese literature, 仙境 *xian jing* is "fairyland", Faerie)
- "sage living high in the mountains; mountain-man; hermit; recluse" (folk etymology for the character 仙)
- "immortal (talent); accomplished person; celestial (beauty); marvelous; extraordinary" (metaphorical modifier)

Xian semantically developed from meaning spiritual "immortality; enlightenment", to physical "immortality; longevity" involving methods such as alchemy, breath meditation, and T'ai chi ch'uan, and eventually to legendary and figurative "immortality".

The *xian* archetype is described by Victor H. Mair.

They are immune to heat and cold, untouched by the elements, and can fly, mounting upward with a fluttering motion. They dwell apart from the chaotic world of man, subsist on air and dew, are not anxious like ordinary people, and have the smooth skin and innocent faces of children. The transcendents live an effortless existence that is best described as spontaneous. They recall the ancient Indian ascetics and holy men known as *ṛṣi* who possessed similar traits.1994:376

According to the Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, Chinese *xian* (仙) can mean Sanskrit *ṛṣi* (*rishi* "inspired sage in the Vedas").

The word *xian*

The most famous Chinese compound of *xiān* is *Bāxiān* (八仙 "the Eight Immortals"). Other common words include *xiānrén* (仙人 *sennin* in Japanese, "immortal person; transcendent", see *Xiānrén Dòng*), *xiānrénzhǎng* (仙人掌 "immortal's palm; cactus"), *xiānnǚ* (仙女 "immortal woman; female celestial; angel"), and *shénxiān* (神仙 "gods and immortals; divine immortal"). Besides humans, *xiān* can also refer to supernatural animals. The mythological *húlījīng* 狐狸精 (lit. "fox spirit") "fox fairy; vixen; witch; enchantress" has an alternate name of *húxiān* 狐仙 (lit. "fox immortal").

The etymology of *xiān* remains uncertain. The circa 200 CE *Shiming*, a Chinese dictionary that provided word-pun "etymologies", defines *xiān* (仙) as "to get old and not die," and explains it as someone who *qiān* (遷 "moves into") the mountains."

Edward H. Schafer (1966:204) defined *xian* as "transcendent, sylph (a being who, through alchemical, gymnastic and other disciplines, has achieved a refined and perhaps immortal body, able to fly like a bird beyond the trammels of the base material world into the realms of aether, and nourish himself on air and dew.)" Schafer noted *xian* was cognate to *xian* 翾 "soar up", *qian* 遷 "remove", and *xianxian* 僊僊 "a flapping dance movement"; and compared Chinese *yuren* 羽人 "feathered man; *xian*" with English *peri* "a fairy or supernatural being in Persian mythology" (Persian *pari* from *par* "feather; wing").

Two linguistic hypotheses for the etymology of *xian* involve the Arabic language and Sino-Tibetan languages. Wu and Davis (1935:224) suggested the source was *jinn*, or *jinni* "genie" (from Arabic جني *jinnī*). "The marvelous powers of the *Hsien* are so like those of the *jinni* of the Arabian Nights that one wonders whether the Arabic word, *jinn*, may not be derived from the Chinese *Hsien*." Axel Schuessler's etymological dictionary (2007:527) suggests a Sino-Tibetan connection between *xiān* (Old Chinese **san* or **sen*) "'An immortal' ... men and women who attain supernatural abilities; after death they become immortals and deities who can fly through the air" and Tibetan *gšen* < *g-syen* "shaman, one who has supernatural abilities, incl[uding] travel through the air".

The character and its variants

The word *xiān* is written with three characters 僊, 仙, or 仚, which combine the logographic "radical" *rén* (人 or 亻 "person; human") with two "phonetic" elements (see Chinese character classification). The oldest recorded *xiān* character 僊 has a *xiān* ("rise up; ascend") phonetic supposedly because immortals could "ascend into the heavens". (Compare *qiān* 遷 "move; transfer; change" combining this phonetic and the motion radical.) The usual modern *xiān* character 仙, and its rare variant 仚, have a *shān* (山 "mountain") phonetic. For a character analysis, Schipper (1993:164) interprets "'the human being of the mountain,' or alternatively, 'human mountain.' The two explanations are appropriate to these beings: they haunt the holy mountains, while also embodying nature."

The *Shijing* (220/3) contains the oldest occurrence of the character 僊, reduplicated as *xiānxiān* (僊僊 "dance lightly; hop about; jump around"), and rhymed with *qiān* (遷). "But when they have drunk too much, Their



"The Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea"^[1]

deportment becomes light and frivolous—They leave their seats, and [遷] go elsewhere, They keep [僊僊] dancing and capering." (tr. James Legge)[2] Needham and Wang (1956:134) suggest *xian* was cognate with *wu* 巫 "shamanic" dancing. Paper (1995:55) writes, "the function of the term *xian* in a line describing dancing may be to denote the height of the leaps. Since, "to live for a long time" has no etymological relation to *xian*, it may be a later accretion."

The 121 CE *Shuowen Jiezi*, the first important dictionary of Chinese characters, does not enter 仙 except in the definition for 僊佺 (Wo Quan "name of an ancient immortal"). It defines 僊 as "live long and move away" and 佺 as "appearance of a person on a mountaintop".

Textual references

This section chronologically reviews how Chinese texts describe *xian* "immortals; transcendents". While the early *Zhuangzi*, *Chuci*, and *Liezi* texts allegorically used *xian* immortals and magic islands to describe spiritual immortality, later ones like the *Shenxian zhuan* and *Baopuzi* took immortality literally and described esoteric Chinese alchemical techniques for physical longevity. On one the hand, *neidan* (内丹 "internal alchemy") techniques included *taixi* (胎息 "embryo respiration") breath control, meditation, visualization, sexual training, and Tao Yin exercises (which later evolved into Qigong and T'ai chi ch'uan). On the other hand, *waidan* (外丹 "external alchemy") techniques for immortality included alchemical recipes, magic plants, rare minerals, herbal medicines, drugs, and dietetic techniques like inedia.

The earliest representations of Chinese immortals, dating from the Han Dynasty, portray them flying with feathery wings (the word *yuren* 羽人 "feathered person" later meant "Daoist") or riding dragons. In Chinese art, *xian* are often pictured with symbols of immortality including the dragon, crane, fox, white deer, pine tree, peach, and mushroom.

Besides the following major Chinese texts, many others use both graphic variants of *xian*. *Xian* (仙) occurs in the *Chunqiu Fanlu*, *Fengsu Tongyi*, *Qian fu lun*, *Fayan*, and *Shenjian*; *xian* (僊) occurs in the *Caizhong langji*, *Fengsu Tongyi*, *Guanzi*, and *Shenjian*.

Zhuangzi

Two circa 3rd century BCE "Outer Chapters" of the *Zhuangzi* (莊子 "[Book of] Master Zhuang") use the archaic character *xian* 僊. Chapter 11 has a parable about "Cloud Chief" (雲將) and "Big Concealment" (鴻濛) that uses the *Shijing* compound *xianxian* ("dance; jump"):

Big Concealment said, "If you confuse the constant strands of Heaven and violate the true form of things, then Dark Heaven will reach no fulfillment. Instead, the beasts will scatter from their herds, the birds will cry all night, disaster will come to the grass and trees, misfortune will reach even to the insects. Ah, this is the fault of men who 'govern'!"

"Then what should I do?" said Cloud Chief.

"Ah," said Big Concealment, "you are too far gone! [僊僊] Up, up, stir yourself and be off!"

Cloud Chief said, "Heavenly Master, it has been hard indeed for me to meet with you—I beg one word of instruction!"

"Well, then—mind-nourishment!" said Big Concealment. "You have only to rest in inaction and things will transform themselves. Smash your form and body, spit out hearing and eyesight, forget you are a thing among other things, and you may join in great unity with the deep and boundless. Undo the mind, slough off spirit, be blank and soulless, and the ten thousand things one by one will return to the root—return to the root and not know why. Dark and undifferentiated chaos—to the end of life none will depart from it. But if you try to know it, you have already departed from it. Do not ask what its name is, do not try to



Xian riding dragons^[1]



Paintings of *xian* by Soga Shōhaku 曾我蕭白, ca. 1760.

observe its form. Things will live naturally end of themselves."

Cloud Chief said, "The Heavenly Master has favored me with this Virtue, instructed me in this Silence. All my life I have been looking for it, and now at last I have it!" He bowed his head twice, stood up, took his leave, and went away. (11, tr. Burton Watson 1968:122-3)

Chapter 12 uses *xian* when mythical Emperor Yao describes a *shengren* (聖人 "sagely person").

The true sage is a quail at rest, a little fledgling at its meal, a bird in flight who leaves no trail behind. When the world has the Way, he joins in the chorus with all other things. When the world is without the Way, he nurses his Virtue and retires in leisure. And after a thousand years, should he weary of the world, he will leave it and ascend to [僊] the immortals, riding on those white clouds all the way up to the village of God. (12, tr. Watson 1968:130)

Without using the word *xian*, several *Zhuangzi* passages employ *xian* imagery, like flying in the clouds, to describe individuals with superhuman powers. For example, Chapter 1, within the circa 3rd century BCE "Inner Chapters", has two portrayals. First is this description of Liezi (below).

Lieh Tzu could ride the wind and go soaring around with cool and breezy skill, but after fifteen days he came back to earth. As far as the search for good fortune went, he didn't fret and worry. He escaped the trouble of walking, but he still had to depend on something to get around. If he had only mounted on the truth of Heaven and Earth, ridden the changes of the six breaths, and thus wandered through the boundless, then what would he have had to depend on? Therefore I say, the Perfect Man has no self; the Holy Man has no merit; the Sage has no fame. (1, tr. Watson 1968:32)

Second is this description of a *shenren* (神人 "divine person").

He said that there is a Holy Man living on faraway [姑射] Ku-she Mountain, with skin like ice or snow, and gentle and shy like a young girl. He doesn't eat the five grains, but sucks the wind, drinks the dew, climbs up on the clouds and mist, rides a flying dragon, and wanders beyond the four seas. By concentrating his spirit, he can protect creatures from sickness and plague and make the harvest plentiful. (1, tr. Watson 1968:33)

The authors of the *Zhuangzi* had a lyrical view of life and death, seeing them as complimentary aspects of natural changes. This is antithetical to the physical immortality (*changshengbulao* 長生不老 "live forever and never age") sought by later Daoist alchemists. Consider this famous passage about accepting death.

Chuang Tzu's wife died. When Hui Tzu went to convey his condolences, he found Chuang Tzu sitting with his legs sprawled out, pounding on a tub and singing. "You lived with her, she brought up your children and grew old," said Hui Tzu. "It should be enough simply not to weep at her death. But pounding on a tub and singing—this is going too far, isn't it?"

