

CAO DAI GREAT WAY THE ESSENTIALS

Translated by

Diệu Đức – Phương Thảo – Thiện Quang

***THE GREAT WAY FOR THE THIRD
UNIVERSAL SALVATION***

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THE ESSENTIALS**

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CAO DAI TEMPLE OVERSEAS

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INTRODUCTION

Since the initiation of Cao Dai Faith in 1925, holy messages, holy teachings, scriptures, and prayers have been proclaimed in abundance, in all aspects of life, in different circumstances, in different locations, and for different people. Facing with this huge amount of information, practitioners and researchers may be baffled, not knowing where to start. To help them understand the teaching of the Great Way, the book titled *Yếu Điểm Giáo Lý Đại Đạo* attempted to systematize and outline the essentials of the doctrine. This book, written in Vietnamese language and published in 2006, was a collective work of Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo (the Institute for the Teaching of the Great Way).

Essentials are the fundamental elements and/or characteristics of a teaching. It is not clear how the authors came up with the essentials discussed in this book. But one can map out these essentials by considering the goal of the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation presented in the motto “*Harmony in Secular Way, Liberation in Spiritual Way*” as the result of a problem, then working backwards to find the unknowns, i.e., the essentials, that are needed to achieve this goal.

With that said, to achieve the “*Harmony in Secular Way*”, it requires the relationship between persons in family, in nation, and in society. They are introduced in chapter 4 on Human Life in which the concepts of *Humanness*, *Fraternity*, and *Harmony* are discussed. As these relationships are all about humans, an analysis on mankind is needed to clarify what it means to be human. Chapter 3 discussed about human being, human

dignity, and human power, along with the concepts of *the Equal Triad*, *Human Mission*, and *God-Man Union* to explain the relationships mentioned above. In a deeper level, these relationships are derived from the principle of *Heaven-Earth and All Beings are One*; hence, this principle is introduced ahead, in chapter 2 on Cosmology of the Great Way.

By the same token, to achieve the “*Liberation in Spiritual Way*”, it requires an understanding of the two principles: *Heaven-Earth and All Beings are One* and *One emanates Myriad, Myriad converge to One*; both of which are introduced in chapter 2 on the Universe. The principle *One emanates Myriad, Myriad converge to One* indicates two directions of the human mission: One is engaging in life to bring peace and happiness to the world, and the other is looking inwards to reunite with God. The latter is the path for spiritual liberation and is discussed in chapter 5 on Back to the Root, that presents the *Mission of Grand Vehicle*, the *Nature-Body Cultivation*, as well as an *Outline of the Spiritual Cultivation*, including a list of some basic levels in the Method of Heart, along with its criteria and benefits.

Finally, all these essentials are the fundamental elements in the teaching of the Great Way. Therefore, ahead of them is chapter 1 on Cao Dai and the Great Way, discussing the concepts of *the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation*, *Cao Dai configuration*, *God Eye*, and *Mystic Rule of Power* as the foundation based on which the teaching and the essentials of the Great Way are constructed. So, by simply analyzing the goal of the Great Way, the essentials in this doctrine can be reasonably derived and linked to each other.

We hope the content of this book adequately presents the fundamental elements of the teaching of the Great Way. But if this is not the case, we wish it raises a

beacon of light in the vast firmament of the Great Way, to ignite the light in human hearts into a huge torch that can illuminate and warm up the world. Finally, we look forward to receiving all feedback, corrections, and comments from the readers, scholars, and the virtuous ones.

The Translation Team

April 23, 2024

(The Full-moon day of the 3rd month of Giáp Thìn year)

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THE ESSENTIALS

CHAPTER 1.

CAO DAI AND THE GREAT WAY

SECTION 1. OVERVIEW OF THE GREAT WAY FOR THE THIRD UNIVERSAL SALVATION

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SECTION 1

OVERVIEW OF THE GREAT WAY FOR THE THIRD UNIVERSAL SALVATION

The Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation is the comprehensive salvation of mankind using the method of the Great Way that God has established in this last era.

In Bính Dần year (1926), God founded Cao Dai Faith to inaugurate the Great Way as a means, the religion format, to apply the universal laws or the celestial principles and mechanism to save all beings.

Celestial mechanism is the cyclic operation of the Way in accord with the periodic law of “revolving to the Origin”, by which the Third Universal Salvation corresponds to the last period of such cycle.

Back to the root or revolving to the Origin is the driving force for the evolution of all sentient beings in the process of spiritual preservation and advancement. The method of the Great Way aims to make people aware of the mechanism of returning to the origin, so they walk the way of self-liberation, i.e., the Great Way, employing their own intrinsic evolutionary setting, which is their Sparks of Divine Light, as well as God's Favor in the Third Universal Salvation.

Although the salvation is set by God's mercy, its mechanism is strictly based on the Principles of Natural Nature and Adaptive Nature of Heaven-Earth and the universe.

First is the principle of **Heaven-Earth and All Beings are One**, through which the teaching of the Great Way highlights an infinite essence, i.e., the Globe of Divine Light, as the original source that emanates myriads of Sparks of Divine Light sharing that same essence. They are the spiritual seeds sowed in the evolution machinery of all beings.

Thanks to the connection between the **Globe of Divine Light and Sparks of Divine Light**, all beings are always attracted, promoted, and able to evolve into perfect creatures.

On the evolution hierarchy, any creature achieving the human rank becomes an extremely miraculous being, capable of inducing responses from God, the Globe of Divine Light, and having the authority to share with the Creator the task of building and nurturing all living creatures. His Holiness the Spiritual Pope of the Great Way Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo taught:

*God and Man are two but one,
 God gives the machinery; Man holds the key;
 Spark of Divine Light is immaculate and
 pristine,
 But covered by worldly dust, it becomes
 sentient.¹*

Her Holiness the Goddess of Mercy Đức Quan Âm Bồ Tát taught:

*Being human and in the Way ever since,
 One should strive to seek the origin.
 God-Man Union depends on
 One's will to control one's own mind.²*

Consequently, the teaching of Great Way accepts the notion of “the Equal Triad”.

Based on **God-Man Union** and **the Equal Triad**, mankind obviously carries a very noble mission. This world is the venue for humans to amass work of merit and accrete credit of virtue, so they keep evolving further and further until they can self-liberate from the life-death cycle and achieve the ranks of superior sacred beings. It is the **human mission** that every person must accomplish right in one's own family, society, people, and mankind.

The noble mission assigned to the superior species in this world is the human mission, that is, the authority to represent God in managing all other species accordingly with

¹ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tuất thời, 15-07 Quý Sửu (13-08-1973); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

² Đức Quan Âm Bồ Tát; Minh Đức Tu Viện, Ngọ thời, 13-01 Ất Mão (23-02-1975); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

*the law of creation and transformation; it is also the power of self-liberation to evolve.*³

In the Third Universal Salvation, the original people, whom God entrusted with **mystic power**, also receive an even more outstanding mission; that is the **Mission of Grand Vehicle**, i.e., the mission of “transforming the world on behalf of God” to save mankind.

Aiming to fully save mankind, God employs the credo “The Three Ancient Religions get back to the Origin; the Five Religious Branches return to One” to establish the method of the Great Way. It means converging the Three Ancient Religions and the Five Religious Branches to compound Mystic Power toward the goal “Harmony in Secular Way –Liberation in Spiritual Way.”

With respect to the goal “Harmony in Secular Way”, the teaching of the Great Way undertakes the restoration of **human root (humanness)** and the establishment of **fraternity**. It is because this world can become a virtuous world or a **world of harmony** only when everyone willingly turns inwards and lives up to the stance of true human characterized by humanness and lovingkindness; that is when everyone loves and respects all others, treating each other consistently with dignity.

*Only when humanness shines, people feel they are true humans.*⁴

³ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quán; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Hội thời, 01-01 Quý Hợi (13-01-1983); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

⁴ Đức Lê Văn Duyệt Đại Tiên; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tỷ thời, 14 rạng 15-02 Canh Tuất (21-03-1970); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

With respect to the goal “Liberation in Spiritual Way”, God bestows the New Method of Cao Dai, employing the approach of **nature-body cultivation** to guide and save disciples who seek the way of self-liberation. They are those who step in the Spiritual Way. In the Third Universal Salvation, the Spiritual Way is **the Way of Grand Vehicle**, in which disciples should practice simultaneously “self-liberation and liberating others”. Therefore, to successfully accomplish the Spiritual Way, practitioners must carry out the mission of saving all beings.

*Spiritual Way flows through all beings,
To miraculously transform their evolution
machineries.
Missionaries of the Grand Vehicle exerting
Spiritual Way
Never mind about hardships on their long
journey.⁵*

The outstanding point of the Third Universal Salvation is **God-Man Union**. Supreme God holds the true method of Cao Dai and sets mystic power in the mechanism of the Way. He also entrusts mystic power to the missionaries so they can perform the task of universal salvation. And mystic power to start the inauguration of the Great Way is Cao Dai Faith or Cao Dai religion.

*Father God finds Cao Dai in this southeastern
region as the point of mystic power. It is this
mission of mystic power that promotes all
religions to assemble into the entity of world*

⁵ Đức Đông Lâm Tiên Trưởng; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tuát thời, 15-10 Đinh Tỵ (25-11-1977); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

*redemption in the Third Universal Salvation,
just like the germinal disc in an egg.⁶*

Mystic power is indeed the link between God and Man to establish the worldly method of operating celestial principles to transmit the mechanism of restoring the unity in all religions and all beings.

In general, the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation is a rare event of celestial mechanism, aiming to conclude a historic cycle of global mankind spanning from the First Era, Middle Era, to the Last Era.

It is rare because God is turning the celestial mechanism to converge all religions and all beings into the Great Way which He presides, and to simultaneously select evolutionary candidates for the First Era of the new cycle. That is the principle of the Great Way: **One emanates Myriad – Myriad converge to One.**

It is even rarer because although God decides on the event of returning to the Origin, the process is revolving around the Heaven-Earth axis of mystic power, the **Supreme Being** of God and the **August Being⁷** of all creatures.

*August Being is indeed the Central Point
between Heaven-Earth and all creatures. (...)
Whether the world peace and the Virtuous Era
can be established or not, all depends on the*

⁶ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Nam Thành Thánh Thất, Tý thời, 01-01 Kỷ Dậu (16-02-1969); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

⁷ Translator's note: The term "Hoàng Cực" is translated as the "August Being" based on the famous book titled *Hoàng Cực Kinh Thế* (*Huangji jingshi shu* 皇極經世書) being translated as *The Book of the August Ultimate through the Ages*. (Source: www.chinaknowledge.de/Literature/Daoists/huangjijingshi.html)

fact that everyone must recognize the existence of one's intrinsic Maitreya Buddha. Compassion, lovingkindness, fairness, uprightness, and concord, these five basic virtues would reveal Maitreya Buddha. Leniency, loyalty, courtesy, intelligence, and credibility, these make up August Being.⁸

It is then that all beings can unite with Supreme Being to complete the mechanism of the Great Way.

Hence, the Great Way is symbolized by **God Eye**, the Lord and Supreme Being, whose spiritual power brilliantly radiates and unites with the **true heart** of serene people to lead all beings into the universal restoration.

Therefore, the two words **Cao Dai** carry multiple meanings. It is the universal heart as well as the evolution hierarchy for all beings. It is also the everlasting truth for everyone to converge and successfully integrate with the infinite essence, i.e., the Supreme God, which is the once-in-a-lifetime chance in the last era that Cao Dai manifests to establish the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation.

⁸ Đức Vạn Hạnh Thiền Sư; Trúc Lâm Thiền Điện, 07-04 Canh Tuất (11-05-1970); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

SECTION 2

CAO DAI

In the Third Era of Salvation, Supreme God uses **Cao Dai** as his assumed name and as the name of the new religion that He Himself founded. But what is Cao Dai?

1. DEFINITION

The Vietnamese term “Cao Đài” comprises two words – “Cao” (tall or high) and “Đài” (tower) – with the general meanings as follows:

“**Đài**” is a noun used to indicate a hierarchical structure consisting of many levels; each level plays a definite role in forming and maintaining the existence of the whole structure: the “lower level” establishes the foundation for the “higher level”, and the “higher level” promotes the function of the “lower level”.

“**Cao**” is an adjective used in *quantification* to emphasize the infinite number of levels in that structure, and in *qualification* to honor or establish the values of that structure.

Therefore, **Cao Đai** is an infinite and hierarchical configuration that implies great value to mankind.

In such definition, **Đai** refers to the objectivity of Heaven-Earth, and **Cao** implies the subjectivity of mankind. Hence, Cao Đai is the structure formed by the cooperation between humans and Heaven-Earth. This cooperation is expressed in the principle of God-Man Union that God uses as the key to salvage all beings in the third era:

*Cao Dai – the site of God-Man Union,
And the assumed name God uses in saving all
creatures.
While the world undergoes drastic
transformation,
In this last era God restores in humans their
good nature.⁹*

For a more visual description, Cao Dai is a high tower with countless floors. The higher floor one can reach, the broader vision one can achieve, and the clearer perception one can acquire to self-liberate from the narrow limitation of prejudice so as to penetrate the truth about the universe and all beings, and to experience the truth within oneself:

*Cao Dai is the high tower,
That surpasses all blockages,
Where one can see clearly and hear
distinctively,
Where nothing can restrict one's perception.
Outside the world, God is infinite,
Inside every creature, God is Supreme Being.¹⁰*

⁹ Đức Ngõ Hai Giáo Chủ Ngô Minh Chiêu; Ngọc Minh Đài, Tuất thời, 01-3 Bình Ngo.

2. CAO DAI IS THE UNIVERSE

In the context of universe, the above definition renders more concrete meaning: Cao Dai is the universe, and this universe exists as the union of God, mankind, and all beings. In this context, the teaching of the Great Way explains:

*Cao is the nobleness of Heaven in governing all beings,
Dai, the profoundness of Earth in nurturing them boundlessly.*¹¹

meaning: “Cao” refers to the **infinite nobleness** of Heaven in creating everything, including all creatures and all phenomena; “Dai”, the **unfathomable capacity** of Earth in nurturing all creatures, with no limit or exclusion.

Therefore, “Cao” means the infinite nobleness of Heaven and in this context, Heaven means spirit; then “Cao” is the nobleness of spirit. “Dai” means the infinite profoundness of Earth and in this context, Earth means matter; thus “Dai” is the profoundness of matter. Combining them, the category “Cao Dai” encompasses both Heaven and Earth – or also called “Heaven-Earth” (“Thiên Địa, Càn Khôn”) – the two invisible action potentials that manifest as the universe. This manifestation is confirmed in Đạo Học Chỉ Nam scripture:

*The universe is the form of Heaven-Earth.*¹²

¹⁰ Đức Quảng Đức Chơn Tiên; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, Tuất thời, 07-6 Tân Dậu.

