Title: Conversations
Subtitle: Taoism
Second Subtitle: Taoism
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Quote:

Quotations:
"Be still like a mountain and flow like a great river." Lao Tse
"Different Chinese philosophers, writing probably in 5-4 centuries B.C., and a way of life that are nowadays known under the name of Taoism, the between man and the tendency or the course of natural world." Alan Watt Watercourse Way."
"We believe in the formless and eternal Tao, and we recognize all perso human constructs. We reject hatred, intolerance, and unnecessary violen love and learning, as we are taught by Nature. We place our trust and ou may live in peace and balance with the Universe, both in this mortal life Western Reform Taoist Congregation 1

History of Taoism:
Tao (pronounced "Dow") can be roughly translated into English as path, indefinable. It has to be experienced. It "refers to a power which envelop through all things, living and non-living. The Tao regulates natural proce in the Universe. It embodies the harmony of opposites (i.e. there would b light without dark, no male without female.)" 2

The founder of Taoism is believed by many to be Lao-Tse (604-531 BCE), Confucius. (Alternate spellings: Lao Tze, Lao Tsu, Lao Tzu, Laozi, Laotz for a way that would avoid the constant feudal warfare and other conflict during his lifetime. The result was his book: Tao-te-Ching (a.k.a. Daodej a mythical character.

Taoism started as a combination of psychology and philosophy but evolve 440 CE when it was adopted as a state religion. At that time Lao-Tse bec a deity. Taoism, along with Buddhism and Confucianism, became one of t China. With the end of the Ch'ing Dynasty in 1911, state support for Tao Taoist heritage was destroyed during the next period of warlordism. Afte 1949, religious freedom was severely restricted. "The new government pu confiscated temples, and plundered treasures. Several million monks wer 50,000" by 1960. 3 During the cultural revolution in China from 1966 to 1 Taoist heritage was destroyed. Some religious tolerance has been restor from 1982 to the present time.

Taoism currently has about 20 million followers, and is primarily centere
Taoists live in North America; 1,720 in Canada (1991 census). Taoism ha
on North American culture in areas of "acupuncture, herbalism, holistic m
martial arts..." 3

Taoist Beliefs and Practices:

Taoism has provided an alternative to the Confucian tradition in China.
coexisted in the country, region and generally within the same individual

Tao is the first-cause of the universe. It is a force that flows through al

"The Tao surrounds everyone and therefore everyone must listen to find

Each believer's goal is to become one with the Tao.

The priesthood views the many gods as manifestations of the one Dao, "
represented as an image or a particular thing." The concept of a personi
as is the concept of the creation of the universe. Thus, they do not pray
God to hear the prayers or to act upon them. They seek answers to life's
meditation and outer observation.

In contrast with the beliefs and practices of the priesthood, most of the
spirits pervaded nature...The gods in heaven acted like and were treated
of men; worshipping the gods was a kind of rehearsal of attitudes toward
other hand, the demons and ghosts of hell acted like and were treated lik
threatening strangers in the real world; they were bribed by the people a
the martial forces of the spirit officials." 3

Time is cyclical, not linear as in Western thinking.

Taoists generally have an interest in promoting health and vitality.

Five main organs and orifices of the body correspond to the five parts o
metal and earth.

Each person must nurture the Ch'i (air, breath) that has been given to t

Development of virtue is one's chief task. The Three Jewels to be sough
moderation and humility.

Taoists follow the art of "wu wei," which is to let nature take its course
allow a river to flow towards the sea unimpeded; do not erect a dam whic
natural flow.

One should plan in advance and consider carefully each action before m

A Taoists is kind to other individuals, largely because such an action te

Taoists believe that "people are compassionate by nature...left to their
this compassion without expecting a reward." 5

The Yin Yang symbol:

This is a well known Taoist symbol. "It represents the balance of opposit
they are equally present, all is calm. When one is outweighed by the oth
disarray." 4 One source explains that it was derived from astronomical o
the shadow of the sun throughout a full year. 5 The two swirling shapes
impression of change -- the only constant factor in the universe. One tra
Ying; the dark side) represents the breath that formed the earth. Yang (t
breath that formed the heavens. "The most traditional view is that 'yin' r

feminine: being soft, cool, calm, introspective, and healing... and "yang"
hot, energetic, moving, and sometimes aggressive. Another view has the
'yang' day.5 However, since nothing in nature is purely black or purely w
small black spot in the white swirl, and a corresponding white spot in the

Ultimately, the 'yin' and 'yang' can symbolize any two opposing forces in
humans intervene in nature and upset the balance of Yin and Yang.

Tai Chi:
There is a long history of involvement by Taoists in various exercise and
chi in particular works on all parts of the body. It "stimulates the centra
pressure, relieves stress and gently tones muscles without strain. It also
elimination of wastes and the circulation of blood. Moreover, tai chi's rh
the internal organs and improve their functionality." Traditional Chinese
is caused by blockages or lack of balance in the body's "chi" (intrinsic e
balance this energy flow.

Taoist Texts:
These include:

Tao-te-Ching ("The Way of Power," or "The Book of the Way") is believe
Lao-Tse. It describes the nature of life, the way to peace and how a rule
Chuang-tzu (named after its author) contains additional teachings.