Chuang Tzu said, "You're wrong. When she first died, do you think I didn't grieve like anyone else? But I looked back to her beginning and the time before she was born. Not only the time before she was born, but the time before she had a body. Not only the time before she had a body, but the time before she had a spirit. In the midst of the jumble of wonder and mystery a change took place and she had a spirit. Another change and she had a body. Another change and she was born. Now there's been another change and she's dead. It's just like the progression of the four seasons, spring, summer, fall, winter."

"Now she's going to lie down peacefully in a vast room. If I were to follow after her bawling and sobbing, it would show that I don't understand anything about fate. So I stopped. (18, tr. Watson 1968:191-2)

Alan Fox explains this anecdote about Zhuangzi's wife.

Many conclusions can be reached on the basis of this story, but it seems that death is regarded as a natural part of the ebb and flow of transformations which constitute the movement of Dao. To grieve over death, or to fear one's own death, for that matter, is to arbitrarily evaluate what is inevitable. Of course, this reading is somewhat ironic given the fact that much of the subsequent Daoist tradition

comes to seek longevity and immortality, and bases some of their basic models on the *Zhuangzi*. (1995:100)

Chuci

The 3rd-2nd century BCE *Chuci* (楚辭 "Lyrics of Chu") anthology of poems uses *xian* 仙 once and *xian* 僊 twice, reflecting the disparate origins of the text. These three contexts mention the legendary Daoist *xian* immortals Chi Song (赤松 "Red Pine", see Kohn 1993:142–4) and Wang Qiao (王喬, or Zi Qiao 子喬). In later Daoist hagiography, Chi Song was Lord of Rain under Shennong, the legendary inventor of agriculture; and Wang Qiao was a son of King Ling of Zhou (r. 571–545 BCE), who flew away on a giant white bird, became an immortal and was never again seen.

The "*Yuan You*" (遠遊 "Far-off Journey") poem describes a spiritual journey into the realms of gods and immortals, frequently referring to Daoist myths and techniques.

My spirit darted forth and did not return to me,
And my body, left tenantless, grew withered and lifeless.
Then I looked into myself to strengthen my resolution,
And sought to learn from where the primal spirit issues.
In emptiness and silence I found serenity;
In tranquil inaction I gained true satisfaction.
I heard how once Red Pine had washed the world's dust off:
I would model myself on the pattern he had left me.
I honoured the wondrous powers of the [真人] Pure Ones,
And those of past ages who had become [仙] Immortals.
They departed in the flux of change and vanished from men's sight,
Leaving a famous name that endures after them. (tr. Hawkes 1985:194)

The "*Xi shi*" (惜誓 "Sorrow for Troth Betrayed") resembles the "*Yuan You*", and both reflect Daoist ideas from the Han period. "Though unoriginal in theme," says Hawkes (1985:239), "its description of air travel, written in a pre-aeroplane age, is exhilarating and rather impressive."

We gazed down of the Middle Land [China] with its myriad people
As we rested on the whirlwind, drifting about at random.
In this way we came at last to the moor of Shao-yuan:
There, with the other blessed ones, were Red Pine and Wang Qiao.
The two Masters held zithers tuned imperfect concord:
I sang the Qing Shang air to their playing.
In tranquil calm and quiet enjoyment,
Gently I floated, inhaling all the essences.
But then I thought that this immortal life of [僊] the blessed,
Was not worth the sacrifice of my home-returning. (tr. Hawkes 1985:240)

The "*Ai shi ming*" (哀時命 "Alas That My Lot Was Not Cast") describes a celestial journey similar to the previous two.

Far and forlorn, with no hope of return:
Sadly I gaze in the distance, over the empty plain.



The supposed "footprint of a *xian*", a little pond in Guangzhou's Temple of the Five Immortals

Below, I fish in the valley streamlet;
 Above, I seek out [僊] holy hermits.
 I enter into friendship with Red Pine;
 I join Wang Qiao as his companion. We send the Xiao Yang in front to guide us;
 The White Tiger runs back and forth in attendance.
 Floating on the cloud and mist, we enter the dim height of heaven;
 Riding on the white deer we sport and take our pleasure. tr. Hawkes 1985:266)

The "*Li Sao*" (離騷 "On Encountering Trouble"), the most famous *Chuci* poem, is usually interpreted as describing ecstatic flights and trance techniques of Chinese shamans. The above three poems are variations describing Daoist *xian*.

Some other *Chuci* poems refer to immortals with synonyms of *xian*. For instance, "*Shou zhi*" (守志 "Maintaining Resolution), uses *zhenren* (真人 "true person", tr. "Pure Ones" above in "*Yuan You*"), which Wang Yi's commentary glosses as *zhen xianren* (真仙人 "true immortal person").

I visited Fu Yue, bestriding a dragon,
 Joined in marriage with the Weaving Maiden,
 Lifted up Heaven's Net to capture evil,
 Drew the Bow of Heaven to shoot at wickedness,
 Followed the [真人] Immortals fluttering through the sky,
 Ate of the Primal Essence to prolong my life. (tr. Hawkes 1985:318)

Liezi

The *Liezi* (列子 "[Book of] Master Lie"), which Louis Komjathy (2004:36) says "was probably compiled in the 3rd century CE (while containing earlier textual layers)", uses *xian* four times, always in the compound *xiansheng* (仙聖 "immortal sage").

Nearly half of Chapter 2 ("The Yellow Emperor") comes from the *Zhuangzi*, including this recounting of the above fable about Mount Gushe (姑射, or Guye, or Miao Gushe 藐姑射).

The Ku-ye mountains stand on a chain of islands where the Yellow River enters the sea. Upon the mountains there lives a Divine Man, who inhales the wind and drinks the dew, and does not eat the five grains. His mind is like a bottomless spring, his body is like a virgin's. He knows neither intimacy nor love, yet [仙聖] immortals and sages serve him as ministers. He inspires no awe, he is never angry, yet the eager and diligent act as his messengers. He is without kindness and bounty, but others have enough by themselves; he does not store and save, but he himself never lacks. The Yin and Yang are always in tune, the sun and moon always shine, the four seasons are always regular, wind and rain are always temperate, breeding is always timely, the harvest is always rich, and there are no plagues to ravage the land, no early deaths to afflict men, animals have no diseases, and ghosts have no uncanny echoes. (tr. Graham 1960:35)

Chapter 5 uses *xiansheng* three times in a conversation set between legendary rulers Tang (湯) of the Shang Dynasty and Ji (桀) of the Xia Dynasty.

T'ang asked again: 'Are there large things and small, long and short, similar and different?'
 —"To the East of the Gulf of Chih-li, who knows how many thousands and millions of miles, there is a deep ravine, a valley truly without bottom; and its bottomless underneath is named "The Entry to the Void". The waters of the eight corners and the nine regions, the stream of the Milky Way, all pour into it, but it neither shrinks nor grows. Within it there are five mountains, called Tai-yü, Yüan-chiao, Fang-hu, Ying-chou and P'eng-lai. These mountains are thirty thousand miles high, and as many miles round; the tablelands on their summits extend for nine thousand miles. It is seventy thousand miles from one mountain to the next, but they are considered close neighbours. The towers and terraces upon them

are all gold and jade, the beasts and birds are all unsullied white; trees of pearl and garnet always grow densely, flowering and bearing fruit which is always luscious, and those who eat of it never grow old and die. The men who dwell there are all of the race of [仙聖] immortal sages, who fly, too many to be counted, to and from one mountain to another in a day and a night. Yet the bases of the five mountains used to rest on nothing; they were always rising and falling, going and returning, with the ebb and flow of the tide, and never for a moment stood firm. The [仙聖] immortals found this troublesome, and complained about it to God. God was afraid that they would drift to the far West and he would lose the home of his sages. So he commanded Yü-ch'iang to make fifteen [鼈] giant turtles carry the five mountains on their lifted heads, taking turns in three watches, each sixty thousand years long; and for the first time the mountains stood firm and did not move.

'But there was a giant from the kingdom of the Dragon Earl, who came to the place of the five mountains in no more than a few strides. In one throw he hooked six of the turtles in a bunch, hurried back to his country carrying them together on his back, and scorched their bones to tell fortunes by the cracks. Thereupon two of the mountains, Tai-yü and Yüan-chiao, drifted to the far North and sank in the great sea; the [仙聖] immortals who were carried away numbered many millions. God was very angry, and reduced by degrees the size of the Dragon Earl's kingdom and the height of his subjects. At the time of Fu-hsi and Shen-nung, the people of this country were still several hundred feet high.' (tr. Graham 1960:97–8)

Penglai Mountain became the most famous of these five mythical peaks where the elixir of life supposedly grew, and is known as Horai in Japanese legends. The first emperor Qin Shi Huang sent his court alchemist Xu Fu on expeditions to find these plants of immortality, but he never returned (although by some accounts, he discovered Japan).

Holmes Welch (1957:88–97) analyzed the beginnings of Daoism, sometime around the 4th-3rd centuries BCE, from four separate streams: philosophical Daoism (Laozi, Zhuangzi, Liezi), a "hygiene school" that cultivated longevity through breathing exercises and yoga, Chinese alchemy and Five Elements philosophy, and those who sought Penglai and elixirs of "immortality". This is what he concludes about *xian*.

It is my own opinion, therefore, that though the word *hsien*, or Immortal, is used by Chuang Tzu and Lieh Tzu, and though they attributed to their idealized individual the magic powers that were attributed to the *hsien* in later times, nonetheless the *hsien* ideal was something they did not believe in—either that it was possible or that it was good. The magic powers are allegories and hyperboles for the *natural* powers that come from identification with Tao. Spiritualized Man, P'eng-lai, and the rest are features of a *genre* which is meant to entertain, disturb, and exalt us, not to be taken as literal hagiography. Then and later, the philosophical Taoists were distinguished from all other schools of Taoism by their rejection of the pursuit of immortality. As we shall see, their books came to be adopted as scriptural authority by those who did practice magic and seek to become immortal. But it was their misunderstanding of philosophical Taoism that was the reason they adopted it. (Welch 1957:95)

Shenxian zhuan

The *Shenxian zhuan* (神仙傳 Biographies of Spirit Immortals") is a hagiography of *xian*. Although it was traditionally attributed to Ge Hong (283–343 CE), Komjathy (2004:43) says, "The received versions of the text contain some 100-odd hagiographies, most of which date from 6th-8th centuries at the earliest."