¹¹ Đức Trần Hưng Đạo; Bát Nhã Thiên Đường, Ngọ thời, 29-01 Đinh Tỵ.

¹² Đạo Học Chỉ Nam, chương 1, tiết 4, mục 1.

Being the form of Heaven-Earth, the universe is also the form of Cao Dai. Then Cao Dai is both a blueprint of the universe and a source of material to build the universe. In other words, Cao Dai is the Principle of the universe. Without that Principle, the universe cannot be created, and even if the universe were created, it would not be preserved. So, if Cao Dai does not exist as the soul, neither does the universe as the body. Therefore

*Cao Dai is the heart of the universe.*¹³

Being the heart, the essential core of the universe, ***Cao Dai is the universe***. Therefore, the universe is a high tower designed by the creative ideas of spirit and built from the material source of matter.

3. CAO DAI IS HUMAN

Like the universe itself, each creature in the universe – including human – is constructed analogously to “the high tower” model, as evidenced by the infinite structure of matter. However, for non-human species, the Cao-Dai-in-all-being is a structure completely formed and existed as a fixed destiny that cannot be changed, whereas for mankind, the Cao-Dai-in-human is a universe under construction.

Then what is the Cao Dai that each human must build oneself? *Cao Dai is not beyond the heart.*¹⁴ It means Cao Dai is the Spiritual Heart of that person.

The Spiritual Heart in human is a Cao Dai,

¹³ Đức Như Ý Đạo Toàn Chơn Nhơn; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Hội thời, 29-8 Quý Hợi.

¹⁴ Đức Cao Triều Phát; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tuất thời, 15-10 Kỷ Mùi.

*A microcosm, a constituent of the miraculous Triad.”*¹⁵

Human Spiritual Heart is a tower with countless number of floors, and each floor represents a hidden level of evolution. Differences among those evolutionary levels do not lie on any external factors or outer conditions; they are rather determined by one's competency of self-reflection.

But with such multi-level structure of the evolution machinery in space-time dimension, one's *heart* is merely a *tower* (and that tower is the intrinsic machinery of evolution in one's microcosm). Whether that tower is *high* or not, that is, whether a person can elevate to the levels of Deity, Saint, Immortal, or Buddha in the evolution machinery or not, all depends on oneself alone. The Creator – Supreme God – has given mankind sufficient freedom to decide, and sufficient authority to execute one's own decision.

Therefore, ***Cao Dai is also human***. Each person is a co-author with God to shape one's own intrinsic Cao Dai. Although God creates the mighty stature of that high tower through the microcosmic configuration in each person, the personal and social values of that high tower must be established by that individual's way of life.

¹⁵ Đức Quan Âm Bồ Tát; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, Tuất thời, 03-9 Giáp Dần.

4. CAO DAI IS THE WORLD¹⁶

The world is the community life of mankind, expressed in various extents: family, ethnic group, nation, geographic region, human world, ... In any extent, a society can exist only in its own order and discipline: each family has its own set of family rules, each organization has its own hierarchy, and each nation has its own laws, etc...

Social order is implemented through social structure. Every structural society is a hierarchical structure with three typical classes: the upper class comprises the leaders; the middle one, the managers; and the lower one, the members. *Each structural society is a tower, yet it is not a high tower.* Indeed, this tower can achieve a certain height due to its ability to self-protect using its power; but it may not be high in humanistic value if it misses a basic element.

What is that basic element? God taught:

*Your sincerity and your mission of fraternity is Cao Dai.*¹⁷

Each person is a Cao Dai in the universe. But if the Cao Dai of individuals cannot *fraternize* with each other, it

¹⁶ Translator's note: The term '*nhân sanh*' is literally translated as '*human life*', but other terms are interchangeably used such as '*the way of life*' or simply '*the world*' or sometimes '*humanity*'. Those terms are based on the following definition from en.wiktionary.org and en.wikipedia.org: The **way of life** is defined as "the characteristics, key events, and situations which compose the essentials of human existence, such as birth, growth, emotionality, aspiration, conflict, and mortality." As a literary term, "**human life**" is typically used in the context of ambiguous subjects such as the meaning of life or moral concerns.

¹⁷ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tuất thời, 15-10 Quý Sửu.

is impossible to establish the Cao Dai of society. In this case, no matter in what direction the society moves and to what level it achieves, this society is merely a system of social classes with internal struggles leading to self-destruction.

However, only fraternity is not sufficient, as the solidarity must be implemented with *sincerity*. In other words, only when mankind willfully considers the fraternity mission as the topmost priority and makes a serious effort to execute it, then the *assembly of individuals can build a strong society and the assembly of societies, an everlasting humanity*.

Therefore, society by itself is merely a Cao Dai. That Cao Dai can achieve the height in humanistic nature only when people implement their sincerity in fraternizing with each other. If so, each society would be a high Cao Dai. This Cao-Dai-the-society is the union of Cao-Dai-the-individuals, and in turn, Cao-Dai-the-societies become the components, constituents, or subsystems of Cao-Dai-the-world, which is a much greater Cao Dai configuration, the Cao Dai of entire mankind.

In this sense, Cao Dai is also the world.

In any human society that simulates the Cao Dai model – regardless of the size of such society – it is its order and discipline that serve as the architectural diagram. That diagram establishes relationships between *personal responsibilities* and *social goals*. Thanks to these relationships, a person is no longer an individual, as that person becomes a function in community, a duty in society, a mission in humanity to achieve the common collective goals; and such society is no longer a system of social classes. Instead, it becomes a lively

venue of evolution to promote human potentials and spiritual competencies.

5. CAO DAI IS RELIGION

The principle of “Cao Dai” has appeared in all religions of all civilizations from eastern to western hemisphere and from ancient to modern time. This principle has been symbolized in the architecture of all religions. The pyramids in Egyptian and Peruvian ancient religions, the multi-floor of Hinduist temples, the towers of Buddhist pagodas, the towers of Catholic churches, the towers of Islamic temples, etc..., are the various expressions of the high tower model of human aspiration toward spiritual progression.

Obviously, none of the religions can conceal its tendency for self-preservation of *the Cao Dai form* in its architecture. Those high towers in a religion are used to represent *the great scope and noble value of the work of salvation this religion develops in the world.*

Religion is a special form of human community. Not only does religion inherit or develop Cao-Dai-the-world, but it also simulates Cao-Dai-the-universe; and moreover, it combines those two configurations – those of the universe and of the world – to promote the potentials in the structure of Cao-Dai-the-mankind.

In that sense, *each religion is a Cao Dai.*

Cao Dai in each religion is the Cao Dai of distinct cultural identities. It is the Cao Dai that has so far created human civilization, including all aspects from material to spiritual. It is unfortunate that the differences between those religious nuances have been misunderstood as contradictions and turned into one of the reasons for humanity to divide itself. The consequence of such misunderstanding is that religions

deny themselves the Cao Dai nature inherent in their own spiritual foundation. Therefore, right after the historic missions of the religions in the first and second salvations were accomplished, a new problem has immediately emerged in the next step of the development of human civilization; that is: Mankind needs a universal Cao Dai to build a world of peace and equality.

And now, that universal Cao Dai has been appeared on our planet, in Vietnam. It is Cao Dai religion, i.e., the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation, directly founded by Supreme God Himself, to bring a solution for restoring the universal essence of mankind.

6. CAO DAI IS THE GREAT WAY

In fact, the two words “Cao Dai” have been spread in our world only since the opening of Cao Dai Faith. Although in its beginning stage Cao Dai was present as a religion, it is indeed not a “religion” in the ordinary sense of this word; instead, it is the Great Way, i.e., the indispensable evolutionary path of all living beings on earth from ancient times to present:

*People still think Cao Dai a religion,
Without knowing it is the Great Way in
propagation.
It includes all roads and approaches,
To restore the world in the third era of
transformation.*

*Develop wisdom to elucidate the celestial
principle,
Compose your mind to understand the divine
mechanism,*

*It is the cyclic revolvement,
The only God-Way from ancient till present.¹⁸*

Borrowing the form of a religion, Cao Dai can harmonize basic ideas as well as synthesize the essence in the traditions of all teachings. Through a visible structure called *the organization of the Great Way*, the basic and essential elements of all teachings are systematized into the Three-Teaching Religion. Looking in that, mankind can understand the nature of the three eastern religions (Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism), and can affirm that all religions in the world are of the same principle, because the three eastern religions as well as all religions in the world are merely two different aspects of the Three-Teaching Religion in the Great Way.

The religious form of Cao Dai is a preparation for mankind in terms of awareness so the history of human civilization can move to the stage of worldwide sanctification.

*I, your Holy Master Teacher, have arranged a true form of the **Three-Teaching Religion** for you to clearly understand that **all religions in the world are of the same truth**, to establish the *Virtuous Era after the Dragon-Flower Assembly*.¹⁹*

Therefore, even under the form of a religion, the existence of Cao Dai is not the existence of a religion. Cao Dai is an agent that unites all religions to create a spiritual power to motivate all human organizations to

¹⁸ Đức Vạn Hạnh Thiền Sư; Trúc Lâm Thánh Đức Thiền Điện, Tuất thời, 07-3 Giáp Dần.

¹⁹ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, 30-9 Canh Tuất.

achieve humanistic progress, so that each organization can assert its noble position in a universal civilization.

Cao Dai does not establish another religion but attempts to unite all religions into one. Not only does it create a status for its own organization, but it also makes all organizations become a noble position in this world and in the Kingdom of Heaven and Nirvana.²⁰

Should Cao Dai be considered a religion, it can only be the religion that preaches the monadic principle of the universe, the oneness of all beings, and the harmony of mankind. It is the religion that honors God through noble human values. It is also the religion that realizes the mission of all religions by creating human fraternity among all religions.

The existence in religious form of Cao Dai in the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation is to send into the universe and humanity a message to remind that each person in this world is a Cao Dai among mankind; that each soul, who is still wandering in the six paths of incarnation, is also a Cao Dai within Heaven-Earth; and that each religion on this earth is inherently a Cao Dai in the mission of universal salvation that Supreme God aims at.

7. CAO DAI IS THE ASSUMED NAME OF SUPREME GOD IN THE THIRD UNIVERSAL SALVATION

In the Third Universal Salvation, Supreme God proclaims Himself “Cao Đài Tiên Ông Đại Bồ Tát Ma Ha Tát” (Cao Dai Immortal Bodhisattva Mahasattva). The use of this assumed name also brings in the effect

²⁰ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 2, tiết 4, mục 1.

of revitalizing the Three-Teaching Religion to save all beings:

*I, your Holy Master Teacher, initiate the Way in this last era at the right time according to the destiny of the third era, which must get back to the first era. Therefore, I – alias Cao Dai Immortal – found the Great Way for the Third Era to revitalize the Three Teachings, making them spiritually deep and adequately miraculous to save all sentient beings.*²¹

Then what does this assumed name mean?

“Cao Đài” – a concept deeply rooted in the Way of Saint – is a broad category, encompassing the entire universe, all beings, mankind, and comprising all levels of human society, including religions. Cao Đài is also the most noble place in each creature; that part is the Holy Eucharist, the Buddha Nature, the God Nature, which is a hidden essence within every person and every being in the universe.

“Tiên Ông” (“Immortal”) – an image originated from the Way of Immortal – is used to symbolize a highly noble fruition that one can achieve through one’s own effort in self-cultivation. That fruition has been mentioned by each religion in different terms, but they all refer to the single result when one returns to one’s divine origin.

“Cao Đài Tiên Ông” (“Cao Dai Immortal”) means *the Immortal of the entire universe, of the whole mankind, and of all religions*. That Immortal is inherently hidden in each person and in each creature. And the evolution of each creature in the universe, as well as that of each

²¹ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Hườn Cung Đàn, Tý thời, 15-10 Quý Mão.

person in the world, is the different stages in a single journey to “wake up” that Immortal, or in other words, to transform the spiritual fruition within oneself from a potential to an actuality.

“Đại Bồ Tát” (“Bodhisattva”) – a noun originated from the Way of Buddha – means *the person who compassionately engages in this world to save all sentient beings*, not only does he/she save mankind but he/she also saves all living creatures in the universe.

“Cao Đài Tiên Ông Đại Bồ Tát” (“Cao Dai Immortal Bodhisattva”) means the *person who self-liberates* through his/her own effort to wake up the Buddha Nature inside him/herself, self-cultivates to create the Holy Eucharist in his/her own body, and then *uses his/her own fruition of enlightenment to save all beings*.

“Ma Ha Tát” (“Mahasattva”) – an adjective originated from the Way of Buddha – means immense and profound in both space and time. It is the nature of Cao Dai, to indicate that Cao Dai is inherently and intrinsically self-existing and everlasting being in the universe and in all creatures.

“Cao Đài Tiên Ông Đại Bồ Tát Ma Ha Tát” (“Cao Dai Immortal Bodhisattva Mahasattva”) means the One who is self-existing and eternal throughout space and time, both inside and outside the universe and all creatures. That One is the eternal Savior of all living beings.

In that sense, the nouns “Cao Đài”, “Cao Đài Tiên Ông”, “Cao Đài Bồ Tát”, “Cao Đài Tiên Ông Đại Bồ Tát Ma Ha Tát” have been used as assumed names of Supreme God when He comes to open the Way in Vietnam to save mankind in the last era.

Also in that sense, Cao Dai would rather be a common noun than a proper noun. This noun acts as the sacred seal of Supreme God. The patriarchs of the religions in previous eras of salvation, when descending in the séances of the Third Universal Salvation, still carry this sacred seal with them, especially in cases when it is necessary to lead predestined disciples in their religions back to the Great Way of the Third Universal Salvation.