According to the *Shenxian zhuan*, there are four schools of immortality:

Qì (气—"Pneumas"): Breath control and meditation. Those who belong to this school can

"...blow on water and it will flow against its own current for several paces; blow on fire, and it will be extinguished; blow at tigers or wolves, and they will crouch down and not be able to move; blow at serpents, and they will coil up and be unable to flee. If someone is wounded by a weapon, blow on the wound, and the bleeding will stop. If you hear of someone who has suffered a poisonous insect bite, even if you are not in his presence, you can, from a distance, blow and say in incantation over your own hand (males on the left hand, females on the right), and the person will at once be healed even if more than a hundred li away. And if you yourself are struck by a sudden illness, you have merely to swallow pneumas in three series of nine, and you will immediately recover.

But the most essential thing [among such arts] is fetal breathing. Those who obtain [the technique of] fetal breathing become able to breathe without using their nose or mouth, as if in the womb, and this is the culmination of the way [of pneumatic cultivation]." (Campany 2002:21)

Fàn (饭—"Diet"): Ingestion of herbal compounds and abstention from the *Sān Shī Fàn* (三尸饭—"Three-Corpses food")—Meats (raw fish, pork, dog, leeks, and scallions) and grains. The *Shenxian zhuan* uses this story to illustrate the importance of *bigu* "grain avoidance":

"During the reign of Emperor Cheng of the Han, hunters in the Zhongnan Mountains saw a person who wore no clothes, his body covered with black hair. Upon seeing this person, the hunters wanted to pursue and capture him, but the person leapt over gullies and valleys as if in flight, and so could not be overtaken. [But after being surrounded and captured, it was discovered this person was a 200 plus year old woman, who had once been a concubine of Qin Emperor Ziyang. When he had surrendered to the 'invaders of the east', she fled into the mountains where she learned to subsist on 'the resin and nuts of pines' from an old man. Afterwards, this diet 'enabled [her] to feel neither hunger nor thirst; in winter [she] was not cold, in summer [she] was not hot.']

The hunters took the woman back in. They offered her grain to eat. When she first smelled the stink of grain, she vomited, and only after several days could she tolerate it. After little more than two years of this [diet], her body hair fell out; she turned old and died. Had she not been caught by men, she would have become a transcendent." (Campany 2002:22–23)

Fángzhōng Zhī Shù (房中之術—"Arts of the Bedchamber"): Sexual yoga. (Campany 2002:30–31) According to a discourse between the Yellow Emperor and the immortal *Sùnnǚ* (素女—"Plain Girl"), one of the three daughters of Hsi Wang Mu,

"The sexual behaviors between a man and woman are identical to how the universe itself came into creation. Like Heaven and Earth, the male and female share a parallel relationship in attaining an



An immortal riding a tortoise. A Han Dynasty painting

immortal existence. They both must learn how to engage and develop their natural sexual instincts and behaviors; otherwise the only result is decay and traumatic discord of their physical lives. However, if they engage in the utmost joys of sensuality and apply the principles of yin and yang to their sexual activity, their health, vigor, and joy of love will bear them the fruits of longevity and immortality. (Hsi 2002:99–100)

The *White Tigress Manual*, a treatise on female sexual yoga, states,

“A female can completely restore her youthfulness and attain immortality if she refrains from allowing just one or two men in her life from stealing and destroying her [sexual] essence, which will only serve in aging her at a rapid rate and bring about an early death. However, if she can acquire the sexual essence of a thousand males through absorption, she will acquire the great benefits of youthfulness and immortality.” (Hsi 2001:48)

Dān (丹—“Alchemy”, literally “Cinnabar”): Elixir of Immortality. (Campany 2002:31)

Baopuzi

The 4th century CE *Baopuzi* (抱朴子 “[Book of] Master Embracing Simplicity”), which was written by Ge Hong, gives some highly detailed descriptions of *xian*.

The text lists three classes of immortals:

Tiānxiān (天仙—“Celestial Immortal”): The highest level.

Dìxiān (地仙—“Earth Immortal”): The middle level.

Shījiě xiān (尸解仙—“Escaped-by-means-of-a-stimulated-corpse-simulacrum Immortal”, literally “Corpse Untie Immortal”): The lowest level. This is considered the lowest form of immortality since a person must first “fake” their own death by substituting a bewitched object like a bamboo pole, sword, talisman or a shoe for their corpse or slipping a type of Death certificate into the coffin of a newly departed paternal grandfather, thus having their name and “allotted life span” deleted from the ledgers kept by the *Sīmìng* (司命—“Director of allotted life spans”, literally “Controller of Fate”). Hagiographies and folktales abound of people who seemingly die in one province, but are seen alive in another. Mortals who choose this route must cut off all ties with family and friends, move to a distant province, and enact the *Ling bao tai xuan yin sheng zhi fu* (靈寶太玄生之符—“Numinous Treasure Talisman of the Grand Mystery for Living in Hiding”) to protect themselves from heavenly retribution. (Campany 2002:52–60)

However, this is not a true form of immortality. For each misdeed a person commits, the Director of allotted life spans subtracts days and sometimes years from their allotted life span. This method allows a person to live out the entirety of their allotted lifespan (whether it be 30, 80, 400, etc.) and avoid the agents of death. But the body still has to be transformed into an immortal one, hence the phrase *Xiānsǐ hòutuō* (先死後脫—“The ‘death’ is apparent, [but] the sloughing off of the body’s mortality remains to be done.”)

Sometimes the *Shījiě* are employed by heaven to act as celestial peace keepers. Therefore, they have no need for hiding from retribution since they are empowered by heaven to perform their duties. There are three levels of heavenly *Shījiě*:

Dìxià zhǔ (地下主—“Agents Beneath the Earth”): Are in charge of keeping the peace within the Chinese underworld. They are eligible for promotion to earthbound immortality after 280 years of faithful service.

Dìshàng zhǔzhě (地上主者—“Agents Above the Earth”): Are given magic talismans which prolong their lives (but not indefinitely) and allow them to heal the sick and exorcize demons and evil spirits from the earth. This level was *not* eligible for promotion to earthbound immortality.

Zhìdì jūn (制地君—“Lords Who Control the Earth”): A heavenly decree ordered them to “disperse all subordinate junior demons, whether high or low [in rank], that have cause afflictions and injury owing to blows or offenses against the Motion of the Year, the Original Destiny, Great Year, the Kings of the Soil or the establishing or

breaking influences of the chronograms of the tome. Annihilate them all." This level was also *not* eligible for promotion to immortality.

These titles were usually given to humans who had either not proven themselves worthy of or were not fated to become immortals. One such famous agent was Fei Changfang, who was eventually murdered by evil spirits because he lost his book of magic talismans. However, some immortals are written to have used this method in order to escape execution. (Campany 2002:52–60)

Ge Hong wrote in his book *The Master Who Embraces Simplicity*,

The [immortals] Dark Girl and Plain Girl compared sexual activity as the intermingling of fire [yang/male] and water [yin/female], claiming that water and fire can kill people but can also regenerate their life, depending on whether or not they know the correct methods of sexual activity according to their nature. These arts are based on the theory that the more females a man copulates with, the greater benefit he will derive from the act. Men who are ignorant of this art, copulating with only one or two females during their life, will only suffice to bring about their untimely and early death. (Hsi 2001:48)

Zhong Lü Chuan Dao Ji

The *Zhong Lü Chuan Dao Ji* (鐘呂傳道集/钟吕传道集

"Anthology of the Transmission of the Dao from Zhong[li Quan] to Lü [Dongbin]") is associated with Zhongli Quan (2nd century CE?) and Lü Dongbin (9th century CE), two of the legendary Eight Immortals. It is part of the so-called "Zhong-Lü" (鍾呂) textual tradition of internal alchemy (*neidan*). Komjathy (2004:57) describes it as, "Probably dating from the late Tang (618–906), the text is in question-and-answer format, containing a dialogue between Lü and his teacher Zhongli on aspects of alchemical terminology and methods."

The *Zhong Lü Chuan Dao Ji* lists five classes of immortals:

Guǐxiān (鬼仙—"Ghost Immortal"): A person who cultivates too much yin energy. These immortals are likened to Vampires because they drain the life essence of the living, much like the fox spirit. Ghost immortals do not leave the realm of ghosts.

Rénxiān (人仙—"Human Immortal"): Humans have an equal balance of yin and yang energies, so they have the potential of becoming either a ghost or immortal. Although they continue to hunger and thirst and require clothing and shelter like a normal human, these immortals do not suffer from aging or sickness. Human immortals do not leave the realm of humans. There are many sub-classes of human immortals, as discussed above under *Shījiě xiān*.

Dìxiān (地仙—"Earth Immortal"): When the yin is transformed into the pure yang, a true immortal body will emerge that does not need food, drink, clothing or shelter and is not affected by hot or cold temperatures. Earth immortals do not leave the realm of earth. These immortals are forced to stay on earth until they shed their human form.

Shénxiān (神仙—"Spirit Immortal"): The immortal body of the earthbound class will eventually change into vapor through further practice. They have supernatural powers and can take on the shape of any object. These immortals must remain on earth acquiring merit by teaching mankind about the Tao. Spirit immortals do not leave the realm of spirits. Once enough merit is accumulated, they are called to heaven by a celestial decree.

Tiānxiān (天仙—"Celestial Immortal"): Spirit immortals who are summoned to heaven are given the minor office of water realm judge. Over time, they are promoted to oversee the earth realm and finally become administrators of the celestial realm. These immortals have the power to travel back and forth between the earthly and celestial realms.



Hé (和) and Hé (合), the two "Immortals of Harmony and Unity", associated with happy marriage, depicted in Changchun Temple, a Taoist temple in Wuhan

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External links

- "Transcendence and Immortality" (<http://kirkland.myweb.uga.edu/rk/pdf/pubs/ref/IMMORTAL>), Russell Kirkland, The Encyclopedia of Taoism
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-

Taoism

Taoism	
Chinese name	
Traditional Chinese	道教 or 家
Simplified Chinese	道教 or 家
<div>Transcriptions</div> <div>Mandarin</div>	
- Hanyu Pinyin	dào jiào or jiā (dao ⁴) (jiao ⁴ or jia ¹)
- Wade–Giles	tao ⁴ chiao ⁴
<div>Cantonese (Yue)</div>	
- Yale Romanization	dou ⁶ gaau ³
Vietnamese name	
Vietnamese	đạo giáo
Korean name	
Hangul	도교
<div>Transcriptions</div>	
- Revised Romanization	do gyo
- McCune-Reischauer	to kyo
Japanese name	
Kanji	道教
Hiragana	どうきょう
<div>Transcriptions</div>	
- Revised Hepburn	dō kyō

Taoism (modernly: **Daoism**) is a philosophical and religious tradition that emphasizes living in harmony with the Tao (modernly romanized as "Dao"). The term *Tao* means "way", "path" or "principle", and can also be found in Chinese philosophies and religions other than Taoism. In Taoism, however, *Tao* denotes something that is both the source and the driving force behind everything that exists. It is ultimately ineffable: "The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao."^[1]

The keystone work of literature in Taoism is the *Tao Te Ching*, a concise and ambiguous book containing teachings attributed to Laozi (Chinese: 老子; pinyin: *Lǎozǐ*; Wade–Giles: Lao Tzu). Together with the writings of Zhuangzi, these texts build the philosophical foundation of Taoism. This philosophical Taoism, individualistic by nature, is not institutionalized. Institutionalized forms, however, evolved over time in the shape of a number of different schools, often integrating beliefs and practices that even pre-dated the keystone texts – as, for example, the theories of the

School of Naturalists, which synthesized the concepts of yin-yang and the Five Elements. Taoist schools traditionally feature reverence for Laozi, immortals or ancestors, along with a variety of divination and exorcism rituals, and practices for achieving ecstasy, longevity or immortality.