Indeed, at the period of the opening of the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation, Holy Beings such as Dipankara Ancient Buddha, Sakyamuni Buddha, the Supreme Master of the Way ... descended in spirit séances using the name of Cao Dai in quite a few times.²²

²² References for this section:

- Đàn cơ tại Vĩnh Nguyên Tự, 07 Avril 1926; Thánh Ngôn Hiệp Tuyển, Q.1, tr.14: “*Jade Emperor Supreme God alias Cao Đài Immortal Bodhisattva Mahasattva, teaching the Way in the South. Dipankara Ancient Buddha is Me, Sakyamuni Buddha is Me, the Supreme Master of the Way is Me; also named Cao Đài*”.
- Đàn cơ tại Hội Phước Tự (Cần Giuộc), 05-4 Bính Dần (Samedi 05 Juin 1926); Thánh Ngôn Hiệp Tuyển, Q.1, tr.21: “*Sakyamuni Buddha is Me, aiming to save all beings, alias Cao Đài Bodhisattva Mahasattva.*”
- Đàn cơ tại Chùa Giác Hải, 15-8 Bính Dần (21-9-1926); Thánh Ngôn Hiệp Tuyển, Q.2, tr.10: “*Sakyamuni Buddha, alias Cao Đài Immortal Bodhisattva Mahasattva, transforming Buddhism in the South.*”
- Đàn cơ tại Phước Linh Tự, 15-9 Bính Dần (24-10-1926); Thánh Ngôn Hiệp Tuyển, Q.1, tr.52: “*Sakyamuni Buddha, alias Cao Đài Immortal Bodhisattva Mahasattva, teaching the Way in the South.*”

Later, Divine Beings such as Jesus Christ, Sakyamuni Buddha, ... still use the name of Cao Dai many times when descending in spirit séances.²³

Such events reinforce the conclusion in the previous section: Cao Dai is the Great Way.

The teaching of the Great Way always emphasizes that *Cao Dai* is merely an *assumed name* of Supreme God (i.e., an alias or a temporarily borrowed name). Why is it necessary to emphasize so? It is because Supreme God is a Nameless Being, and forever He is the One who never needs to be named. But in this Third Universal Salvation, the alias “Cao Đài Tiên Ông Đại Bồ Tát Ma Ha Tát” that He brings to this world is *to proclaim the sacred dignity of mankind in Heaven-Earth*. This proclamation states that the intrinsic essence of every human being is indeed a Cao Đài Tiên Ông Đại Bồ Tát Ma Ha Tát (Cao Đài Immortal Bodhisattva Mahasattva).

Hence, this title is not a self-claim of God’s stature, but a declaration of the divine status of humans, that is, the

²³ References for this section:

- Đức Jésus Christ; Huòn Cung Đàn (Giáo Hội Cao Đài Thống Nhất), 06-11 Mậu Thân (25-12-1968); Đạo Lý, số 37, tr.06: “*Jesus Christ, alias Cao Đài.*”
- Đức Gia Tô Giáo Chủ; Huòn Cung Đàn (Giáo Hội Cao Đài Thống Nhất), Ngọ thời, 29-02 Mậu Thân (27-03-1968); Kinh Bình Minh đệ nhất, tr.22:
*I, alias Cao Đài, save all beings,
I use that name to enforce the Celestial
Mechanism (...)*
- Đức Thích Ca Như Lai; Văn Phòng Đại Đạo, 06-08 Canh Tuất (06-09-1970); Kinh Bình Minh đệ tam, tr.38:
*Sakyamuni is Me – Cao Đài
Cao Đài is Me, just a name change.*

lofty dignity that humans must indispensably achieve if they steadfastly practice the complete teaching of the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation.

8. THE INTRINSIC CAO DAI

The life of every human should be a process of building the high tower within oneself. Otherwise, there is no way to prove that one is a human being in the universe. Because this high tower is within each human being – not any other external entity – the teaching of the Great Way calls it the *intrinsic Cao Dai*.

The power to create the intrinsic Cao Dai is an innate potential in humans. That power is also the only difference between mankind and other species. Unable to use that power, humans can degenerate to other species, and it means humans deprive themselves of that sacred power.

For humans, building the intrinsic Cao Dai must be the goal of their entire life, because it is the only way for mankind to exist as human beings in the universe. His Holiness Đức Như Ý Đạo Toàn Chơn Nhơn taught:

Be determined to build a majestic and solemn intrinsic Cao Dai for yourself to live in and consider it your eternal throne, then you will overcome all ordeals (such as storm, sun, and rain). ”²⁴

²⁴ Đức Như Ý Đạo Toàn Chơn Nhơn; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tuất thời, 14-3 Mậu Ngọ.

9. CONCLUSION

When the two words “Cao Dai” are no longer narrowly conceived as something only related to Cao Dai religion, then the category Cao Dai will reveal its true meaning.²⁵

Existence – of God and humans, of the universe and all beings, of nature and society – is Cao Dai. Also, Cao Dai is existence, in the sense of the principle and structure of existence.

In terms of content, Cao Dai is a universal category of dogma, encompassing the entire Heaven, Earth, all beings, including God and mankind. But in terms of application, this category is not for all beings, nor for God, but *for mankind*. Supreme God and the Divine utilize this category in the Third Salvation as a means of innovating human perception and action. Therefore, this category only takes effects when people live with it through their perceptions and actions that reflect the union of God and Man.

In time, Cao Dai is a long journey for Sparks of Divine Light to establish their sacred dignity. In space, Cao Dai is the call to return to the root, to the initial post, for all Sparks of Divine Light whose journey is still unfinished:

*Whoever has not built Cao Dai, build it;
whoever has not found Cao Dai, find it;
whoever has not knocked on the door of Cao
Dai, knock it; because Cao Dai is the heart of*

²⁵ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tuất Thời, 15-01 Giáp Dần: “*Cao Đài being not cao đài is truly Cao Đài.*”

*the universe, the spirit, and the root of humans.*²⁶

And finally, not only is Cao Dai the call for all beings to turn towards goodness, it also the New Method of the Great Way in the Third Universal Salvation to guide all beings to reach the final point of the restoration journey to reunite with God.

²⁶ Đức Như Ý Đạo Toàn Chơn Nhơn; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Hội thời, 29-8 Quý Hợi.

SECTION 3

GOD EYE²⁷

1. OVERVIEW

Every religion is associated with its founder. To honor the founder as well as his teachings, dignitaries and followers perform the most unique and solemn rituals.

As for Cao Dai, its founder is Supreme God, invisible and intangible, who descended in this world via spirit writings to initiate the Great Way. Being invisible, He does not have an image to worship. Yet, because people have faith in Him and sincerely wish to find a symbol to worship Him, Supreme God displayed “God Eye” twice to his first disciple, Sir Ngô Văn Chiêu, and taught the latter to use the symbol God Eye to worship Him.

God Eye is an open left eye, illuminating the universe. God Eye contains the profound and mystic principle of the universe and humanity. Therefore, even though Supreme God as well as Buddhas and Immortals have revealed celestial secrets through holy messages since

²⁷ Translator’s note: Another term for God Eye is Divine Eye.

the inauguration of the Way, God Eye remains a koan (riddle) that Cao Dai dignitaries and followers always meditate on to find the secret method of practice.

1.1. Holy Teachings about God Eye

1.1.1. Thánh Ngôn Hiệp Tuyển (Collection of Selected Cao Dai Holy Messages)

*It is not yet the right time to know why you draw **God Eye** to worship Me. But I briefly discuss it so you can grasp a little bit of its meaning.*

*Eye is master of the mind,
And the two sources of light.
Light is Spirit.
Spirit is God.
God is Me.*

*Spirit is the missing part of the mystic mechanism since the day the Way has been closed. Founding this Third Universal Salvation, only I can let **Spirit** unite with Quintessence and Energy to complete the Three Treasures, the mystic mechanism to transform sentient into saint.*

*(...) I come to **reinstate your True Spirit**, so you can attain enlightenment. You should understand that **Spirit resides in the eye**. Arrange for your co-religionists to clearly understand it. **The source of Immortals and Buddhas** is essentially there.”²⁸*

²⁸ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 25 Février 1926; *Thánh Ngôn Hiệp Tuyển*, Q.1, tr.12, , i.e., *Collection of Selected CaoDai Holy Messages*, séance on the 13th day of the first month of Bính Dần

1.1.2. Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo (The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching)

Why did I tell you to worship “God Eye”, and not teach you to image worship like in other religions?

*Children! You should know that God is **Principle**. This **Principle** is very miraculous and encompasses the entire universe. I do not have a physical body like you to make it visible to you. Therefore, worshipping **God Eye** is worshipping Me.*

Why does God Eye symbolize Me? Previously I taught:

*Eye is master of the mind,
And the two sources of light.
Light is Spirit.
Spirit is God.
God is Me.*

*Eye is the spiritual heart in humans. That **heart** is **the Creator**, which is Spirit; but **Spirit** is **Principle of Infinity**. Indeed, that Principle of Infinity is God.*

When one transmutes Quintessence into Energy, Energy into Spirit, Spirit into Nothingness, and Nothingness into Infinity, one activates Mystic Sight.²⁹

year (February 25, 1926), p. 32, trans. Hum Bui and Hong Bui, CreateSpace, 2015.

²⁹ Translator’s note: ‘*huyền quang nhứt khiếu*’ is the Mystic Sight, the spiritual sense with which humans communicate with the spiritual worlds.

*What is that **Mystic Sight**? Indeed, it is **God Eye**. It locates at Nirvana Chamber³⁰, gathering the full Yang³¹ energy of the Way.*

*Your two eyes are corporeal, that is **Yin and Yang**. Analogously, **the Supreme Being is God Eye** and **the two lights are Sun and Moon**, constantly illuminating the entire universe, continuously circulating from day to night, from night to day, never ending the work of the Creator.³²*

³⁰ Translator's note: The Vietnamese term 'Nê Hườn Cung' means Nirvana Chamber, the ni-wan (the mud-pill) center. It is the Crown Chakra of Hindu Yogic systems and is connected to the Big Dipper and the hypothalamus gland.

³¹ Translator's note: The Vietnamese term 'chơn dương' is the true Yang, i.e., the purely positive energy of the Yin-Yang pair.

³² Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 20-9 Bính Tý (1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1950), thiên 46 "Cách thờ phượng", tr.432; i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter "Method of Worship", pp. 258 – 259, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas 2015.

Translator's notes: The first verse in Vietnamese language *Nhân thị chủ Tâm* may be interpreted in two meanings based on the context of this excerpt. (1) The first three paragraphs (*Eye is the spiritual heart ... the full yang energy of the Way.*) state that God Eye is the Spiritual Heart in humans, the Creator of the universe and all beings. Then, *Eye is master of the mind*. But this case is for enlightened people whose Mystic Sight (the Third Eye) has already been developed. (2) For ordinary people, as mentioned in the last paragraph of this excerpt (*Your two eyes are corporeal ... never ending the work of the Creator*), their corporeal eyes are merely windows or devices for whatever light in their mind to shine through. And the light of God Eye, i.e., the Spiritual Heart, can shine through the corporeal eyes only when the mind is tranquil. So, in this case, *Eye is mastered by the mind*.

1.1.3. Thánh Giáo Sư Tập (Selection of Holy Messages from Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, the Institute for Studies of the Great Way)

His Holiness Đức Đông Phương Lão Tổ taught:

*God Eye is the **Spiritual Heart** in human beings. The two lights, i.e., Yin and Yang, serve as the master. That is the Dyad within the Principle of Monad. Yin and Yang combine into **Spirit**, that is Dyad reverts to Monad.*

*Monad is the Master. **Spirit** is God, the Supreme God within us.³³*

His Holiness Sakyamuni Buddha taught:

The Great Way has no domain, boundary, or scope. Religion is merely a noun to highlight the philosophy of a profoundly mystic principle in dogma. If there is still domain, boundary, subject discrimination, or disparities, then it is not the Way, nor is it the Original State of True Suchness, Cao Dai, or God Eye up there,³⁴ nor does it express as a religious form. Essentially the Great Way reveals to mankind the following message: Return to the existing Cao Dai of humanity, return to the perfect wisdom – to achieve perfect enlightenment, to cross the birth-death shore – that is, return to God Eye, Spiritual Heart, and Buddha Nature. Anyone, who achieves that level of enlightenment, is Saint in Buddha's Dharma

³³ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quân; Vĩnh Nguyên Tự, Tý thời, 28 rạng 29-01 Giáp Dần.

³⁴ In the context of this holy message, “up there” means up on the Divine Altar (The God Altar).

and has already depicted the infinite image of Cao Dai.³⁵

His Holiness the Zen Master Đức Bát Nhã Thiên Sư stated:

*To attain that profoundly mystic depth, one cannot use one's shallow and limited mind; instead, one needs **Wisdom Eye to thoroughly penetrate the realm of Infinity.**³⁶*

1.2. Summary of Holy Teachings about God Eye

Through the above passages of holy messages, the significance of God Eye can be summarized as follows:

- Worshipping God Eye is worshipping the Creator
- God Eye is Cao Dai, the Holy Master Teacher
- God Eye is Principle of Infinity
- God Eye is Principle of Monad or Supreme Being
- God Eye is Spirit
- God Eye is Mystic Sight
- God Eye is Spiritual Heart, Buddha Nature, Perfect Wisdom
- God Eye is Transcendental Eye

In the areas where mathematics can be applied,

if $A = B$
 and $B = C$,
 then $A = C$;

³⁵ Đức Thích Ca Như Lai; Trúc Lâm Thiền Điện, Ngọ thời, 18-7 Quý Sửu.

³⁶ Đức Bát Nhã Thiên Sư; Bát Nhã Thiền Đường, 29-5 Bính Thìn.

we can have thousands of different names for God Eye.

Example 1:

God Eye = Supreme Being
 Supreme Being = Spirit Ravine³⁷
 Then God Eye = Spirit Ravine

Example 2:

God Eye = Perfect Wisdom
 Perfect Wisdom = Wisdom for Wonderful
 Contemplation
 Then God Eye = Wisdom for Wonderful
 Contemplation

1.3. Meaning of the poem taught by the Supreme God

*“Eye is master of the mind,³⁸
 And the two sources of light.
 Light is Spirit.
 Spirit is God.
 God is Me.”*

Combining with Holy Teachings about God Eye, the above verses could be explained as follows:

God Eye is Spiritual Heart (the Creator’s Heart):

*“Eye” is mastered by Spiritual Heart.³⁹
 It is the source of serenity and light (or
 radiance),⁴⁰*

³⁷ Translator’s note: Spirit Ravine is the Mud-pill or ni-wan center, the central point of a human head.

³⁸ Translator’s note: In reference to the translator’s notes for Part 1.1.2, this is meaning # 1 of ‘Eye’.

³⁹ Translator’s note: In reference to the translator’s notes for Part 1.1.2, this is meaning # 2 of ‘Eye’.

*Light is Spirit.
Spirit is God.
God is Me.”*

God Eye is the Supreme Being:

*“Eye is mastered by Supreme Being.
It is King of the two light sources Yin and Yang.
Light source is Spirit.
Spirit is God.
God is Me.”*

Therefore, God Eye is the intrinsic essence of the universe and mankind.

2. GOD EYE IS THE INTRINSIC ESSENCE OF THE UNIVERSE

2.1. God Eye is the Way, Infinity – Supreme Being

Before the division of Heaven-Earth, there existed in the infinite and hazy space the perfectly pure and light Primordial Ether that disperses throughout.

That serene and mystic space is Infinity. Infinity means no beginning, no end, no form, no expression, and no name. Ancient Saints temporarily called it the Way.

⁴⁰ The Vietnamese term ‘*Tịch*’ means serenity; ‘*Chiếu*’ means radiance or light. His Holiness the Zen Master Đức Bát Nhã Thiên Sư, Minh Lý Thánh Hội, 29-10 Bình Thịn taught: “*Freedom is the state of the Way, the Infinity, the origin of Heaven-Earth. Anyone, who observes the Way and simulates it, should persistently practice it. According to the Logics of Change scripture, Infinity corresponds to Serenity, and Supreme Being corresponds to Radiance. Serenity and Radiance are one, Serenity is not beyond Radiance, and Radiance is not outside Serenity. Serenity and Radiance are the intrinsic essence of Spiritual Heart.*” Original Holy Teachings.

In Infinity there is only Primordial Ether (the mixed and chaotic fluid, not yet separating into Yin and Yang), that is, the Innate Energy of Nothingness (the nebular fluid prior to the formation of Heaven-Earth, also named Pre-Genesis or Innate Energy⁴¹).

*Innate Energy reveals a circle of splendid light, which is the Supreme Being; it is said Infinity, an empty circle O, engenders Supreme Being (nothing creates something).*⁴²

That **circle of splendid light** in the Primordial Chaos is the Globe of Divine Light, True Spirit, **God Eye**, illuminating the universe.

*Innate Energy engenders **Supreme Being**,
That is the unique and splendid Globe of Divine
Light,
Intangible, imageless, and formless,
Omnipotent and perfectly miraculous.*⁴³

⁴¹ Translator's note: The Vietnamese term 'Tiên Thiên' is translated into 'Innate' or 'Pre-Genesis' as it refers to what happens before the formation and separation of Heaven and Earth.

⁴² Đức Đại Đức Cao Tiên; 03-8 Bính Tý (1936); Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo (bản in 1950), tr.274; i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter "The Pre-Genesis Odd-Even Set", p.160, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas 2015. Please note in the context of "*Innate Energy engenders Supreme Being*", the word "**engenders**" means a phase in the transmutation process within the Trinity (Non-Being, Supreme Being, and August Being). For further details please refer to Chapter 2, Section 2 "The Way – God" (section The Monad engenders the Triad).

⁴³ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 20-9 Bính Tý (1936); Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo (bản in 1950), tr.436, i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter "Method of Worship", p.260, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas 2015.

The circle of Infinity (i.e., the splendid Globe of Divine Light engendered by Infinity) has the central point called **Promoter**. Promoter is the first action of Principle of Monad within Infinity, when Yin and Yang, Spirit and Energy are still embraced and not yet separated, in silence (Infinity – Serenity) but still revealed and comprehended (Supreme Being – Radiance); thus, it is said to be *dynamic (Supreme Being) but static (Infinity), and static (Infinity) but not static (Supreme Being)*.⁴⁴

Infinity in dynamic is Supreme Being. Supreme Being in static is Infinity. Infinity – Supreme Being is the two sides of the intrinsic essence of the Way.

Serene Infinity is the static essence of Supreme Being. Radiant Supreme Being is the dynamic essence of Infinity.

Therefore, Infinity circle enclosing God Eye is the serene, silent essence of Supreme Being. Supreme Being, i.e., God Eye, illuminating the immense universe is the dynamic essence of Infinity. The Holiness Divine Mother Diêu Trì taught:

*Children! Wherever there is Holy Eucharist of Father God (Supreme Being), I (Divine Mother) always encircle it inside and outside, because I am the intangible Infinity ...*⁴⁵

They are called Infinity and Supreme Being, static and dynamic, quiescent and radiant, inside and outside, but in fact they are merely the circulation of Innate Energy of Nothingness:

⁴⁴ Đức Bát Nhã Thiên Sư; 24-11 Át Mão.

⁴⁵ Đức Diêu Trì Kim Mẫu; Thánh Thất Bình Hòa, 15-8 Đinh Mùi.

Promoter is Innate Energy in extreme static that leads to dynamic. Dynamic energy is promoter energy, swirling endlessly, engendering infinitely. But the unnamed appears to have name, it is the Way, Supreme Being, Nature, Spirit. Inherent Nature and Original Spirit is one. Taoists call it Spirit, Buddhists and Confucians call it Nature (...).⁴⁶

Supreme Being is also called Radiant Supreme Being.⁴⁷

When Sun and Moon are not yet separated, they assemble into the unique state called Radiant Intrinsic Essence or Radiant Supreme Being. It is called Radiant ('*Minh*' in Vietnamese language) because the word '*Minh*' in Sino-Vietnamese characters comprises two words Sun and Moon.⁴⁸ '*Minh*' is the original union of Sun and Moon, not yet being separated. '*Minh*' is Perfect Light of Wonderful Enlightenment, Intrinsic Nature of True Suchness.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quán; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, 22-10 Mậu Ngọ.

⁴⁷ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 3, tiết 3, mục 3: "*The original Radiance is the Radiant Supreme Being.*"

⁴⁸ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quán; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, Tuất thời, 06-12 Quý Sửu:

*Now as Yin-Yang appear,
Sun and Moon unite to engender the Radiance 'Minh'
Wise people should comprehend it,
This celestial secret has been formed since the Antiquity.*

⁴⁹ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 5, tiết 3, mục 3: "*Prior to the creation, the dynamic-static pair has not yet formed and is called the Pre-Genesis. We can borrow the word 'Minh' (Light or Radiance) for the state of Supreme Being. The words Sun and Moon in their original union form the word 'Minh'. 'Minh' here is Perfect Light of Miraculous Enlightenment, Intrinsic Nature of True Suchness.*"

Radiant Supreme Being is the light source of the Globe of Divine Light.

Globe of Divine Light is True Spirit of the universe.

Yin-Yang transmutation is immeasurable and is called Spirit – being Spirit, how can it be measured? Being immeasurable, it comes and goes without a door, half real half unreal; in Yin there is Yang, in Yang there is Yin; it keeps transmuting infinitely and endlessly.⁵⁰

Spirit is the Principle of Infinity. Indeed, that Principle of Infinity is God.⁵¹

Therefore, *Spirit is God, God is Me*, indeed.

God Eye is Sacred Self, Spiritual Heart that covers the past and current universe as well as existing in every human being.

***Sacred Self is a Common Self,**
It is immense and omnipresent.
Sacred Self is not self but still exists,
It exists only as **Spiritual Heart.**⁵²*

2.2. God Eye is Universal Heart, i.e., Supreme God

Eye is Spiritual Heart in human. That Spiritual Heart is the Creator, i.e., Spirit; but Spirit is

⁵⁰ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 1, tiết 3, mục 2.

⁵¹ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 20-9 Bính Tý (1936); Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo (bản in 1950), tr.432. i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “Method of Worship”, p.258, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas 2015.

⁵² Đức Trần Hưng Đạo; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1972-1973, tr.78.

*Principle of Infinity; then, Principle of Infinity is God.*⁵³

The universe has only one Heart, human has only one Heart, one Spiritual Heart, one God.

*God is also Heart, Heart is God. That Heart is only one, sentient and saint are not two, the same for awakened and ignorant. Buddha and demon are one. If two, it is not the Way.*⁵⁴

God Eye is the Creator's Heart. It is the organ that regulates the circulatory system of the universe. When the Creator's Heart operates, the circulatory system of the universe has life. When the Creator's Heart stops, the operation of the universe will stop, and death will come to all beings.

The ceaseless operation of the Creator's Heart is the infinite, endless transformation of *True Spirit* of the universe, symbolized by **God Eye always open**, radiating a brilliant halo in the universe to guide, regulate, and control the periodic mechanism of the universe.

The periodicity of the universe always operates in harmonious order, thanks to its clinging to the root of Heaven-Earth; this root is the *Central Point* (Promoter) of the circle of Infinity. Promoter is the dynamic of the essence of Nothingness, and is named Supreme Being, Principle of Monad or Principle of One Center.

⁵³ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 20-9 Bính Tý (1936); Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo (bản in 1950), tr.432, i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter "Method of Worship", p.258, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas 2015.

⁵⁴ Đức Bát Nhã Thiên Sư; Bát Nhã Thiên Đường, 18-5 Ất Mão.

Center is Infinity and One is Supreme Being.⁵⁵ Center does not separate from One, and One does not separate from Center.

Heaven-Earth does not separate from Center and so, Heaven-Earth is firmly established.

Man is in between Heaven and Earth; so, Man is in the Equal Triad.

Sun at Center prospers; Moon at Center rounds out. The One Center is Promoter, Principle, the point of mystic power in Cao Dai Faith.

*Mystic power is Promoter, Principle, the method of bringing the absolute into the relative realm, transforming impermanence into eternal transcendence.*⁵⁶

*The point of mystic power contained in Infinity is the **Supreme Being**. i.e., the **Holy Master Teacher**.*⁵⁷

*The Holy Father holds mystic power to operate the mechanism of engendering the universe and all beings.*⁵⁸

Mystic power of the Way is the original Promoter to transmute the spiritual to the material, the non-existing

⁵⁵ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 3, tiết 4, mục 2: “*Light or Radiance is Center. But Center without One is like a nation without the king. Center is analogous to **Infinity**, i.e., Radiance; One is analogous to **Supreme Being**, i.e., Principle.*”

⁵⁶ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1968-1969, tr.88-89.

⁵⁷ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1968-1969, tr.88-89.

⁵⁸ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Nam Thành Thánh Thất, Ngô thời, 01-01 Kỷ Dậu (17-02-1969); Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1968-1969, tr.88-89.

to the existing, God to Man and Man back to God. Human returns to God because God is the intrinsic essence, i.e., God Eye in human.

3. GOD EYE IS THE INTRINSIC ESSENCE OF HUMAN

3.1. God Eye is the August Being⁵⁹

Infinity engenders Supreme Being; Supreme Being divides Yin and Yang; August Being assembles Yin and Yang to give birth to all beings.

Infinity⁶⁰ when static is Yin; Supreme Being when dynamic is Yang; moderating Yin and Yang is August Being. The three Beings, though different, are of the same essence, which is the Innate Energy of Nothingness to transform dynamically, statically, and harmoniously to engender Heaven-Earth, and all beings.

Supreme Being is Principle of One Center; August Being is Energy of Supreme Harmony.

Infinity and Supreme Being is the big root of Heaven-Earth and all beings. August Being is the communicative way of Heaven-Earth and all beings.

Supreme Being is the intrinsic God Eye in Heaven-Earth and all beings. August Being is God Eye in human beings.

⁵⁹ Translator's note: The term "Hoàng Cực" is translated as the "August Being" based on the famous book titled *Hoàng Cực Kinh Thé* (*Huangji jingshi shu* 皇極經世書) being translated as *The Book of the August Ultimate through the Ages*. (Source: www.chinaknowledge.de/Literature/Daoists/huangjijingshi.html)

⁶⁰ Translator's note: In terms of the Trinity, the Infinity is Non-Being, one of the three states of the Way (Refer to Chapter 2, Section 2: The Way – God).

3.1.1. The Extrinsic August Being

The Extrinsic August Being is

- The center of life in the world.
- The balance of justice in humanity.

August Being ensures harmony between Yin and Yang, coordinates the Five Elements⁶¹, and creates the harmonious life for all beings to evolve.

In the Third Universal Salvation, August Being is also a solution to govern the world, namely, the World Method of August Being mentioned in the following holy message:

*The World Method of **August Being** is the **Law of Heaven**, the Spiritual Heart of human, the Virtue of Saint, the Way of King; all of which establish the method to stabilize the universe in the last era of annihilation.⁶²*

The World Method of August Being guides mankind to achieve the goal of Cao Dai, which is “*the world harmony*”, by building human fraternity based on the three focuses: humanness, peacefulness, and progress; among these, the determinant is humanness – God Nature – Master August Being of humans. Living a humane life means shining God Nature in each person by perfecting oneself, family, society, religion, race, humanity until accomplishing the final goal, which is “*spiritual liberation*”, to return to the sacred origin, the Globe of Divine Light or Supreme God.

⁶¹ Translator’s note: According to the Logics of Change scripture, the Five Elements are Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth.

⁶² Đức Quan Thế Âm Bồ Tát; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tuất thời, 15-6 Giáp Dần.

To build August Being in the world, one must find the Way existing within oneself and shine up one's intrinsic August Being.

3.1.2. Intrinsic August Being

*It is the splendid light of **Master August Being**.*⁶³

That splendid light is God Eye.

God Eye in human is Master August Being, “same in nature to Heaven-Earth, identical to the Heart of Forefathers and Buddhas.”

*August Being is the lord of Yin-Yang, harmonizing the duality of firmness and softness, bringing it under control of not being inside nor outside. That is the Mystic Sight.*⁶⁴

*What is that Mystic Sight? It is God Eye. It locates at Nirvana Chamber, gathering the entire true Yang energy of the Way.”*⁶⁵

Mystic Sight, which Taoists called Spirit-Energy point, is the convergence site for Yin-Yang as well as Spirit-Energy. Mystic Sight resides at Nirvana Chamber; it is Cao Dai, Celestial Gate in human.

Cao Dai is the Universal Heart, Spirit, human root. It has name but nameless, because all

⁶³ Đức Vạn Hạnh Thiền Sư; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1970-1971, tr.56.
Translator's note: Master August Being is Intrinsic August Being within each person.

⁶⁴ Đạo Học Chi Nam, chương 3, tiết 3, mục 3.

⁶⁵ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 20-9 Bính Tý (1936); Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo (bản in 1950), thiên 46 “Cách thức thờ phượng”, tr.432; i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “Method of Worship”, p.258. trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas 2015.

*beings are born from it, but it is born from nowhere.*⁶⁶

*What is the term Cao Dai? It is the Head Crown or Nirvana Chamber, belonging to the upper world (...). What is Celestial Gate? It is Nirvana Chamber.*⁶⁷

Celestial Gate is the door into Heaven. To attain spiritual enlightenment, one must open that Celestial Gate so the soul can penetrate the eternal and spiritual realm.