Taoist propriety and ethics may vary depending on the particular school, but in general tends to emphasize wu-wei (action through non-action), "naturalness", simplicity, spontaneity, and the Three Treasures: compassion, moderation, and humility.

Taoism has had profound influence on Chinese culture in the course of the centuries, and clerics of institutionalised Taoism (Chinese: 道士; pinyin: *dàoshi*) usually take care to note distinction between their ritual tradition and the customs and practices found in Chinese folk religion as these distinctions sometimes appear blurred. Chinese alchemy (especially neidan), Chinese astrology, Zen Buddhism, several martial arts, Traditional Chinese medicine, feng shui, and many styles of qigong have been intertwined with Taoism throughout history. Beyond China, Taoism also had influence on surrounding societies in Asia.

After Laozi and Zhuangzi the literature of Taoism grew steadily and used to be compiled in form of a canon – the Daozang, which was at times published at the behest of the emperor. Throughout Chinese history, Taoism was several times nominated as state religion. After the 17th century, however, it fell much from favor. Like all other religious activity, Taoism was suppressed in the first decades of the People's Republic of China (and even persecuted during the Cultural Revolution), but continued to be practised in Taiwan. Today, it is one of five religions recognized in the PRC, and although it does not travel readily from its Asian roots, claims adherents in a number of societies.^[2]

Spelling and pronunciation

English-speakers continue to debate the preferred romanization of the words "Daoism" and "Taoism". The root Chinese word 道 "way, path" is romanized *tao* in the older Wade–Giles system and *dào* in the modern Pinyin system. In linguistic terminology, English *Taoism/Daoism* is formed from the Chinese loanword *tao* 道 "way; route; principle" and the native suffix *-ism*. The debate over *Taoism* vs. *Daoism* involve sinology, phonemes, loanwords, and politics – not to mention whether *Taoism* should be pronounced /'taʊ.ɪzəm/ or /'daʊ.ɪzəm/.

Daoism is pronounced /'daʊ.ɪzəm/, but English speakers disagree whether *Taoism* should be /'daʊ.ɪzəm/ or /'taʊ.ɪzəm/. In theory, both Wade-Giles *tao* and Pinyin *dao* are articulated identically, as are *Taoism* and *Daoism*. An investment book titled *The Tao Jones Averages* (a pun on the Dow Jones Indexes) illustrates this /daʊ/ pronunciation's widespread familiarity.^[3] In speech, *Tao* and *Taoism* are often pronounced /'taʊ/ and 'taʊ.ɪzəm/, reading the Chinese unaspirated lenis ("weak") /t/ as the English voiceless stop consonant

/t/. Lexicography shows American and British English differences in pronouncing *Taoism*. A study of major English dictionaries published in Great Britain and the United States found the most common *Taoism* glosses were /taʊ.ɪzəm/ in British sources and /daʊ.ɪzəm, taʊ.ɪzəm/ in American ones.^[4]



The Dai Temple at Mount Tai, one of the holiest mountains in China

Categorization

There is debate over how, and whether, Taoism should be categorized. Traditionally, it is divided into two categories:^[5]

1. Philosophical Taoism (*Daojia*, Chinese: 道家; pinyin: *dàojiā*; lit. "school or family of Dao") – The philosophy based on the texts of the *Daodejing* (道德經) and the *Zhuangzi* (莊子). These texts were linked together under the term of *Daojia* during the early Han Dynasty, but notably not before.^{[6][7]} It is unlikely that *Zhuangzi* was familiar with the text of the *Daodejing*,^{[8][9]} and *Zhuangzi* would not have identified himself as a Taoist as this classification did not arise until well after his death.^[9]
2. Religious Taoism (*Daojiao*, Chinese: 道教; pinyin: *dàojiào*; lit. "teachings of Dao") – A family of organized religious movements sharing concepts or terminology derived from *Daojia*,^[10] the first of these is recognized as the Celestial Masters school.

However, the distinction between *Daojia* and *Daojiao* is rejected by the majority of modern scholars (at least in Japan and the West).^{[11][12][13]} It is, amongst others, contested by hermeneutic (interpretive) difficulties in the categorization of the different Taoist schools, sects and movements.^[14] Taoism does not fall under an umbrella or a definition of a single organized religion like the Abrahamic traditions; nor can it be studied as the originator or a variant of Chinese folk religion, as although the two share some similar concepts, much of Chinese folk religion is outside of the tenets and core teachings of Taoism.^[15] Sinologists Isabelle Robinet and Livia Kohn agree that "Taoism has never been a unified religion, and has constantly consisted of a combination of teachings based on a variety of original revelations."^[16]

Origins and development

Laozi is traditionally regarded as the founder of Taoism and is closely associated in this context with "original", or "primordial", Taoism.^[17] Whether he actually existed is commonly disputed;^{[18][19]} however, the work attributed to him – the *Daodejing* – is dated to the late 4th century BC.^[20]



White Cloud Monastery, Beijing

Taoism draws its cosmological foundations from the School of Yin-Yang (in form of its main elements – yin and yang and the Five Phases), which developed during the Warring States period (4th to 3rd centuries BC).^[21]

Robinet identifies four components in the emergence of Taoism:

1. Philosophical Taoism, i.e. the *Daodejing* and *Zhuangzi*
2. techniques for achieving ecstasy
3. practices for achieving longevity or immortality
4. exorcism.^[18]

Some elements of Taoism may be traced to prehistoric folk religions in China that later coalesced into a Taoist tradition.^{[22][23]} In particular, many Taoist practices drew from the Warring-States-era phenomena of the *wu* (connected to the "shamanism" of Southern China) and the *fangshi* (which probably derived from the "archivist-soothsayers of antiquity, one of whom supposedly was Laozi himself"), even though later Taoists insisted that this was not the case.^[24] Both terms were used to designate individuals dedicated to "... magic, medicine, divination,... methods of longevity and to ecstatic wanderings" as well as exorcism; in the case of the *wu*, "shamans" or "sorcerers" is often used as a translation.^[24] The *fangshi* were philosophically close to the School of Yin-Yang, and relied much on astrological and calendrical speculations in their divinatory activities.^[25]

The first organized form of Taoism, the Tianshi (Celestial Masters') school (later known as Zhengyi school), developed from the Five Pecks of Rice movement at the end of the 2nd century AD; the latter had been founded by Zhang Daoling, who claimed that Laozi appeared to him in the year 142.^[26] The Tianshi school was officially recognized by ruler Cao Cao in 215, legitimizing Cao Cao's rise to power in return.^[27] Laozi received imperial recognition as a divinity in the mid-2nd century BCE.^[28]

Taoism, in form of the Shangqing school, gained official status in China again during the Tang Dynasty (618–907), whose emperors claimed Laozi as their relative.^[29] The Shangqing movement, however, had developed much earlier, in the 4th century, on the basis of a series of revelations by gods and spirits to a certain Yang Xi in the years between 364 to 370.^[30]

Between 397 and 402, Ge Chaofu compiled a series of scriptures which later served as the foundation of the Lingbao school,^[31] which unfolded its greatest influence during the Song Dynasty (960–1279).^[32] Several Song emperors, most notably Huizong, were active in promoting Taoism, collecting Taoist texts and publishing editions of the *Daozang*.^[33]

In the 12th century, the Quanzhen School was founded in Shandong. It flourished during the 13th and 14th century and during the Yuan dynasty became the largest and most important Taoist school in Northern China. The school's most revered master, Qiu Chuji, met with Genghis Khan in 1222 and was successful in influencing the Khan towards exerting more restraint during his brutal conquests. By the Khan's decree, the school also was exempt from taxation.^[34]

Aspects of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism were consciously synthesized in the Neo-Confucian school, which eventually became Imperial orthodoxy for state bureaucratic purposes under the Ming (1368–1644).^[35] The Qing Dynasty (1644–1912), however, much favored Confucian classics over Taoist works. During the 18th century, the imperial library was constituted, but excluded virtually all Taoist books.^[36] By the beginning of the 20th century, Taoism had fallen much from favor (for example, only one complete copy of the *Daozang* still remained, at the White Cloud Monastery in Beijing).^[37]

Today, Taoism is one of five religions recognized by the People's Republic of China. The government regulates its activities through the Chinese Taoist Association.^[38] Taoism is freely practiced in Taiwan, where it claims millions of adherents.