God Eye in human is Master August Being, the master of one's intrinsic Cao Dai structure. This intrinsic Cao Dai structure is constructed by the animating Spirit, using the following ingredients: Innate Energy (i.e., Pre-Genesis Energy of Nothingness) and Essence of Dyad (i.e., Yin-Yang in Supreme Being).⁶⁸

In other words, the intrinsic Cao Dai structure is only built in humans by the union of Innate Yin-Yang and Spirit-Energy. Thus, the union of Yin-Yang and that of Spirit-Energy is God Eye in each human being.

⁶⁶ Đức Như Ý Đạo Toàn Chơn Nhơn; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, 29-8 Quý Hợi.

⁶⁷ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 28-8 Bính Tý (1936); Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo (bản in 1950), thiên 34 “Thập tự tam thanh”, tr.322; i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “The Cross of Three Purities”, p.190, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas 2015.

⁶⁸ Đức Như Ý Đạo Toàn Chơn Nhơn taught: “*To build the mystic and eternal Cao Dai, you should eliminate all discernment, sensual love and hatred, proponent and opponent, worrying and fright, so Spirit is animated to bring Pre-Genesis Energy and Essence of Dyad to build your intrinsic Cao Dai.*” Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tuất thời, 29-3 Mậu Ngọ.

God Eye is God Heart as well as human heart. In God it is called Spiritual Heart; in man, True Heart. The term ‘True’ is used to differentiate from the term ‘Spiritual’; in fact, Spiritual Heart is True Heart, and both True Heart and Spiritual Heart are God Heart in the universe and all beings.

3.2. God Eye is the True Heart

*Eye is mastered by the mind.*⁶⁹ It is the sight, view, perception, etc. of the six corporeal senses in human. I see, I hear, I smell, I taste, I touch, I feel; all of these are *regulated by the True Heart*.

The six corporeal senses – eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, thought (true thought) – prior to the interferences of *consciousness*, are sight, view, hearing of the intrinsic nature of True Heart, activated by True Mind. So, they do not involve any desires, seeing but not viewing, hearing but not listening, seeing but not appreciating, hearing but not doting. The mind with no differentiation is tranquil mind. Tranquil mind is serene mind. Serene mind is empty mind and empty nature. When both mind and nature are empty, Radiant Spirit emerges. Radiant Spirit is the light of human mind. As light is Radiance, and ‘Man’ is August Being, the Third Being of the Trinity – Non-Being (Infinity), Supreme Being, August Being – the internal light in human is called Radiant August Being.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Translator’s note: In reference to the translator’s notes for Part 1.1.2, this is meaning # 2 of ‘Eye’.

⁷⁰ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 3, tiết 3, mục 3: “*The original Radiance is Radiant Supreme Being; the reversing Radiance is Radiant August Being*”; “*August Being is a fusion state, the way to return to the root and restore life, to access to the truth (...)*”.

Radiant August Being is the harmony between the two power sources in humans: Yin and Yang, Spirit and Energy. Spirit-Energy are the two light sources in humans. Therefore,

And the two light sources (Radiant August Being): It is the radiance of Spark of Divine Light, shining up when human mind is serene, and Spirit-Energy unites.

*As the mind is tranquil, divine light radiates.
Divine light is the intrinsic God.*⁷¹

Light is Spirit: That divine light is the Original Spirit, the Pre-Genesis point given by God to each person upon incarnating in this world so that he/she can self-cultivate, evolve, and return to God (Radiant Reinstatement).

*Born in the Post-Genesis realm your body is
created
With the **Pre-Genesis point** included.
This point is the Seed of Life, the **Original
Spirit,**
It is **God, the Way, the human Core.**⁷²*

Spirit is God: Spirit is God, the point of Original Spirit, God Heart, Buddha Nature, Supreme Being in every person.

God is Me: God is me; I am the child of God, a Creation within the Creation. The human ego, when quitting false thoughts, can maintain serene mind without delusion or discernment. Then it is the **Ego of God Nature, of Buddha Nature.**

⁷¹ Đức Đông Phương Chưởng Quân; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tuất thời, 10-5 Bính Thìn.

⁷² Đức Vô Cực Từ Tôn; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tuất thời, 13-8 Kỷ Mùi.

Every human being has intrinsic God Eye, Buddha Nature, True Mind. But due to the impact of **consciousness**, the six senses become the **six conceptions**.⁷³

Consciousness is the discerning mind that generates thoughts of discrimination, comparison, deception, and unpredictable calculation. Due to discerning mind, the six senses become the six conceptions. To eliminate these weeds of discernment, His Holiness Đức Đông Phương Lão Tổ taught:

Be diligent in exercising the Method of Heart to eliminate false thoughts, reverse the six conceptions to the six senses to restore serenity, diminish Yin and reinstate Yang to harmonize them, then the Three Treasures and the Five Elements will be harmonized and well balanced.

⁷⁴

This is the New Method of Cao Dai that God mystically conveys via God Eye.

4. GOD EYE IS THE NEW METHOD OF CAO DAI

In the holy teaching on why Caodaists worship God Eye, Supreme God explained:

I come to reinstate your True Spirit, so you can attain enlightenment. You should understand that Spirit resides in the eye. Arrange for your co-religionists to clearly understand it. The

⁷³ The six senses or roots comprise sight root, hearing root, smell root, taste root, body root, and thought root (the word “root” means origin or foundation). The six conceptions are sight consciousness, hearing consciousness, scent consciousness, taste consciousness, body consciousness, and thought consciousness.

⁷⁴ Đức Đông Phương Lão Tổ, 24-01 Đinh Ty.

*source of Immortals and Buddhas is essentially there.*⁷⁵

Thus, the ultimate goal of the New Method of Cao Dai is “Reinstate the True Spirit” to achieve “Spiritual Liberation”.

Reinstate the True Spirit means unify Spirit and Energy to harmonize Yin-Yang. The Holy Master Teacher taught:

*The Way of your Holy Master Teacher is not peculiar; it is just Yin and Yang, Spirit and Energy, nothing beyond that. If you want to understand the Way, you should use Yin-Yang as the basis.*⁷⁶

To harmonize Yin-Yang, Spirit-Energy, one should utilize the key provided by the Holy Master Teacher: It is “God Eye Promoter”.

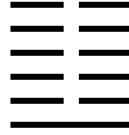
In Heaven-Earth, “**Promoter**” is Supreme Being, the single point of Yang • that is just activating in the serene essence of Infinity.

In human, “**Promoter**” is the single Yang line being just activating in the hexagram Return⁷⁷ according to the Logics of Change scripture:

⁷⁵ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 25 Février 1926; Thánh Ngôn Hiệp Tuyển, Q.1, tr.12, i.e., *Collection of Selected CaoDai Holy Messages*, séance on the 13th day of the first month of Bình Dần year (February 25, 1926), p. 32, trans. Hum Bui and Hong Bui, CreateSpace, 2015.

⁷⁶ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 01-9 Bình Tý (1936); Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo (bản in 1950), thiên 10 “Nền tảng Cao Đài Đại Đạo”, tr.90; i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “The Foundation of Cao Dai Great Way”, p. 53, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas 2015.

⁷⁷ Translator’s note: The Chinese term ‘Fu’ means return or turning point.



This promoter emerges only when the five senses (eye, ear, nose, mouth, body) are tranquil, then True Thought can circulate. The five senses are the five Yin lines in the hexagram Return, whereas True Thought is **Promoter**, the only Yang line, the Heart of Heaven-Earth (Universal Heart), Master August Being, True Heart in human.⁷⁸

To quiet the six senses, the mind should be meditative. To achieve the meditative mind and maintain it in serenity, one should practice the new method that the Holy Master Teacher has taught his children in the Third Universal Salvation, which is “*Eye is mastered by the mind.*”

God Eye is the seeing and knowing mastered by the mind.

This seeing and knowing does not only see the outside world but also know the inside:

⁷⁸ Đức Trần Hưng Đạo; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, 06-11 Bính Thìn: We should consider the Return hexagram as the basis for our meditation practice to nurture the True Origin. Return implies many meanings, among which its original meaning is “*prior to Infinity, the Yin already encloses the Yang*”, like the serenity of the Yin miraculously illuminating the return to the Origin. Therefore, the image of Return hexagram consisting of one Yang line under five Yin lines can be deduced as follows: Principle of One Yang is the dynamic Promoter point, i.e., the True Thought, and the static Promoter is the five Yin lines: eye, ear, nose, mouth, body. As the five senses are tranquil, the True Thought radiates. Meditation practitioners should contemplate on it as the riddle (koan) for their spiritual cultivation.

*Outside in the world is the immense God (The Extrinsic God),
Inside all beings is also God (The Intrinsic God).⁷⁹*

God and human are closely related from the outside world to the inside mind.

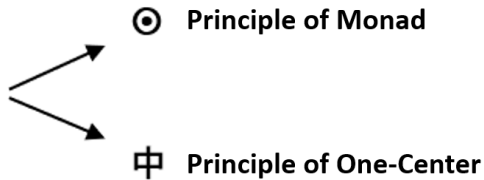
Caodaists worship **God Eye that illuminates** throughout the immense universe, as the miraculous source of spiritual light to help them self-enlighten to unite with Cao Dai Supreme God.

4.1. External Contemplation

External contemplation is the gazing at God Eye above the Divine Altar (the Extrinsic God).

External configuration of God Eye:

- The Infinity circle enclosing God Eye symbolizes Energy of Nothingness (the Impersonal God).
- God Eye:



In every of the four daily worship sessions, Caodaists gaze at God Eye while chanting prayers. It is their **external contemplation**.

Human eyes – the left one is Yang, and the right one, Yin – gazing at the only one “God Eye” is the method of “Two Light Sources converging to One”, i.e., the

⁷⁹ Đức Quảng Đức Chơn Tiên; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, 07-6 Tân Dậu.

union of Yin and Yang lights. Yin-Yang union is Supreme Being, Spirit, God Eye. Anyone in such state of perfect sincerity and veneration would feel that “God Eye” also gazes at him/her. That is the method of “Turning the light inwards on oneself”. One would experience spiritual communion: You are in Holy Master Teacher, and Holy Master Teacher is in you. That is the practice of external contemplation to concentrate the spirit and control the mind to achieve the following results: Holy Master Teacher and you is One, God Eye and your Self is One.

4.2. Internal Contemplation

Practice the Method of Heart to comprehend the miraculous Way.

Forge into Immortal and Buddha via the twin eyes,

*Where **Yin-Yang promoter** resides,*

To unify Spirit and Energy in the head crown.⁸⁰

Yin-Yang is the dynamic-static Promoter in Heaven-Earth, and of Spirit-Energy in your body.⁸¹

Twin eyes are the union of two streams of light from human eyes. The left eye is Yang (Sun); and the right

⁸⁰ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 20-9 Bính Tý (1936); Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo (bản in 1950), thiên 46 “Cách thờ phượng”, tr.434; i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “Method of Worship”, pp. 258-259, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas 2015.

⁸¹ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 20-9 Bính Tý (1936); Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo (bản in 1950), thiên 46 “Cách thờ phượng”, tr.434; i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “Method of Worship”, pp. 259, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas 2015.

eye, Yin (Moon). Yin-Yang, or Sun-Moon unite to form Radiance ('Minh').

To achieve Radiance, one should use the magic of converging light to activate God Eye (promoter residing in eyes). If both eyes gaze at the point between the two eyebrows, True Energy will no longer scatter, Spirit will be at peace, and false consciousness will hardly arise. The light condensing method is the initial step for meditative beginners to turn the light inwardly into the Higher Elixir Field (Supreme Being). As the light sources are concentrated at this point, the two energies in heart and kidney join, Kan and Li trigrams meet, Fire and Water connect, Dragon and Tiger adore.⁸²

Kan and Li, Fire and Water, Dragon and Tiger are Yang and Yin, respectively. Yin-Yang union is Radiance, i.e., Spirit:

Yin-Yang union is Spirit, i.e., Dyad reverts to Monad. Monad is the Master. Spirit is God, the Supreme Being in human body [the Intrinsic God].⁸³

God Eye is the Universal Heart, i.e., the Spirit. *The source of Immortals and Buddhas is essentially there.* Spirit can miraculously and infinitely transmute. If Spirit resides in a body, that body is alive; if Spirit leaves a body, that body is dead. If Spirit exists, so does Energy. (Pre-Genesis) Innate Energy is the Mother of Spirit. If Energy remains, Spirit will not diffuse. If Energy is exhausted, Spirit disappears. If one turns

⁸² Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 5, tiết 3, mục 3.

⁸³ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quân; Vĩnh Nguyên Tự, Tý thời, 28 rạng 29-01 Giáp Dần.

Spirit inwardly to illuminate one's mind, that mind will become serene.

As the mind is serene, Radiant Spirit reveals, and God Eye shines; the six conceptions revert to six senses, delusional mind becomes True Mind, Five Elements unite, True Thought emerges, True Energy circulates, Yin and Yang harmonize, Spirit and Energy bind together; Quintessence evolves to Energy, Energy to Spirit, Spirit to Nothingness, Nothingness to Infinity; Infinity is the Innate Energy of Nothingness, the Universal Center, the Way, the essence of the Holy Master Teacher and all beings.

In human beings, Universal Center is Nirvana Chamber, with Mystic Sight at the head crown. Enlightened people, who achieve Spirit-Energy union and attain spiritual liberation, can activate Mystic Sight, open Celestial Gate, and unite with the Holy Master Teacher to fulfill the riddle: *I am you; you are Me.*⁸⁴

5. CONCLUSION

Caodaists worship **Divine Eye** or “**God Eye**”, which is a **brightly open left eye**, symbolizing the invisible Cao Dai God, Holy Father of all beings. The universe has only one Way, one Heart, one Father God. Therefore, God Eye is only One. “One” is to express the **Consistent** and **Rational** view. God Eye is a view of the Absolute, a view that carries the spirit of the Great Way, surpassing beyond and above all discernment of Existence and Non-Existence, and not clinging to either Existence or Non-Existence, because

⁸⁴ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 20 Février 1926; Thánh Ngôn Hiệp Tuyển, Q.1, tr.8.

*Clinging to Existence or Non-Existence is satanic,
Denying Existence or Non-Existence is also diabolic.*⁸⁵

Left Eye symbolizes God Eye. Left is Yang, the dynamic essence, immense, and open. God Eye is always widely open, illuminating the entire universe to monitor and control the circulatory system of the universe and all beings, in every place, every people, every religion, every period, in the love of Holy Father. Therefore, **God Eye represents harmony, universality, and eternity.**

God Eye is God Heart, True Spirit of the universe. In human, the twin eyes' two light streams are the gateway to the soul, which is the Spark of Divine Light given by God. Thanks to it, one can exercise spiritual method to unite Yin and Yang, Spirit and Energy, by keeping the mind serene and reverting the six conceptions to the six senses. When the mind is serene, Heaven-Earth, Yin-Yang, Nature-Body, Spirit-Energy, all return to One Heart, to the intrinsic God Eye in every person.