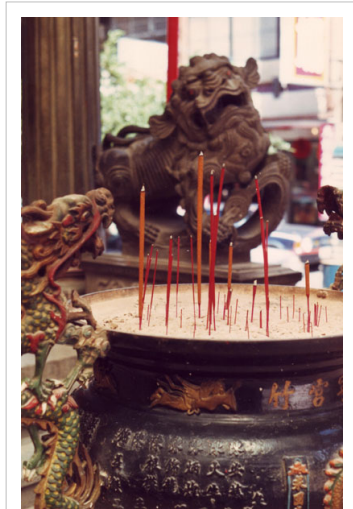
Ethics

Taoism tends to emphasize various themes of the Daodejing and Zhuangzi, such as naturalness, spontaneity, simplicity, detachment from desires, and most important of all, *wu wei*.^[39] However, the concepts of those keystone texts can not be equated with Taoism as a whole.^[40]

Tao and Te

Tao (Chinese: 道; pinyin: *dào*) literally means "way", but can also be interpreted as road, channel, path, doctrine, or line.^[41] In Taoism, it is "the One, which is natural, spontaneous, eternal, nameless, and indescribable. It is at once the beginning of all things and the way in which all things pursue their course."^[42] It has variously been denoted as the "flow of the universe",^[43] a "conceptually necessary ontological ground",^[44] or a demonstration of nature.^[45] The Tao also is something that individuals can find immanent in themselves.^[46]

The active expression of Tao is called *Te* (also spelled – and pronounced – *De*, or even *Teh*; often translated with *Virtue* or *Power*; Chinese: 德; pinyin: *dé*),^[47] in a sense that *Te* results from an individual living and cultivating the Tao.^[48]



A Taoist Temple in Taiwan, showing elements of the Jingxiang religious practice and sculptures of Dragon and Lion guardians

Wu-wei

The ambiguous term *wu-wei* (simplified Chinese: 无为; traditional Chinese: 無為; pinyin: *wú wéi*) constitutes the leading ethical concept in Taoism.^[49] *Wei* refers to any intentional or deliberated action, while *wu* carries the meaning of "there is no ..." or "lacking, without". Common translations are "nonaction", "effortless action" or "action without intent".^[49] The meaning is sometimes emphasized by using the paradox expression "wei wu wei": "action without action".^[50]

In ancient Taoist texts, *wu-wei* is associated with water through its yielding nature.^[51] Taoist philosophy proposes that the universe works harmoniously according to its own ways. When someone exerts their will against the world, they disrupt that harmony. Taoism does not identify one's will as the root problem. Rather, it asserts that one must place their will in harmony with the natural universe.^[52] Thus, a potentially harmful interference is to be avoided, and in this way, goals can be achieved effortlessly.^{[53][54]} "By *wu-wei*, the sage seeks to come into harmony with the great Tao, which itself accomplishes by nonaction."^[49]

Naturalness

Naturalness (Chinese: 自然; pinyin: *zìrán*; Wade–Giles: *tzu-jan*; lit. "self-such") is regarded a central value in Taoism.^[55] It describes the "primordial state" of all things^[56] as well as a basic character of the Tao^[57], and is usually associated with spontaneity and creativity.^{[58][57]} To attain naturalness, one has to identify with the Tao^[57]; this involves freeing oneself from selfishness and desire, and appreciating simplicity.^[55]

An often cited metaphor for naturalness is *pu* (simplified Chinese: 朴; traditional Chinese: 樸; pinyin: *pǔ, pú*; Wade–Giles: *p'u*; lit. "uncut wood"), the "uncarved block", which represents the "original nature... prior to the imprint of culture" of an individual.^[59] It is usually referred to as a state one *returns* to.^[60]

Three Treasures

The *Three Treasures* or *Three Jewels* (simplified Chinese: 三宝; traditional Chinese: 三寶; pinyin: *sānbǎo*) are basic virtues in Taoism comprising Compassion, Moderation, and Humility. They are also translated as kindness, simplicity (or the absence of excess), and modesty. Arthur Waley describes them as "[t]he three rules that formed the practical, political side of the author's teaching". He correlated the Three Treasures with "abstention from aggressive war and capital punishment", "absolute simplicity of living", and "refusal to assert active authority".^[61]

Cosmology

Further information: School of Yin Yang, Qi, and Taoism and death

Taoist cosmology is based on the beliefs of the School of Naturalists.^[62]

In this spirit, the universe is seen as being in a constant process of re-creating itself, as everything that exists is a mere aspect of qi, which, "condensed, becomes life; diluted, it is indefinite potential".^[63] Qi is in a perpetual transformation between its condensed and diluted state.^[64] These two different states of qi, on the other hand, are embodiments of the abstract entities of yin and yang,^[64] two complimentary extremes that constantly play against and with each other and can not exist without the other.^[65]

Human beings are seen as a microcosm of the universe^[15], and for example comprise the Five Elements in form of the zang-fu organs.^[66] As a consequence, it is believed that deeper understanding of the universe can be achieved by understanding oneself.^[67]

Physical exercises

A recurrent and important element of Taoism are rituals, exercises and substances aiming at aligning oneself spiritually with cosmic forces, at undertaking ecstatic spiritual journeys, or at improving physical health and thereby extending one's life, ideally to the point of immortality.^{[68][69]} Probably the most characteristic among these methods is Taoist alchemy. Already in very early Taoist scriptures - like the *Taiping Jing* and the *Baopuzi* - alchemical formulas for achieving immortality were outlined.^{[70][71]} Enlightened and immortal beings are referred to as xian.

A number of martial arts traditions, particularly the ones falling under the category of Neijia (like T'ai Chi Ch'uan, Bagua Zhang and Xing Yi Quan) embody Taoist principles to a significant extent, and some practitioners consider their art to be a means of practicing Taoism.^[72]



Taoist Priest in Macau, February 2006

Pantheon

Further information: Category:Chinese deities

Taoist beliefs include teachings based on revelations from various sources. Therefore, different branches of Taoism often have differing beliefs, especially concerning deities and the proper composition of the pantheon.^[73] Nevertheless, there are certain core beliefs that nearly all the sects share.^[74]

Popular Taoism typically presents the Jade Emperor as the official head deity. Intellectual ("elite") Taoists, such as the Celestial Masters sect, usually present Laozi (*Laojun*, "Lord Lao") and the Three Pure Ones at the top of the pantheon of deities.^{[17][75]} The pantheon tends to mirror the bureaucracy of Imperial China; deities also may be promoted or demoted for their actions.^[76]

While a number of immortals or other mysterious figures appear in the *Zhuangzi*, and to a lesser extent in the *Tao Te Ching*, these have generally not become the objects of worship. Traditional conceptions of Tao are not to be confused with the Western concepts of theism. Being one with the Tao does not indicate a union with an eternal spirit in, for example, the Hindu sense.^{[45][52]}



Statue of Taoist deity in Taiwan

Texts

Tao Te Ching

The *Tao Te Ching*, or *Daodejing*, also often called *Laozi*, is widely regarded to be the most influential Taoist text.^[77] According to legend, it was written by Laozi.^[78] However, authorship, precise date of origin, and even unity of the text are still subject of debate^[79], and will probably never be known with certainty.^[80] The earliest texts of the *Tao Te Ching* that have been excavated - the Guodian bamboo slips - date back to the late 4th century BC.^[81] Throughout the history of religious Taoism, the *Tao Te Ching* has been used as a ritual text.^[82]

The famous opening lines of the *Tao Te Ching* are:

道可道非常道 (pinyin: *dào kě dào fēi cháng dào*)

"The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao"

名可名非常名 (pinyin: *míng kě míng fēi cháng míng*)

"The name that can be named is not the eternal name."^[83]

There is significant, at times acrimonious debate regarding which English translation of the *Tao Te Ching* is to be preferred, and which particular translation methodology is best.^[84]

The *Tao Te Ching* is not thematically ordered. However, the main themes of the text are repeatedly expressed using variant formulations, often with only a slight difference.^[85] The leading themes revolve around the nature of Tao and how to attain it. Tao is said to be ineffable, and accomplishing great things through small means.^[86]

Ancient commentaries on the *Tao Te Ching* are important texts in their own right. Perhaps the oldest one, the *Heshang Gong* commentary, was most likely written in the 2nd century CE.^[87] Other important commentaries include the one from Wang Bi and the Xiang'er.^[88]



Laozi depicted as a Taoist teacher

Daozang

The Daozang (道藏, *Treasury of Tao*) is sometimes referred to as the Taoist canon. It was originally compiled during the Jin, Tang, and Song dynasties. The version surviving today was published during the Ming Dynasty.^{[89][90]} The Ming *Daozang* includes almost 1500 texts.^[91] Following the example of the Buddhist Tripiṭaka, it is divided into three *dong* (洞, "caves", "grottoes"). They are arranged from "highest" to "lowest":^{[92][93]}

1. The *Zhen* ("real" or "truth" 真) grotto. Includes the Shangqing texts.
2. The *Xuan* ("mystery" 玄) grotto. Includes the Lingbao scriptures.
3. The *Shen* ("divine" 神) grotto. Includes texts predating the Maoshan (茅山) revelations.

Daoshi (Dàoshi) generally do not consult published versions of the Daozang, but individually choose, or inherit, texts included in the Daozang. These texts have been passed down for generations from teacher to student.^[94]

The Shangqing school has a tradition of approaching Taoism through scriptural study. It is believed that by reciting certain texts often enough one will be rewarded with immortality.^[95]

Other texts

While the Tao Te Ching is most famous, there are many other important texts in traditional Taoism including Mohism. *Taishang Ganying Pian* ("Treatise of the Exalted One on Response and Retribution") discusses sin and ethics, and has become a popular morality tract in the last few centuries.^[96] It asserts that those in harmony with Tao will live long and fruitful lives. The wicked, and their descendants, will suffer and have shortened lives.^[86]

Symbols and images

The *Taijitu* ("yin and yang") symbol 太極圖 as well as the Ba gua 八卦 ("Eight Trigrams") are associated with Taoist symbolism.^[97]

While almost all Taoist organizations make use of the yin and yang symbol, one could also call it Confucian, Neo-Confucian or pan-Chinese. The yin and yang make an "S" shape, with yin (Black or Red) on the right. One is likely to see this symbol as decorations on Taoist organization flags and logos, temple floors, or stitched into clerical robes. According to Song Dynasty sources, it originated around the 10th century.^[98] Previously, yin and yang were symbolized by a tiger and dragon.^[98]



A Chinese dragon at the Mengjia Longshan Temple in Taipei

Taoist temples may fly square or triangular flags. They typically feature mystical writing or diagrams and are intended to fulfill various functions including providing guidance for the spirits of the dead, to bring good fortune, increase life span, etc.^[99] Other flags and banners may be those of the gods or immortals themselves.^[100]

A zigzag with seven stars is sometimes displayed, representing the Big Dipper (or the Bushel, the Chinese equivalent). In the Shang Dynasty the Big Dipper was considered a deity, while during the Han Dynasty, it was considered a *qi* path of the circumpolar god, *Taiyi*.^[101]

Taoist temples in southern China and Taiwan may often be identified by their roofs, which feature Chinese dragons and phoenix made from multi-colored ceramic tiles. They also stand for the harmony of yin and yang (with the phoenix being yin). A related symbol is the flaming pearl which may be seen on such roofs between two dragons, as well as on the hairpin of a Celestial Master.^[102] In general though, Chinese Taoist architecture has no universal features that distinguish it from other structures.^[103]

Adherents

The number of Taoists is difficult to estimate, due to a variety of factors including defining Taoism. The number of people practicing Chinese folk religion is estimated to be just under four hundred million.^[104] Most Chinese people and many others have been influenced in some way by Taoist tradition. Estimates for the number of Taoists worldwide range from twenty million and possibly to as many as 400 million in China alone.^{[105][106][107]}

Recently, there have been some efforts to revive the practice of Taoist religion. In 1956, the Chinese Taoist Association was formed, and received official approval in 1957. It was disbanded during the Cultural Revolution under Mao, but re-established in 1980. The headquarters of the Association are at Baiyun guan, or White Cloud Temple, of the Longmen branch of Quanzhen.^[108]

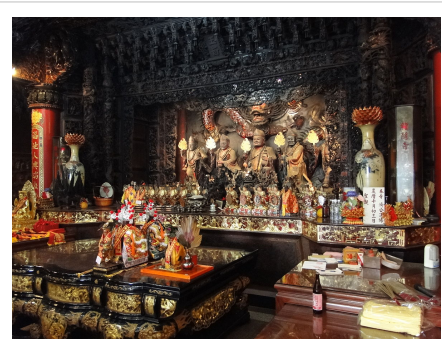
Since 1980, many Taoist monasteries and temples have been reopened or rebuilt, most of them belonging to the Zhengyi or Quanzhen school. For these two schools, ordination has been officially allowed again. However, "the Chinese government prefers the celibate model of ... Quanzhen clergy", while "Zhengyi clergy are often married, and often reside at home."^[109]

Geographically, Taoism flourishes best in regions populated by Chinese people: mainland China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and various Chinese diaspora communities. Taoist literature and art has influenced the cultures of Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. Organized Taoism seems not to have attracted a large non-Chinese following, except in Korea and Vietnam, until modern times. In Taiwan 7.5 million people (33% of the population) identify themselves as Taoists.^[110] In Singapore, 8.5% of the population identify themselves as Taoist.^[111] There are also small numbers of Taoists in the Western world.