At this state, *the Holy Master Teacher's eye and yours are One; I am you, you are Me.*⁸⁶

At this state, God Eye is the Sacred Nature of the Self, the Heart of the universe, the Heart of God:

*To mystically harmonize the Way and the mind,
God and human should unite in harmonious communion,
The mind should not think about right or wrong,*

⁸⁵ Đức Bát Nhã Thiên Sư; Minh Lý Thánh Hội; Giáo Huấn Khuyến Tu Thi Văn, quyển Thượng, tr.33.

⁸⁶ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 20 Février 1926; Thánh Ngôn Hiệp Tuyển, Q.1, tr.8.

*No good, no evil, no self, no non-self.
That is True Mind,
True Heart of the universe, of God, Buddha, and
Immortal.*⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Đức Quan Âm Bồ Tát, Chơn Lý Đàn (Vạn Quốc Tự), Tuất thời, 01-4 nhuận Giáp Dần.

SECTION 4

MYSTIC POWER

In the Third Universal Salvation, Supreme God Himself took the power of the patriarch, establishing a new religion in Vietnam to initiate the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation.

The establishment of Cao Dai Faith in this period has a very special meaning. It is the sowing of pure seeds on selected land to have appropriate conditions for the great tree to bloom and fructify in the future. That seed, for the Great Way of the Third Universal Salvation, is the germ of mystic power.⁸⁸

Cao Dai Faith is an entity of mystic power among religions and among human worlds. Cao Dai leaders are those who receive the mission of mystic power from Supreme God to promote the authority to operate the religion, transforming human conscience and perfecting society.

⁸⁸ Translator's note: The term 'mystic power' is a shorthand for 'mystic rule of power'.

1. GENERAL MEANING OF MYSTIC POWER

1.1. Definition

Power is the capacity of a qualified subject to act on one or more objects such as entities, living beings, organizations, collectives, or individuals.

Rule is order, law, mechanism, according to which both subject and object must comply to achieve the final goal.

Mystic rule of power or in short, **mystic power**, in the most general sense, is the supernatural and eternal capability of any subject in the universe that is acting to control and regulate the engenderment of all beings and moderate their evolutions.

Thus, mystic power is the dogma, the principle according to which all beings have been assigned to complete a mission.

Mystic power is the Way because it operates accordingly with the celestial mechanism.

For the universe before the creation of Heaven-Earth, *mystic power is enclosed [in Infinity], is the Supreme Being, i.e., the Holy Master Teacher.*⁸⁹ *Father God holds mystic power to operate the mechanism of engendering the universe and all beings,*⁹⁰ so the universe can transform from the originally quiescent nature into the lively and constantly changing entity.

It is mystic power enclosed in every existing entity that transforms and engenders all beings.

⁸⁹ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Thánh Giáo Sư Tập 1968-1969, tr.88-89.

⁹⁰ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Thánh Giáo Sư Tập 1968-1969, tr.88-89.

*Thanks to it, nothing disappears, and nothing is newly created.*⁹¹

For a person as oneself, *the point of mystic power is the soul. Thanks to it, a person is born, grows up, matures, and can evolve to the extent of transcending mortal into saint, converting sentient into immortal.*⁹²

For a person in regard to other people, *mystic power is not dominance. Mystic power is essentially love, free of dominance so everyone can evolve.*⁹³

For religions, mystic power is the factor to *promote all existing religions to assemble into an entity of world redemption.*⁹⁴

In summary,

*Mystic power is Promoter, Principle, the method of bringing the absolute into the relative matter, transforming the illusionary impermanence into the eternal transcendence.*⁹⁵

*All existing beings are created and transformed by mystic power.*⁹⁶

⁹¹ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1968-1969, tr.88-89.

⁹² Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1968-1969, tr.88-89.

⁹³ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1968-1969, tr.88-89.

⁹⁴ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1968-1969, tr.88-89.

⁹⁵ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1968-1969, tr.88-89.

⁹⁶ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1968-1969, tr.88-89.

1.2. Characteristics of Mystic Power

Mystic power is the achieving power of the Way, whose subject is *endowed* as the life of all beings or *entrusted* as the mission of a person.

As for Supreme God, He is the Lord of the universe, and his power is absolute. Yet, his mystic power of salvation is essentially centered in God-Man Union:

*Cao Dai – the site of God-Man Union,
And the assumed name God uses in saving all
creatures.⁹⁷*

Mystic power always pairs up with the mission of a subject. If there is a mission, naturally there is mystic power. On the contrary, mystic power is given any time a mission is set.

Power and Rule are the two-way operation of a subject: one direction is to impact the object; the other direction is to meet the subject's requirements for advancement. That is the Middle-Way nature of mystic power.

Mystic power is life and love. Mystic power is not to enhance the subject's position but to transform, establish, and perfect the object (that means forgetting oneself to cherish others).

Mystic power is not reserved for any class or position in the invisible or visible realm. Every sentient being has mystic power corresponding to its use.

Mystic power is only effective when applied in accordance with celestial mechanism, in rapport with the Way and the world.

The person who upholds mystic power is the one who receives the orders of one's supervisor and modulates

⁹⁷ Đức Ngô Minh Chiêu; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1966-1967, tr.41.

one's subordinates. If one does not comply with one's supervisor and is not compatible with one's subordinates, then one's actions no longer have mystic power.

2. MYSTIC POWER OF CAO DAI IN THE THIRD UNIVERSAL SALVATION

2.1. The Role of Mystic Power of Cao Dai Faith

The world is currently in the last period of the Three-Era cycle and therefore, it is an existing entity in the transmutation process. If there is no point of mystic power contained inside as the seed of life, this transmutation process will lead the world to self-destruction.

Therefore, to initiate the Third Universal Salvation, Supreme God first established Cao Dai Faith as the point of mystic power. This religion must achieve the ability to *promote the assembly of all existing religions into the entity of world redemption in the Third Universal Salvation, just like the germinal disc in an egg.*⁹⁸

In its mission of implementing mystic power, Cao Dai Faith merely plays the role of a catalyst for transformation and does not have any exclusive power over other religions around the world. Every religion must have mystic power to become the true entity of religion for world redemption.

Mystic power is not particularly assigned to any person, or any society, or any religion. (...) Depending on the willingness, one can take it;

⁹⁸ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1968-1969, tr.90.

depending on the mission, one can receive it. Mystic power is the Holy Master Teacher, the Way, the motivating force to drive this world toward the virtuous era after the Dragon-Flower Assembly⁹⁹. (...) In the existing entity of world religion, all religions from past and current are in the process of transmuting and dissenting to evolve. (...).¹⁰⁰

To acquire mystic power, all religions must unite their spirit into a unified teaching of the Way, not converging their current organizational systems into that of Cao Dai Faith.

To assist other religions in becoming the “*motivating force*” mentioned above, Cao Dai Faith has proposed in its teaching the motto “Return the Three Religions to the origin” along with the principle “God-Man Union”.

Return the Three Religions to the origin. Supreme God converges the Three Religions to constitute the Great Way, which is also the establishment of *mystic power of Cao Dai Faith*. It is so, because the Three Religions, arisen from the Great Way to transform sentient beings in the First and Second Universal Salvations, were developed into three teachings of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism depending on human karmic backgrounds and tendencies. Nowadays, in the Third Era, the last chance of salvation, Supreme God unites the Three Religions into *one single teaching*, namely, the New Method of Cao Dai, capable

⁹⁹ Translator’s note: The Vietnamese term ‘Hội Long Hoa’ literally means the Flower-Dragon Assembly and figuratively means the Final Judgment.

¹⁰⁰ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Thánh Giáo Sư Tập 1968-1969, tr.88.

of the thorough salvation aiming at “*worldly harmony and spiritual liberation*”.

Once the Three Religions unite, the True Teaching would be obvious because the True Teaching manifests through the Oneness of the Three Religions. From there, all religions would clearly identify their positions in the true teaching and contribute to establishing the unified doctrine, which means “*Converge the Five Religious Branches to One.*”

God-Man Union. God-Man Union is the ultimate mystic power of the Third Salvation, which has become the principle of initiating, propagating, and attaining enlightenment of the Great Way in this Last Era. Father God taught:

*I initiate the universal restoration,
Using the mystic Way for this operation.
I combine my power with that of all creatures,
From East to West, past till present, to form the
future.*¹⁰¹

It is the unity between God and sentient beings in accordance with the celestial principle of returning the universe to the origin that establishes mystic power of the Third Salvation in this world.

Once the unity between Man and God is established, then mystic power is given to carry out the mission:

*It is the communion between your mind and the
Divine Will that creates the divine-appointed*

¹⁰¹ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, 9 giờ đêm, 15-02 Quý Hợi.

*mission to operate accordingly with celestial principle to save all beings.*¹⁰²

Therefore, mystic power is not vague or unrealistic; it is the application of celestial principle and celestial mechanism into this world by those who practice the Spiritual Way:

*(...) As God and Man unites, God's mission will be honored through the hands of mankind, or vice versa.*¹⁰³

In terms of the method for spiritual practice, mystic power is the True Spirit that Supreme God mercifully bestowed upon his children in this Third Universal Salvation; thanks to it, they can practice and attain enlightenment. He taught:

*Spirit is the missing part of the mystic mechanism since the day the Way is closed. Founding this Third Universal Salvation, **only I can let Spirit unite with Quintessence and Energy** to complete the Three Treasures, the mystic mechanism to transform sentient into saint.*¹⁰⁴

and:

*I come to reinstate your True Spirit, so you can attain enlightenment.*¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Đức Diêu Trì Kim Mẫu; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Hội thời, 15-4 Kỷ Mùi.

¹⁰³ Đức Như Ý Đạo Toàn Chơn Nhơn; Vĩnh Nguyên Tự, Tuất thời, 30-3 Quý Sửu.

¹⁰⁴ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 25 Février 1926; Thánh Ngôn Hiệp Tuyển, Q.1, tr.12.

¹⁰⁵ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 25 Février 1926; Thánh Ngôn Hiệp Tuyển, Q.1, tr.12.

2.2. Establishment of Mystic Power in Cao Dai Church

In the early days of the religion, when Supreme God bestowed the Constitution to establish Cao Dai Church, He assigned mystic power among the Three Houses as well as among the dignitaries in a very delicate yet strict way that solemnly highlights the goal of the universal salvation in human world.

Mystic power among the Three Houses. The Three Houses are Bát Quái Đài, the Octagonal House (of Divinities); Hiệp Thiên Đài, the House of Communion (with God); and Cửu Trùng Đài, the House of Nine Levels (of Initiation). Each of the Three Houses has its own mystic power in its area of responsibility. But mystic power of Hiệp Thiên Đài (the House of Communion) is particularly typical for its ability to operate Sacerdotal Law from Bát Quái Đài (the Octagonal House) to impact the targets of Cửu Trùng Đài (the House of Nine Levels); then in turn, these targets carry out their mission in transforming the human world; and finally, they return to unite with Bát Quái Đài (the Octagonal House) after attaining enlightenment. Therefore, His Holiness the Spiritual Pope of the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation affirmed the mediating role of mystic power of Hiệp Thiên Đài (the House of Communion) as follows:

Hiệp Thiên Đài (The House of Communion) holds mystic power to lead Cửu Trùng Đài (the House of Nine Levels) into Bát Quái Đài (the Octagonal House) and transmit the mystic nature of Bát Quái Đài (the Octagonal House)

*into Hiệp Thiên Đài (the House of Nine Levels).*¹⁰⁶

That essential role of Hiệp Thiên Đài (the House of Communion) is not only due to the authority of the dignitaries living in the world; but it is also because:

*Hiệp Thiên Đài (the House of Communion) is the place where the Holy Master Teacher resides, holding the divine power of the Faith. So long as the Faith remains, the House of Communion will still exist.*¹⁰⁷

This fact indicates that no matter how superior and noble mystic power could be, it is still the acceptance to comply with the superior's commands while exercising legal power to carry out its mission, so it is not a spontaneous unilateral action.

Mystic power of the Dignitaries. Consider mystic power of Đầu Sư (Cardinal) as a typical example. According to the Constitution, Đầu Sư is the person who *has the power to represent Giáo Tông (Pope) and Hộ Pháp (Dharma Protector)*¹⁰⁸ to rule both the religious and secular life of the adherents.¹⁰⁹ But Đầu Sư “*is not allowed to do anything on his own initiative that is not commanded by Giáo Tông and Hộ Pháp.*”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Thánh Giáo Sư Tập 1968-1969, tr.88-89.

¹⁰⁷ Pháp Chánh Truyền, phần “Hiệp Thiên Đài”, tr.51.

¹⁰⁸ Pháp Chánh Truyền, phần chú giải Pháp Chánh Truyền về “Quyền hành Đầu Sư”, tr.11.

¹⁰⁹ Pháp Chánh Truyền, phần nguyên văn của Pháp Chánh Truyền về “Quyền hành Đầu Sư”, tr.10.

¹¹⁰ Pháp Chánh Truyền, phần chú giải Pháp Chánh Truyền về “Quyền hành Đầu Sư”, tr.11.

The meaning of mystic power is even more prominent through two important clauses of the Constitution regarding the authority of *Đầu Sư*:

They [Đầu Sư]¹¹¹ must obey the orders of Giáo Tông and do exactly as the rules of Giáo Tông teach.¹¹²

As for any law that is against the welfare of humanity, they must petition for abrogation.¹¹³

Thus, for the superiors one must *obey their orders* and for the subordinates one must *care for their welfare*. That is mystic power of the dignitaries or religious leaders.

But mystic power must also be very distinctive between dignitaries. For instance, in the Constitution, the authority of *Chánh Phối Sư* (Censor Archbishop) are noted as follows:

Chánh Phối Sư is (...) the person who holds in his hands all the power to act; he only follows the orders of Đầu Sư and must obey them; he cannot change the commands to make his own; he must always wait for the orders of Đầu Sư. But on the other hand, Đầu Sư is not allowed to take over the authority of these three Chánh Phối Sư. If Đầu Sư encroaches on his authority to act without the consent of the three Chánh Phối Sư, he is overstepping his authority and must violate

¹¹¹ The words ‘they’ in the original text of the Constitution are all used by the Supreme God.

¹¹² Pháp Chánh Truyền, phần nguyên văn của Pháp Chánh Truyền về “Quyền hành Đầu Sư”, tr.12.

¹¹³ Pháp Chánh Truyền, phần nguyên văn của Pháp Chánh Truyền về “Quyền hành Đầu Sư”, tr.12.

*the Constitution.*¹¹⁴

3. MYSTIC POWER FOR THE MISSIONARIES

Wherever is set for the salvation of the world, so does mystic power. Receiving mystic power without carrying out the mission, one cannot demonstrate mystic power. On the other hand, receiving the mission without upholding mystic power, one cannot accomplish the mission.

For those on mission, mystic power is the ability to apply the principle of the Way that is inherent in one's own nature to impact the temporal and spiritual life of other people to save them. Here it means mystic power is the use of a subject's effort, the promotion of one's spiritual ability in the mission of transforming living beings.

“Power” or “Rule” is in fact one. The distinction is merely due to the difference in the object of impact of the subjective spirit. *Power is a form of expression upon the object; Rule is expression upon oneself.*¹¹⁵

In other words, when a missionary uses his/her spiritual ability to sanctify him/herself so he/she can act with the spirit of an angel, then the Way, the Heart is manifested as Rule. When he/she applies that ability to help and save other people, then the Way, the Heart is manifested as Power.

Power is love; Rule is life. Indeed, Rule is called life because to achieve Rule is to grasp the laws of existence and evolution in the universe; and Power is called love because to obtain Power is to gain the

¹¹⁴ Pháp Chánh Truyền, phần chú giải Pháp Chánh Truyền về “Quyền hành Chánh Phối Sư”, tr.15.

¹¹⁵ Đạo Học Chi Nam, chương 4, tiết 4, mục 1.

ability to educate and save others, to demonstrate the Creator's love that Heaven-Earth has applied in the management of all beings.

It can be stated that the spiritual method is the origin of mystic power:

*Mystic power is also spiritual method, and spiritual method is mystic power. Religious guides and leaders must learn to thoroughly master Power to strictly enforce Rule, just as spiritual cultivators must penetrate the unique point of the Way to be able to practice the method.*¹¹⁶

Therefore, to uphold and maintain mystic power, it is important that one must achieve Rule. Achieving Rule naturally means acquiring Power. If there is Power without Rule, such Power no longer has effect of saving others:

*Having Power without Rule would take people to nowhere; on the contrary, it readily pushes people into darkness and confusion.*¹¹⁷

So, it is necessary to emphasize that the missionaries must cultivate and practice the Spiritual Way of Grand Vehicle to achieve Rule in order to exercise Power:

Getting rank is naturally obtaining position, obtaining position is naturally earning power. Religious power requires the missionaries to achieve spiritual practice corresponding to their

¹¹⁶ Đức Đông Phương Chưởng Quân; Thiên Lý Đàn, Tuất thời, 23-6 Canh Tuất.

¹¹⁷ Đạo Học Chi Nam, chương 4, tiết 4, mục 1.

*executive levels so mystic power is strict and clear.*¹¹⁸

Supreme God confirmed this requirement in the following instructions:

*From Jade Palace God Father command,
And bless everyone present.
Children! Observe the Way to exercise the
Celestial Promoter,
Purify nature and body to demonstrate mystic
power.*¹¹⁹

4. CONCLUSION

Mystic power of the Third Universal Salvation existed and is existing; the mission of mystic power is still ongoing and has not yet been completed.

All existing entities in the last era are undergoing transmutation and subjecting to the laws of annihilation and preservation.

The selected nation must lighten up its sense of mission, and not merely content with the faith in the Holy Master Teacher and religious devotion. If the land harbors the sown seeds but the supporting conditions have not been met properly, then the seeds still cannot sprout up.

Meanwhile, religious leaders should spiritually cultivate and attain enlightenment to establish God-Man Union to support the rapid progress of the mission.

¹¹⁸ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tuất thời, 15-7 Ất Sửu.

¹¹⁹ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Hợi thời, 29-02 Mậu Ngọ.

*If one cannot transform winter into spring, sentient into saint, chaos into order, war into peace, selfishness into universal harmony, then one has not yet achieved mystic power.*¹²⁰

Finally, it should be noted that:

*Mystic power is the Holy Master Teacher, is the Way.*¹²¹

and

*Mystic power is love and life.*¹²²

with a reminder from the Supreme God as follows:

*Upholding mystic power, you can propagate the Way; developing love, you can establish peace and happiness in life. These are the only conditions for you to return to the origin of the Great Way, to Me.”*¹²³

¹²⁰ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Thánh Giáo Sưu Tập 1968-1969, tr.88.

¹²¹ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Thánh Giáo Sưu Tập 1968-1969, tr.89.

¹²² Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Hội thời, 30-12 Quý Sửu.

¹²³ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Hội thời, 30-12 Quý Sửu.

CHAPTER 2.

THE UNIVERSE

SECTION 1. OVERVIEW OF THE
COSMOLOGY OF THE GREAT WAY

SECTION 2. THE WAY – GOD

SECTION 3. PRINCIPLE OF HEAVEN-EARTH
AND ALL BEINGS ARE ONE

SECTION 4. PRINCIPLE OF ONE EMANATES
MYRIAD – MYRIAD CONVERGE TO ONE

SECTION 1

OVERVIEW OF THE COSMOLOGY

Cosmology of the Great Way refers to the universe as an entirety consisting of objects that are observable and unobservable to human cognitive abilities (the universe is often called Heaven-Earth world, Heaven-Earth universe, Heaven-Earth, the universe ...).

Cosmology of the Great Way offers concepts about the origin, the operation and transformation, as well as the evolution of the universe in the direction of generalizing principles and/or common laws of existence and evolution of the universe, especially the principles and laws that guide human evolution into a cosmic scale, that is, transforming humans from the finite position in time and space to that of the omnipresent one.

1. ORIGIN OF THE UNIVERSE

With respect to the origin of the universe, the teaching of the Great Way conceives that before the visible

universe is formed, there exists an essence, namely, the Primordial Being. An initial dynamic power spontaneously arises as the cause of cosmic evolution within that Primordial Being. Concepts of the essence and the original creation of the universe in the teaching of the Great Way are metaphysical but consistent for the entire teaching system.

1.1. Concept of the universe

The teaching of the Great-Way has concepts of the universe that include the categories: time, space, Yin-Yang interaction, and Pre-Genesis – Post-Genesis pair.

1.1.1. The universe in relation to space and time

Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo scripture wrote:

*... Why is it called VŨ-TRỤ (Universe)? How do you perceive it? The entire space of Heaven-Earth is VŨ (Uni). Coexistence with VŨ is called TRỤ (Verse). VŨ encompasses the four cardinal points, as well as the upward and downward directions. TRỤ also signifies the past and present. Thus, the term VŨ-TRỤ (UniVerse) encompasses both space and time.*¹²⁴

1.1.2. The universe in relation to the Yin-Yang pair

Yin is Vũ (Uni), and Yang is Trụ (Verse). Vũ (Uni) is closed in the firmament. Trụ (Verse) opens infinitely. Trụ (Verse) is also time, the Yin-Yang subsequence and continuity, whereas

¹²⁴ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 23-9 Bính Tý (1936); Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo (bản in 1950), thiên 43 “Vũ trụ”, tr.175, i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “The Universe”, pp. 243 – 248, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas, 2015.

Vũ (Uni) is space, the Yin-Yang co-presence and interaction.

With respect to the round of space and time, it is even broader like the circle and the square drawn in the Logics of Change scripture. The circle (time) and square (space) are condensed into one entirety, but not beyond the Yin-Yang expansion and diminution.¹²⁵

1.1.3. Concept of Pre-Genesis – Post-Genesis

In the teaching of the Great Way, the concept of Pre-Genesis – Post-Genesis further strengthens the cosmology that includes the primordial essence and the phenomenal world, *permanence and transmutation*, in which Heaven (Supreme Being) is the dynamic power to engender all creatures (Post-Genesis) from Nothingness (Pre-Genesis).¹²⁶

Primordially when Heaven-Earth has not yet existed, this universe is merely a void of air that condenses into a primordial globe extremely miraculous. That globe manifests from Infinity and is named Supreme Being.... Up to this beginning, nothing static or dynamic is formed, and such stage is called Pre-Genesis.... Once Supreme Being engenders Two Senses, the Yin-

¹²⁵ Đạo Học Chi Nam, chương 1, tiết 4, mục 2.

¹²⁶ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế (xưng danh Đại Đức Cao Tiên); Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo (bản in 1950), thiên 30 “Tiên thiên cơ ngẫu”, tr.272, thiên 31 “Hậu thiên cơ ngẫu”, tr.280, i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “The Pre-Genesis Odd-Even Set”, pp. 158 – 162, and chapter “The Post-Genesis Odd-Even Set”, pp. 163 – 174, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas, 2015.

*Yang pair is formed, Heaven-Earth is established, and all beings proliferate....*¹²⁷

1.2. Essence of the universe

1.2.1. Essence of the universe is the Way, the Imponderable Energy¹²⁸

According to Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo scripture:

*What is the Way? The Way is Imponderable Energy, very mystic, miraculous, and enigmatic. It existed even before the formation of Heaven-Earth. Thus, the Way gives rise to Heaven-Earth universe and engenders all beings. All living creatures must inherit this Imponderable Energy to conceive and perpetuate.*¹²⁹

As the Way exists before Heaven-Earth (the universe of all things) and all living beings must receive Imponderable Energy (i.e., the Way) to be born and transform forever, the Way is the essence of the universe and all creatures.

The Way *creates Heaven-Earth universe and engender all beings and species*; then the Way is also the ultimate origin of the universe and all beings. Therefore, the Way is considered the dynamic power, primordial and eternal.

¹²⁷ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 3, tiết 3, mục 3.

¹²⁸ Translator's note: 'Imponderable Energy' is another name for 'Innate Energy' or 'Energy of the Nothingness'.

¹²⁹ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 02-8 Bính Tý (1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1950), thiên 9 "Đại Đạo luận", tr.66, i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter "Commentaries on the Esoteriscism", pp. 37 – 45, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas, 2015.

Since ancient times, religious founders have used the term ‘the Way’ in a very comprehensive and concise meaning, so the term *Imponderable Energy* can replace the word ‘the Way’ when referring to the meaning of “*Essence*” of the universe. Holy messages state as follows: *If Imponderable Energy does not exist, neither does your Holy Master Teacher,¹³⁰ and your Holy Master Teacher is Imponderable Energy, so is the meaning of the Way.¹³¹*

1.2.2. Essence of the universe is indeed the Infinity.

The teaching of the Great Way also identifies Infinity with the cosmic essence. Infinity is the amorphous and infinite nebula filled with the primordial chaos fluid, before the manifestation of Supreme Being:

Prior to the manifestation of Supreme Being, that space is an amorphous and infinite nebula, because it is still in Primordial Chaos. That space is Infinity.¹³²

Supreme Being is composed of Principle of Natural Nature and Energy of Adaptive Nature:

In Infinity there is the miraculous Principle of Natural Nature, along with its antagonist twin,

¹³⁰ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 13-06 Bính Dần (Jeudi 22 Juillet 1926); *Thánh Ngôn Hiệp Tuyển*, Q.1, tr.32, i.e., *Collection of Selected CaoDai Holy Messages*, séance on the 13th day of the sixth month of Bính Dần year (Thursday, July 22, 1926), pp. 58 – 59, trans. Hum Bui and Hong Bui, CreateSpace, 2015.

¹³¹ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Ngọc Minh Đài, Tuất thời, 29-12 Bính Ngọ (02-02-1967); *Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản*.

¹³² Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 23-9 Bính Tý (1936); Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo (bản in 1950), thiên 43 “Vũ trụ”, tr.410, i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “The Universe”, pp. 243 – 248, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas, 2015.

*Energy of Adaptive Nature. Such Principle and Energy are respectively the Yang and Yin in Primordial Chaos. Those Principle and Energy gradually unite and crystallize, condensing in many eons to form a splendid globe of light. At the right date and time, this massive ball of light explodes (...). Then a point of divine light ejects from that explosion.... That is how the Lord of the universe emerges. Since then, the universe begins to have Supreme Being....*¹³³

1.3. Creation of the universe

The Way, or Imponderable Energy, is the essence of the universe and all beings. But the existence of all beings arises from that essence in accordance with a principle and two basic laws:

Principle of Supreme Being – Yin-Yang Pair. If the Infinity essence of the universe remains forever silent and does not trigger the emergence of Supreme Being, then there will never be the beginning of the cosmic engenderment. That is why in *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* scripture it is written:

*[Supreme Being] uses the Yin-Yang body to separate the pure from impure, creating a dynamic-static mechanism to gather Imponderable Energy to engender all creatures.*¹³⁴

¹³³ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 23-9 Bính Tý (1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1950), thiên 43 “Vũ trụ”, tr.410, i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “The Universe”, pp. 243 – 248, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas, 2015.

¹³⁴ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 23-9 Bính Tý (1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1950), thiên 43 “Vũ trụ”, tr.410, i.e., *Cao Dai*

If so, it should be sufficient to only consider Principle of Supreme Being, because Supreme Being itself contains the two Yin-Yang energies. But in fact, Supreme Being is just the transitional being from the essence concept to the creation concept, and in fact, Supreme Being is also Infinity.¹³⁵

Law of Odd-Even Set. Principle of Supreme Being – Yin-Yang Pair is the indispensable principle of the primordial and eternal dynamic that dominates from the beginning to the endless engenderment of the universe.

As for Law of Odd-Even Set, it is the rule, the mandatory condition to give rise to the ability to engender all beings. Law of Odd-Even Set requires there must always be TWO opposing but complementing dynamic powers (to be Even) to initiate the engendering operation; and never can only ONE single power (i.e., Odd) activate the engenderment momentum. This engenderment momentum is indeed the THIRD factor in the creation mechanism of the universe.

Thus, it is stated in Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo scripture as follows:

*Supreme Being operates the **true Yang** in union with the **true Yin** (Yang and Yin are **odd and even**). The Yin-Yang energies mix and collide with each other to keep engendering; it is due to*

Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching, chapter “The Universe”, pp. 243 – 248, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas, 2015.