Rituals

At certain dates, food may be set out as a sacrifice to the spirits of the deceased or the gods, such as during the Qingming Festival. This may include slaughtered animals, such as pigs and ducks, or fruit. Another form of sacrifice involves the burning of Joss paper, or Hell Bank Notes, on the assumption that images thus consumed by the fire will reappear—not as a mere image, but as the actual item—in the spirit world, making them available for revered ancestors and departed loved ones. At other points, a vegan diet or full fast may be observed.

Also on particular holidays, street parades take place. These are lively affairs which invariably involve firecrackers and flower-covered floats broadcasting traditional music. They also variously include lion dances and dragon dances; human-occupied puppets (often of the "Seventh Lord" and "Eighth Lord"); *tongji* (童乩 "spirit-medium; shaman") who cut their skin with knives; *Bajiajiang*, which are Kungfu-practicing honor guards in demonic makeup; and palanquins carrying god-images. The various participants are not considered performers, but rather possessed by the gods and spirits in question.^[112]



Interior of a temple in Taiwan



A century-old Taoist temple, a landmark built by the Chinese community in 5th Avenue LRT Station, Caloocan, Manila, Philippines.



Taoist charm from Tien Hau Temple in San Francisco

Fortune-telling—including astrology, I Ching, and other forms of divination—has long been considered a traditional Taoist pursuit. Mediumship is also widely encountered in some sects. There is an academic and social distinction between martial forms of mediumship (such as *tongji*) and the spirit-writing that is typically practiced through planchette writing.^[113]

Political aspects

Unlike Confucianism, Taoism favors philosophical anarchism, pluralism and laissez-faire-government.^[114] According to Laozi, the best way to govern is not to govern (cf. *wu-wei*).^[115] He has been considered as one of the first classical liberals,^{[116][117]} as he wrote in the *Daodejing*: "*The more prohibitions there are, the poorer the people become.*"^[116] Also Zhuangzi was along the same lines.^[114] On the other hand, politics never have been a main issue in Taoism.

Relations with other religions and philosophies



Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism are one, a painting in the *litang* style portraying three men laughing by a river stream, 12th century, Song Dynasty.

The terms Tao and De are religious and philosophical terms shared between Taoism and Confucianism.^[118] The authorship of the Tao Te Ching is assigned to Laozi, who is traditionally held to have been a teacher of Confucius.^[119] However, some scholars believe the Tao Te Ching arose as a reaction to Confucianism.^[120] Zhuangzi, reacting to the Confucian-Mohist ethical disputes in his "history of thought", casts Laozi as a prior step to the Mohists by name and the Confucians by implication.

Early Taoist texts reject the basic assumptions of Confucianism which relied on rituals and order, in favour of the examples of "wild" nature and individualism. Historical Taoists challenged conventional morality, while Confucians considered society debased and in need of strong ethical guidance.^[121]

The entry of Buddhism into China was marked by interaction and syncretism, with Taoism in particular.^[122] Originally seen as a kind of "foreign Taoism", Buddhism's scriptures were translated into Chinese using the Taoist vocabulary.^[123] Chan Buddhism was particularly modified by Taoism, integrating distrust of scripture, text and even language, as well as the Taoist views of embracing "this life", dedicated practice and the "every-moment".^[124] Taoism incorporated Buddhist elements during the Tang period, such as monasteries, vegetarianism, prohibition of alcohol, the doctrine of emptiness, and collecting scripture in tripartite organisation. During the same time, Chan Buddhism grew to become the largest sect in Chinese Buddhism.^[125] Christine Mollier concluded that a number of Buddhist sutras found in medieval East Asia and Central Asia adopted many materials from earlier Taoist scriptures.^[126]

Ideological and political rivals for centuries, Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism deeply influenced one another.^[127] For example, Wang Bi, one of the most influential philosophical commentators on the Laozi (and Yijing), was a Confucian.^[128] The three rivals also share some similar values, with all three embracing a humanist philosophy emphasizing moral behavior and human perfection. In time, most Chinese people identified to some extent with all three traditions simultaneously.^[129] This became institutionalised when aspects of the three schools were synthesised in the Neo-Confucian school.^[130]

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Arthur Schopenhauer both wrote of Taoism.^[131]

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- Until recently, the Mawangdui manuscripts have held the pride of place as the oldest extant manuscripts of the *Laozi*. In late 1993, the excavation of a tomb (identified as M1) in Guodian, Jingmen city, Hubei province, has yielded among other things some 800 bamboo slips, of which 730 are inscribed, containing over 13,000 Chinese characters. Some of these, amounting to about 2,000 characters, match the *Laozi*. The tomb...is dated around 300 B.C.E."
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External links

- Tao Directory (<http://www.taodirectory.co.uk>)
- Early Daoist texts (<http://ctext.org/daoism>) – Chinese Text Project
- Daoism (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00wlgbg>) on *In Our Time* at the BBC. (listen now (http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/console/b00wlgbg/In_Our_Time_Daoism))

Daozang

Daozang (Chinese: 道藏; pinyin: *Dào Zàng*; Wade-Giles: Tao Tsang), meaning "Treasury of Dao" or "Daoist Canon", consists of around 1400 texts that were collected circa C.E. 400 (after the Dao De Jing and Zhuang Zi which are the core Daoist texts). They were collected by Daoist monks of the period in an attempt to bring together all of the teachings of Daoism, including all the commentaries and expositions of the various masters from the original teachings found in the Dao De Jing and Zhuangzi. It was split into Three Grottoes, which mirrors the Buddhist Tripitaka (three baskets) division. These three divisions were based on the main focus of Daoism in Southern China during the time it was made, namely; meditation, ritual, and exorcism.

These Three Grottoes were used as levels for the initiation of Daoist masters, from lowest (exorcism) to highest (meditation).

As well as the Three Grottoes there were Four Supplements that were added to the Canon circa C.E. 500. These were mainly taken from older core Daoist texts (e.g. [Dao De Jing]) apart from one which was taken from an already established and separate philosophy known as Tianshi Dao (Way of the Heavenly Masters).

Although the above can give the appearance that the Canon is highly organized, this is far from the truth. Although the present-day Canon does preserve the core divisions, there are substantial forks in the arrangement due to the later addition of commentaries, revelations and texts elaborating upon the core divisions.

Timeline

1. The First Daozang

- This was the first time an attempt was made to bring together all the teachings and texts from across China and occurred circa C.E. 400 and consisted of roughly 1,200 scrolls

2. The Second Daozang

- In C.E. 748 the Tang emperor Tang Xuan-Zong (claimed to be a descendant of Laozi), sent monks to collect further teachings to add to the Canon.

3. The Third Daozang

- Around C.E. 1016 of the Song dynasty, the Daozang was revised and many texts collected during the Tang dynasty were removed. This third Daozang consisted of approximately 4500 scrolls.

4. The Fourth Daozang

- In C.E. 1444 of the Ming dynasty, a final version was produced consisting of approximately 5300 scrolls.

Many new Daozang were published.

Constituent Parts

Three Grottoes (sandong) 三洞 C.E. 400

1. Authenticity Grotto (Dongzhen) 洞真部: Texts of Supreme Purity (Shangqing) tradition

- This grotto is concerned mainly with meditation and is the highest phase of initiation for a Daoist master.

2. Mystery Grotto (Dongxuan) 洞玄部: Texts of Sacred Treasure (Lingbao) tradition

- This grotto is concerned mainly with rituals and is the middle phase of initiation for a Daoist master.

3. Spirit Grotto (Dongshen) 洞神部: Texts of Three Sovereigns (Sanhuang) tradition

- This grotto is concerned mainly with exorcisms and is the lowest phase of initiation for a Daoist master.
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Each of the above Three Grottoes then has the following 12 chapters

1. Main texts (Benwen) 本文類
2. Talismans (Shenfu) 神符類
3. Commentaries (Yujue) 玉訣類
4. Diagrams and illustrations (Lingtu) 靈圖類
5. Histories and genealogies (Pulu) 譜錄類
6. Precepts (Jielu) 戒律類
7. Ceremonies (Weiyi) 威儀類
8. Rituals (Fangfa) 方法類
9. Practices (Zhongshu) 像術(衆術)類
10. Biographies (Jizhuan) 記傳類
11. Hymns (Zansong) 讚頌類
12. Memorials (Biaozou) 表奏類

Four Supplements C.E. 500

1. Great Mystery (Taixuan) 太玄部: Based on the Dao De Jing
2. Great Peace (Taiping) 太平部: Based on the Taiping Jing
3. Great Purity (Taiqing) 太清部: Based on the Taiqing Jing and other alchemical texts
4. Orthodox One (Zhengyi) 正一(正乙)部: Based on the Way of the Celestial Masters (Tianshi Dao) tradition.

External links

- Daozang (Taoist Canon) and Subsidiary Compilations ^[1] (Judith M. Boltz), sample entry from *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*
- The Taoist Canon ^[2] - maintained by David K. Jordan at UCSD. See also his overview of the canons of all three major Chinese religions, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, here ^[3].
- Daoist Studies Daozang project ^[4] - maintained by James Miller at Queen's University
- Tao Store Index ^[5] - Online Taoist Scriptures in English
- Daozang ^[6] - maintained by Raymond Larose at Jade Purity
- 道教學術資訊網站 ^[7]

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[4] <http://www.daoiststudies.org/daoazang>
[5] http://home.comcast.net/~taoistresource/dae_idx.htm
[6] <http://daoazang.com>
[7] <http://www.ctcwri.idv.tw>
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Bushido

Bushidō (武士道) comes from two root words. Bushi which means 'warrior', and Do which means 'way'. Therefore, translated Bushido is 'The way of the Warrior'. The word Bushi can be broken down even more in the word Bu meaning 'to stop'. The literal definition of bu is that which prohibits violence and subdues weapons. The other word that makes up the rest of the word bushido is shi. Shi literally means, he who occupies his rank by means of learning. Yet, even those who were Bushis often carried weapons. Therefore, the word bushi seems to mean "Those who keep peace, either by literary or military means". So the whole word Bushido means "The way of those who keep peace, either by literary or military means".

Others believe that **Bushidō** (武士道), meaning "Military Knight Ways" but often translated in English as "Way of the Warrior", is a Japanese word for the way of the samurai life, loosely analogous to the concept of chivalry. It originates from the samurai moral code and stresses frugality, loyalty, martial arts mastery, and honor unto death. Born from *Neo-Confucianism* during times of peace in Tokugawa

Japan and following *Confucian* texts, Bushido was also influenced by Shinto and Buddhism, allowing the violent existence of the samurai to be tempered by wisdom and serenity. Bushidō developed between the 9th and 20th centuries and numerous translated documents dating from the 12th to 16th centuries demonstrate its wide influence across the whole of Japan,^[1] although some scholars have noted "the term *bushidō* itself is rarely attested in premodern literature."^[2]

Under the Tokugawa Shogunate, aspects of bushidō became formalized into Japanese Feudal Law.^[3]

According to the Japanese dictionary *Shogakukan Kokugo Daijiten*, "Bushidō is defined as a unique philosophy (*ronri*) that spread through the warrior class from the Muromachi (*chusei*) period."

The word was first used in Japan during the 17th century.^[4] It came into common usage in Japan and the West after the 1899 publication of Nitobe Inazō's *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*.^[5]

In *Bushido* (1899), Inazō wrote:

...Bushidō, then, is the code of moral principles which the samurai were required or instructed to observe.... More frequently it is a code unuttered and unwritten.... It was an organic growth of decades and centuries of military career.

Nitobe was not the first person to document Japanese chivalry in this way. In his text *Feudal and Modern Japan* (1896), historian Arthur May Knapp wrote:^[6] The samurai of thirty years ago had behind him a thousand years of training in the law of honor, obedience, duty, and self-sacrifice.... It was not needed to create or establish them. As a child he had but to be instructed, as indeed he was from his earliest years, in the etiquette of self-immolation. The fine instinct of honor demanding it was in the very blood....



Japanese samurai in Armour, 1860s. Photograph by Felice Beato

Historical development

Early history to 12th century



The *Kojiki* is Japan's oldest extant book. Written in 712, it contains passages about Yamato Takeru, the son of the Emperor Keiko. It provides an early indication of the values and literary self-image of the Bushidō ideal, including references to the use and admiration of the sword by Japanese warriors.

This early concept is further found in the *Shoku Nihongi*, an early history of Japan written in 797. The chapter covering the year 721 is notable for an early use of the term "bushi" (武士) and a reference to the educated warrior-poet ideal. The Chinese term *bushi* had entered the Japanese vocabulary with the general introduction of Chinese literature, supplementing the indigenous terms *tsuwamono* and *mononofu*. It is also the usage for public placement exams.

An early reference to *saburau* — a verb meaning to wait upon or accompany a person of high rank — appears in *Kokin Wakashū*, the first imperial anthology of poems, (early 10th century). By the end of the 12th century, *saburai* ("retainer") had become largely synonymous with *bushi*, and closely associated with the middle and upper echelons of the warrior class.

Although many of the early literary works of Japan contain the image of the warrior, the term "*bushidō*" does not appear in early texts like the *Kojiki*. Warrior ideals and conduct may be illustrated, but the term did not appear in text until the Sengoku period, towards the end of the Muromachi era (1336–1573).^[7]

13th to 16th centuries

From the literature of the 13th to 16th centuries, there exists an abundance of references to the ideals of Bushidō. Carl Steenstrup noted that 13th and 14th century writings (*gunki monogatari*) "portrayed the bushi in their natural element, war, eulogizing such virtues as reckless bravery, fierce family pride, and selfless, at times senseless devotion of master and man."

Compiled in 1371, the *Heike Monogatari* chronicles the struggle between the Minamoto and Taira clans for control of Japan at the end of the 12th century—a conflict known as the Gempei War. Clearly depicted throughout the *Heike Monogatari* is the ideal of the cultivated warrior. The warriors in the *Heike Monogatari* served as models for the educated warriors of later generations, and the ideals depicted by them were not assumed to be beyond reach. Rather, these ideals were vigorously pursued in the upper echelons of warrior society and recommended as the proper form of the Japanese man of arms. By the time of Imagawa Ryoshun's "Regulations" at the beginning of the 15th century, the Bushidō ideal was fairly clear, and the term itself came into widespread use.

Other examples of the evolution in the Bushidō literature of the 13th to 16th centuries included:

- The Message Of Master Gokurakuji - Hojo Shigetoki (1198–1261)
- The Chikubasho - Shiba Yoshimasa (1350–1410)
- The Regulations Of Imagawa Ryoshun - Imagawa Sadayo (1325–1420)
- The Seventeen Articles Of Asakura Toshikage - Asakura Toshikage (1428–1481)
- The Twenty-One Precepts Of Hōjō Sōun - Hojo Nagauji (1432–1519)
- The Recorded Words Of Asakura Soteki - Asakura Norikage (1474–1555)
- The Iwamizudera Monogatari - Takeda Shingen (1521–1573)
- Opinions In Ninety-Nine Articles - Takeda Nobushige (1525–1561)
- Lord Nabeshima's Wall Inscriptions - Nabeshima Naoshige (1538–1618)
- The Last Statement of Torii Mototada ^[8] - Torii Mototada (1539–1600)
- The Precepts of Kato Kiyomasa - Kato Kiyomasa (1562–1611)
- Notes On Regulations - Kuroda Nagamasa (1568–1623)



Takeda Shingen, by artist Utagawa Kuniyoshi

The sayings of Sengoku-period retainers and warlords such as Kato Kiyomasa and Nabeshima Naoshige were generally recorded or passed down to posterity around the turn of the 16th century when Japan had entered a period of relative peace. In a handbook addressed to "all samurai, regardless of rank," Kato states:

"If a man does not investigate into the matter of Bushido daily, it will be difficult for him to die a brave and manly death. Thus, it is essential to engrave this business of the warrior into one's mind well."

Kato was a ferocious warrior who banned even recitation of poetry, stating:

"One should put forth great effort in matters of learning. One should read books concerning military matters, and direct his attention exclusively to the virtues of loyalty and filial piety....Having been born into the house of a warrior, one's intentions should be to grasp the long and the short swords and to die."^[1]

Naoshige says similarly, that it is shameful for any man to die without having risked his life in battle, regardless of rank, and that "Bushidō is in being crazy to die. Fifty or more could not kill one such a man." However, Naoshige also suggests that "everyone should personally know exertion as it is known in the lower classes."^[1]

17th to 19th centuries



Japan enjoyed a period of relative peace during the *Sakoku* period from 1600 to the mid-19th century, also called the "Pax Tokugawa". During this period, the samurai class played a central role in the policing and administration of the country under the Tokugawa shogunate. The bushidō literature of this time contains much thought relevant to a warrior class seeking more general application of martial principles and experience in peacetime, as well as reflection on the land's long history of war. The literature of this time includes:

- The Last Statement of Torii Mototada (1539–1600)
- Kuroda Nagamasa (1568–1623)
- Nabeshima Naoshige (1538–1618)
- *The Book of Five Rings (Go Rin No Sho)* by Miyamoto Musashi (1584–1645)
- *Budoshoshinshu* by Taira Shigesuke, Daidōji Yūzan (1639–1730)
- *Hagakure* as related by Yamamoto Tsunetomo to Tsuramoto Tashiro.

The *Hagakure* contains many of the sayings of Sengoku-period retainer Nabeshima Naoshige (1537–1619) regarding Bushidō related philosophy early in the 18th century by Yamamoto Tsunetomo (1659–1719), a former retainer to Naoshige's grandson, Nabeshima Mitsushige. The *Hagakure* was compiled in the early 18th century, but was kept as a kind of "secret teaching" of the Nabeshima clan until the end of the Tokugawa era (1867).^[9] His saying "I have found the way of the warrior is death" was a summation of the willingness to sacrifice that bushido codified.^[10]

Tokugawa-era rōnin scholar and strategist Yamaga Sokō (1622–1685) wrote extensively on matters relating to bushidō, bukyō (a "warrior's creed"), and a more general shido, a "way of gentlemen" intended for application to all stations of society. Sokō attempts to codify a kind of "universal bushidō" with a special emphasis on "pure" Confucian values, (rejecting the mystical influences of Tao and Buddhism in Neo-Confucian orthodoxy), while at the same time calling for recognition of the singular and divine nature of Japan and Japanese culture. These radical concepts — including ultimate devotion to the Emperor, regardless of rank or clan — put him at odds with the reigning shogunate. He was exiled to the Akō domain, (the future setting of the 47 Rōnin incident), and his works were not widely read until the rise of nationalism in the early 20th century.

The aging Tsunetomo's interpretation of bushidō is perhaps more illustrative of the philosophy refined by his unique station and experience, at once dutiful and defiant, ultimately incompatible with the mores and laws of an emerging civil society. Of the 47 Rōnin—to this day, generally regarded as exemplars of bushidō — Tsunetomo felt they were remiss in hatching such a wily, delayed plot for revenge, and had been over-concerned with the success of their undertaking. Instead, Tsunetomo felt true samurai should act without hesitation to fulfill their duties, without regard for success or failure.

This romantic sentiment is of course expressed by warriors down through history, though it may run counter to the art of war itself. This ambivalence is found in the heart of bushidō, and perhaps all such "warrior codes". Some combination of traditional bushidō's organic contradictions and more "universal" or "progressive" formulations, (like those of Yamaga Soko), would inform Japan's disastrous military ambitions in the 20th century.

19th and 20th centuries

Recent scholarship in both Japan and abroad has focused on differences between the samurai class and the bushidō theories that developed in modern Japan. Bushidō in the prewar period was often emperor-centered and placed much greater value on the virtues of loyalty and self-sacrifice than did many Tokugawa-era interpretations.^[11] Bushidō was used as a propaganda tool by the government and military, who doctored it to suit their needs.^[12] Scholars of Japanese history agree that the bushidō that spread throughout modern Japan was not simply a continuation of earlier traditions.

More recently, it has been argued that modern bushidō discourse originated in the 1880s as a response to foreign stimuli, such as the English concept of "gentlemanship," by Japanese with considerable exposure to Western culture. Nitobe Inazo's bushidō interpretations followed a similar trajectory, although he was following earlier trends. This relatively pacifistic bushidō was then hijacked and adapted by militarists and the government from the early 1900s onward as nationalism increased around the time of the Russo-Japanese War.^[13]

The *junshi* suicide of General Nogi Maresuke and his wife on the death of Emperor Meiji occasioned both praise, as an example to the decaying morals of Japan, and criticism, explicitly declaring that the spirit of *bushido* thus exemplified should not be revived.^[14]

During pre-World War II and World War II Shōwa Japan, *bushido* was pressed into use for militarism,^[15] to present war as purifying, and death a duty.^[16] This was presented as revitalizing traditional values and "transcending the modern."^[17] *Bushido* would provide a spiritual shield to let soldiers fight to the end.^[18] As the war turned, the spirit of *bushido* was invoked to urge that all depended on the firm and united soul of the nation.^[19] When the Battle of Attu was lost, attempts were made to make the more than two thousand Japanese deaths an inspirational epic for the fighting spirit of the nation.^[20] Arguments that the plans for the Battle of Leyte Gulf, involving all Japanese ships, would expose Japan to serious danger if they failed, were countered with the plea that the Navy be permitted to "bloom as flowers of death."^[21] The first proposals of organized suicide attacks met resistance because while *bushido* called for a warrior to be always aware of death, but not to view it as the sole end, but the desperate straits brought about acceptance.^[22] Such attacks were acclaimed as the true spirit of *bushido*.^[23]

Denials of mistreatment of prisoners of war declared that they were being well-treated by virtue of *bushido* generosity.^[24] Broadcast interviews with prisoners were also described as being not propaganda but out of sympathy with the enemy, such sympathy as only *bushido* could inspire.^[25]

Yukio Mishima, the famous writer, was outspoken in his by-then anachronistic commitment to *bushido* in the 1960s, until his ritual suicide by *seppuku* after a failed *coup d'état* in November 1970.

Tenets

Bushidō expanded and formalized the earlier code of the samurai, and stressed frugality, loyalty, mastery of martial arts, and honor to the death. Under the bushidō ideal, if a samurai failed to uphold his honor he could only regain it by performing seppuku (ritual suicide).

In an excerpt from his book *Samurai: The World of the Warrior*,^[26] historian Stephen Turnbull describes the role of seppuku in feudal Japan:

In the world of the warrior, seppuku was a deed of bravery that was admirable in a samurai who knew he was defeated, disgraced, or mortally wounded. It meant that he could end his days with his transgressions wiped away and with his reputation not merely intact but actually enhanced. The cutting of the abdomen released the samurai's spirit in the most dramatic fashion, but it was an extremely painful and unpleasant way to die, and sometimes the samurai who was performing the act asked a loyal comrade to cut off his head at the moment of agony.



Three stone monuments of great philosophers who had achievements in Buddhism, Shintoism and Confucianism

Bushidō was widely practiced, varying little over time, and across the geographic and socio-economic backgrounds of the samurai, who at one time represented up to 10% of the Japanese population.^[27] The first Meiji era census at the end of the 19th century counted 1,282,000 members of the "high samurai", allowed to ride a horse, and 492,000 members of the "low samurai", allowed to wear two swords but not to ride a horse, in a country of about 25 million.^[28]

Bushidō includes compassion for those of lower station, and for the preservation of one's name.^[1] Early bushidō literature further enforces the requirement to conduct oneself with calmness, fairness, justice, and propriety.^[1] The relationship between learning and the way of the warrior is clearly articulated, one being a natural partner to the other.^[1]

Other parts of the bushidō philosophy cover methods of raising children, appearance, and grooming, but all of this may be seen as part of one's constant preparation for death — to die a good death with one's honor intact, the ultimate aim in a life lived according to bushidō. Indeed, a "good death" is its own reward, and by no means assurance of "future rewards" in the afterlife. Notable samurai, though certainly not all (e.g. Amakusa Shiro), have throughout history held such aims or beliefs in disdain, or expressed the awareness that their station — as it involves killing — precludes such reward, especially in Buddhism. On the contrary, the soul of a noble warrior suffering in hell or as a lingering spirit is a common motif in Japanese art and literature. Bushidō, while exhibiting the influence of Dao through Zen Buddhism, is a philosophy in contradistinction to religious belief, with a deep commitment to propriety in this world for propriety's sake.

Seven virtues of Bushidō

The Bushidō code is typified by seven virtues:

- Rectitude (義 *gi*)
- Courage (勇氣 *yūki*)
- Benevolence (仁 *jin*)
- Respect (禮 *rei*)
- Honesty (誠 *makoto*)
- Honour (名誉 *meiyo*)
- Loyalty (忠義 *chūgi*)

Associated virtues

- Filial piety (孝 *kō*)
- Wisdom (智 *chi*)
- Care for the aged (悌 *tei*)

Modern translations

Modern Western translation of documents related to Bushidō began in the 1970s with Carl Steenstrup, who performed research into the ethical codes of famous Samurai clans including Hōjō Sōun and Imagawa Sadayo.^[29]

Primary research into Bushidō was later conducted by William Scott Wilson in his 1982 text *Ideals of the Samurai: Writings of Japanese Warriors*. The writings span hundreds of years, family lineage, geography, social class and writing style — yet share a common set of values. Wilson's work also examined the earliest Japanese writings in the 8th century: the Kojiki, Shoku Nihongi, the Kokin Wakashū, Konjaku Monogatari, and the Heike Monogatari, as well as the Chinese Classics (the Analects, the Great Learning, the Doctrine of the Mean, and the Mencius).

In May 2008, Thomas Cleary translated a collection of 22 writings on Bushido "by warriors, scholars, political advisers, and educators". The comprehensive collection provides a historically rich view of samurai life and philosophy. The book, *Training the Samurai Mind: A Bushido Sourcebook*, gives an insider's view of the samurai world: "the moral and psychological development of the warrior, the ethical standards they were meant to uphold, their training in both martial arts and strategy, and the enormous role that the traditions of Shintoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism had in influencing samurai ideals." The translations, in 22 chapters, span nearly 500 years from the 14th to the 19th centuries.

Major figures associated with Bushidō

- Asano Naganori
 - Imagawa Ryōshun
 - Katō Kiyomasa
 - Morihei Ueshiba
 - Ogami Itto
 - Sakanoue no Tamuramaro
 - Tadakatsu Honda
 - Tokugawa Ieyasu
 - Torii Mototada
 - Yamaga Sokō
 - Yamamoto Tsunetomo
 - Yamaoka Tesshū
-

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Budō

Budō	
	
Japanese name	
Kanji:	武道
Hiragana:	ぶどう
Transliterations	
- Revised Hepburn:	budō

Budō (武道) is a Japanese term describing martial arts or martial ways.

Etymology

Budō is a compound of the root *bu* (武:ぶ), meaning war or martial; and *dō* (道:ど う), meaning path or way. Specifically, *dō* is derived from the Buddhist Sanskrit *mārga* (meaning "path").^[1] The term refers to the idea of formulating propositions, subjecting them to philosophical critique and then following a 'path' to realize them.^[2] *Dō* signifies a "way of life". *Dō* in the Japanese context, is an experiential term, experiential in the sense that practice (the way of life) is the norm to verify the validity of the discipline cultivated through a given art form. The modern budō has no external enemy, only the internal enemy, one's ego that must be fought^[3] (state of Muga-mushin). Similarly to budō, *bujutsu* is a compound of the roots *bu* (武), and *jutsu* (術:じ ゅ つ), meaning technique^[4] Thus, budō is most often translated as "the way of war", or "martial way", while *bujutsu* is translated as "science of war" or "martial craft." However, both budō and *bujutsu* are used interchangeably in English with the term "martial arts". Budo and bujutsu have quite a delicate difference; whereas bujutsu only gives attention to the physical part of fighting (how to best defeat an enemy), budo also gives attention to the mind and how one should develop oneself. Modern budo uses aspects of the lifestyle of the samurai of feudal Japan and translates them to self-development in modern life.

Bujutsu

It may be difficult to delineate the differences between budō and *bujutsu*. Sometimes, the differences are considered historical; others cite differences in training methods, training philosophy, or emphasis on spiritual development.

In modern usage, *bujutsu*, meaning martial/military art/science, is typified by its practical application of technique to real-world or battlefield situations. Budō, meaning martial Way, has a more philosophical emphasis. The "dō" is a reference to this path.^[5]

Civilian vs. military

Many consider budō a more civilian form of martial arts, as an interpretation or evolution of the older *bujutsu*, which they categorize as a more militaristic style or strategy. According to this distinction, the modern civilian art de-emphasizes practicality and effectiveness in favor of personal development from a fitness or spiritual perspective. The difference is between the more "civilian" versus "military" aspects of combat and personal development. They see budō and *bujutsu* as representing a particular strategy or philosophy regarding combat systems, but still, the terms are rather loosely applied and often interchangeable.

Art vs. lifestyle

One view is that a *bujutsu* is the martial art you practice, whereas a *budo* is the lifestyle you live and the path you walk by practicing a *bujutsu*. For example, one could say that Judo and Jujutsu practiced as a practiced martial art are one and the same, being that the practice of the art Jujutsu leads to obtaining the lifestyle of Judo (Judo was originally known as Kano Jujutsu, after Judo's founder Kano Jigoro). That would be true with arts such as *kenjutsu* / *kendo* and *iaijutsu* / *iaido* as well.

Identifying an art

Dai Nippon Butoku Kai keeps official records of *koryu bujutsu* and *gendai budo* schools (*ryuha*) in Japan. In order to receive information about these particular school or art belongs to any of those types, you can contact the Dai Nippon Butoku Kai.

Generally speaking, a school of martial arts chooses whatever term they feel most comfortable with. A martial arts school might choose to call their practice *bujutsu*, because they desire a connection with the past, or to emphasize that their art is practiced as it was during a certain point in history. A school might choose to call their practice *budō* to reflect an emphasis on spiritual and philosophical development, or simply to reflect that the art was developed more recently.

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External links

- Japanese Kanji relating to Budo (<http://www.japancalligraphy.eu/kanji/budo.htm>)

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