¹³⁵ Đạo Học Chi Nam, chương 1, tiết 2, mục 4, viết: “*Infinity is Supreme Being, God or Emperor is one. Therefore, it is said: the only one being in Nothingness*”. Also, other references such as Chu Liêm Khê (1017-1073) stated: “*Infinity is Supreme Being, Supreme Being is essentially Infinity.*”

*their moderation, correspondence, affinity, warm harmony that engender thousands of species, countless forms, infinite variety of creatures and beings ... with no respite or interruption. It is said: **One begets Two, Two begets Three, and Three begets All Beings.** But all beings must come together to One, because “One engenders all beings, then all beings converge to One” (...). The Principle of Supreme Being is the Principle of Monad, ruling the engenderment, and governing the universe.¹³⁶*

Law of Impartiality and Harmony. In the engenderment mechanism, if Principle of Supreme Being and Law of Odd-Even Set are discussed without mentioning Law of Impartiality and Harmony, the third stage of the process *One begets two, two begets three, and three begets all beings* would be missing.

Therefore, Đại Thừa Chơn giáo scripture emphasizes:

*Celestial law is intangible. Yet, it also requires the harmony of two extraordinary powers of “pure Yin and pure Yang” to create the universe.... They are the two opposing but complementing powers to assure the perpetual engenderment.... Therefore, that engenderment also comes from **harmony**. Then the Way of*

¹³⁶ Đức Đại Đức Cao Tiên; 03-8 Bính Tý (1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1950), thiên 30 “Tiên thiên cơ ngẫu”, tr.274, i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “The Pre-Genesis Odd-Even Set”, pp. 158 – 163, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas, 2015.

*Heaven-Earth is also nothing beyond the two words IMPARTIALITY – HARMONY.*¹³⁷

1.4. Globe of Divine Light – Spark of Divine Light, Impersonal God – Personal God.

Ontological statements in scriptures, such as *All creatures inherit Imponderable Energy to conceive and perpetually engender*, and *Supreme Being gathers Imponderable Energy to engender all creatures*, indicate that the creation mechanism of the universe proceeds by following Principle of *Supreme Being – Yin-Yang Pair* in parallel to Principle of *Heaven-Earth and All Beings are One*. It means every creature in the universe, from the infinitesimal to the giant ones, innately comprises the dynamic power of Supreme Being to promote engenderment with the essence of Imponderable Energy contained within each creature.

In the teaching of the Great Way, the term *divine light* is used to help visualize the unity of the universe as ‘light’ while emphasizing the transcendence of that ‘light’. A consequence of this principle of unity is the content of the pair of categories *Globe of Divine Light – Spark of Divine Light*.

*What is a Spark of Divine Light? It is merely a spark of light. Supreme Being is the Globe of Divine Light that self-divides to give each person a Spark of Divine Light.*¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Đức Đại Đức Cao Tiên; 05-8 Bính Tý (1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1950), thiên 31 “Hậu thiên cơ ngẫu”, tr.280, i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “The Post-Genesis Odd-Even Set”, pp. 163 – 174, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas, 2015.

¹³⁸ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 03-8 Bính Tý (1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1950), thiên 32 “Luận về Đại Đạo tâm truyền”,

Therefore, although the teaching of the Great Way has the concept of self (and at the same time the concept of non-self) about the origin of the universe, it does not perceive any ontological difference between the Creator (God) and all creatures (the universe).

*The Way is the Sovereign One,
The Way is also the unity of all beings.*¹³⁹

or:

*Children! You are divine beings in life,
Together with Me we are identical in divine
light.*¹⁴⁰

When presenting the essence and the origin of the universe and all beings, the teaching of the Great Way also raises the concepts of Impersonal God and Personal God.

If Supreme Being is perceived as a dynamic energy that is transcendent, primordial, eternal, and universal, then Supreme Being is synonymous with Impersonal God.

But if Supreme Being is expressed as *Supreme God omniscient and omnipotent*, or *Supreme God comes to earth in the Last Era*¹⁴¹ or perceived as a subject, as

tr.300, i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “Discussion on the Esotericism”, pp. 174 – 177, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas, 2015.

¹³⁹ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Thiên Lý Đàn, Tuất thời, 14-01 Bính Ngọ (04-02-1966); Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1966-1967, tr.35.

¹⁴⁰ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Thiên Lý Đàn, Tuất thời, 14-01 Bính Ngọ (04-02-1966); Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1966-1967, tr.36.

¹⁴¹ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 25-9 Bính Tý (1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1950), thiên 44 “Địa cầu 68”, tr.420; i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “The 68th Planet”, pp. 249 – 251, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas, 2015. This clause is rarely used from the past to present. It is usually written as: God descended in the world; God

*Holy Father*¹⁴², then Supreme Being is synonymous to Personal God.

The teaching of the Great Way also integrates these two concepts; that means Supreme Being is both Impersonal and Personal.¹⁴³

Through Principle of *Heaven-Earth and All Beings are One* in addition to the pair of categories *Globe of Divine Light – Spark of Divine Light*, the concept of Impersonal God in co-existence with the concept of Personal God in the teaching of the Great Way has raised the unity and the same origin of all beings in the universe.

2. OPERATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE UNIVERSE

Movement and transformation in the universe never stop and take place according to two laws: *Law of Yin-Yang Interaction* and *Law of Recycling to the Origin*.

2.1. Law of Yin-Yang Interaction

According to Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo scripture:

manifests in this world. Here the term “Supreme Being” is personal.

¹⁴² Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Ngọc Minh Đài, Tuất thời, 29-12 Bính Ngọ (02-02-1967); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản: *Your Holy Master Teacher is Imponderable Energy, so is the meaning of the Way.*

¹⁴³ In Kinh Thiên Đạo và Thế Đạo (the prayers being chanted in the four daily worship sessions), the prayer to revere Jade Emperor Supreme God begins with: *Đại La Thiên Đế, Thái Cực Thánh Hoàng...* Đại La (the Celestial Net, alluding to Law of Creation) and Thái Cực (Supreme Being) are concepts of Impersonal God; Thiên Đế (God Emperor) and Thánh Hoàng (King of Saints) are concepts of Personal God.

*Yin-Yang energy starts engendering all beings. Once generated, they continue to engender forever, generation after generation, never stop. That is One begets Two, Two begets Three, and Three begets all beings.*¹⁴⁴

This law of operation can be described according to the system mentioned in the Logics of Change scripture: Infinity – Supreme Being – Twin Senses.

2.2. Law of Recycling to the Origin

Following the above passage, Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo scripture wrote: *But all beings must return to One, because One emanates Myriad, and Myriad converge to One.*¹⁴⁵

Indeed, the operation and transformation of all beings is not random without a path; instead, its ultimate objective is returning to the Origin. This Origin is called One (Origin) to be contrasted with Myriad (all forms, all creatures). Hence, the first direction of the operation is from simple to intricate or from Nothingness to Being. The second direction is from intricate to simple or from Being to Nothingness.

¹⁴⁴ Đức Đại Đức Cao Tiên; 03-8 Bính Tý (1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1950), thiên 30 “Tiên thiên cơ ngẫu”, tr.276, i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “The Pre-Genesis Odd-Even Set”, pp. 158 – 163, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas, 2015.

¹⁴⁵ Đức Đại Đức Cao Tiên; 03-8 Bính Tý (1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1950), thiên 30 “Tiên thiên cơ ngẫu”, tr.276, i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “The Pre-Genesis Odd-Even Set”, pp. 158 – 163, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas, 2015.

The meaning of this cyclical law is very important. And *One emanates Myriad, Myriad converge to One* is the governing principle of the teaching system of the Great Way, especially the concept of evolution of the universe.

3. THE SPIRITUAL UNIVERSE

Heaven-Earth universe is not only the visible universe with innumerable planets and celestial bodies moving in space, but also comprises the invisible universe of spiritual realms.

The teaching of the Great Way believes that, in the unified nature of the universe, the spiritual universe can be divided into seven realms from high to low, from pure to impure, corresponding to the levels of evolution of the spiritual beings belonging to these different realms.

Those seven realms from high to low are: Supreme Being, Twin Senses, Four Forms, Bodhi (enlightenment), Superior World, Intermediary World, and Inferior World (material world).

The seven realms correspond to the evolutionary ladder of spiritual beings: Immortal Body, Golden Body, Superior Mind, Inferior Mind, Astral Body, Etheric Body, Physical Body.

The Spiritual Universe:

THE SEVEN REALMS	THE SEVEN SPIRITUAL BEINGS
Supreme Being	Immortal Body
Twin Senses	Golden Body
Four Forms	Superior Mind
Bodhi (Enlightenment)	Inferior Mind
Superior World	Astral Body
Intermediate World	Etheric Body
Inferior World (material world)	Physical Body

Convincing the spiritual universe as above, the doctrine of the Great Way implies two important points:

- In the universe there are not only tangible objects and living creatures, but also countless spiritual subjects.
- In the universe there are evolutionary levels. The higher level one achieves, the more one drips away the visible, physical, dense, and dark structures to become invisible, immaterial, pure, lucid, and transcendent.

Đại Thừa Chơn giáo scripture clearly trace out this process as follows:

The day you leave your mortal body is the day you take off one of your covers; then when you are born in the Intermediary World, you cut off the Etheric Body, that is, you remove another layer of covering. When you reach the Superior World, you give up the Astral Body; when you reach the Bodhi realm, you abandon the Inferior Mind; when you come to the realm of Four Forms, you abandon the Superior Mind; when you arrive at the realm of Twin Senses, you abandon the Golden Body; then at the realm of Supreme Being, your soul will unite with the Creator.¹⁴⁶

4. EVOLUTION OF THE UNIVERSE

The evolutionary concept of the doctrine of the Great Way is based on two principles:

- *Heaven-Earth and All Beings are One.*
- *One emanates Myriad, Myriad converge to One.*

Because the universe and all beings have a common essence; and this essence is both the supreme, everlasting substance and the origin of all beings, the evolutionary ladder of all beings – including mankind – is to return, to achieve the perfect truth, perfect goodness, and perfect beauty of that essence.

It is the unity in all beings that serves the energy and driving force of evolution.

¹⁴⁶ Đức Nam Phương Giáo Chủ; 22-9 Bình Tý (5 Novembre 1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1956), bài “Điều Căn Yếu Của Người Luyện Đạo”, tr.48, (unpublished information).

Principle *One emanates Myriad, Myriad converge to One* in evolution has become the celestial mechanism and celestial law of God, and ‘converging to One’ has become the ultimate goal of mankind.

This principle is celestial mechanism and celestial law because it is God (also is the Way, Imponderable Energy) who promotes all beings – especially mankind – toward the evolution to reunite with Him. He taught the following message:

*Your Holy Master Teacher is Imponderable Energy, so is the meaning of the Way. That is why in this last era He Himself uses Imponderable Energy to directly manifest in the world, to guide the recovery of Sparks of Divine Light, that were sent to earth, back to the Globe of Divine Light.*¹⁴⁷

Nevertheless, this return is not a transformation of miraculous power; instead, it must follow the Great Way, which is in accordance with the operation law of the universe.

*Children, as you were born in the Great Way, you should follow the Great Way to successfully return to the Supreme Realm of Nothingness.*¹⁴⁸

In humans, evolution becomes the path of return to the origin. Returning does not mean merely reverting to the starting point, but also evolving to become a perfect subject, not exactly the Spark of Divine Light when separating from the Globe of Divine Light, but also

¹⁴⁷ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Ngọc Minh Đài, Tuất thời, 29-12 Bính Ngọ (02-02-1967); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

¹⁴⁸ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, 09-01 Mậu Thân (07-02-1968); Thánh Giáo Sư Tập 1968-1969, tr.7.

surpassing and elevating to sacred positions in celestial realms:

*God and all beings share the same origin,
And the same sacred nature, the same heart.
The Globe of Divine Light divides into myriads,
Humans and all beings are the same as Buddhas
and Immortals.*

*Celestial law is so miraculous,
A human life is extremely precious.
His sacred nature makes him wiser than all
beings,
Through self-cultivation he certainly becomes
God.¹⁴⁹*

Therefore, the magic of the two principles *Heaven-Earth and All Beings are One* and *One emanates Myriad, Myriad converge to One* is found right where humans are striving to evolve.

Spiritual practitioners, who are determined to attain enlightenment and liberate themselves from transmigration, should follow the path of returning to the origin, that is, returning to the human root. Yet, human root is not outside one's private inner universe.¹⁵⁰

In human inner universe, True Spirit is the human root (that Spirit is called Nature in Buddhism, and named Pre-Genesis or Innate Energy in Taoism).¹⁵¹ Hence, the

¹⁴⁹ Đức Quan Âm Bồ Tát; Thánh Tịnh An Tiên (Giáo Hội Tiên Thiên), Tý thời, 01 rạng 02-02 Đinh Mùi (11-03-1967); Thánh Giáo Sư Tập 1966-1967, tr.117.

¹⁵⁰ Đức Đông Phương Chưởng Quân, Vĩnh Nguyên Tự, 04.12 Ất Mão (11-03-1976); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

¹⁵¹ Đức Như Ý Đạo Toàn Chơn Nhơn. Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tuất thời, 29-03-Mậu Ngọ (05-05-1978); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

evolution of all beings to mankind is not merely the physical or spiritual transformations gained through myriads of generations in this world and end up in this same world; instead, it is the thorough evolution from the visible universe to the spiritual universe.

[Children!] True spiritual practitioners are like the good seeds; once sowed and cultivated, they become trees; trees grow then flower; flower then fructify to keep transforming and multiplying. Therefore, you must leave your mortal bodies, but your divine flowers and fruits engender True Spirit. True Spirit keeps engendering myriads and multiplying forever. That is the Way.¹⁵²

Therefore, in terms of evolution the ultimate objective for all sentient beings is the liberation from the finite and visible existence to gain the infinite and invisible existence of the spirit. This is the transcending path as affirmed by the teaching of the Great Way, and this transcending path of evolution must have many steps or levels to reach the union with God.

Children! Only when your Holy Master Teacher exist that you exist; and only when you exist that Deities, Saints, Immortals, and Buddhas exist.¹⁵³

¹⁵² Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 13-06 Bính Dần (Jeudi 22 Juillet 1926); *Thánh Ngôn Hiệp Tuyển*, Q.1, tr.31, i.e., *Collection of Selected CaoDai Holy Messages*, séance on the 13th day of the sixth month of Bính Dần year (Thursday, July 22, 1926), pp. 58 – 59, trans. Hum Bui and Hong Bui, CreateSpace, 2015.

¹⁵³ Sakyamuni Buddha alias Cao Dai Immortal Boddhitattva Mahatattva teaching in the South; Phước Linh Tự, 15-09 Bính Dần (Dimanche 24 Octobre 1926); *Thánh Ngôn Hiệp Tuyển*, Q.1, tr.52, i.e., *Collection of Selected CaoDai Holy Messages*, séance at Phước Linh Tự on the 13th day of the ninth month of Bính Dần

*Children! Your Holy Master Teacher is Buddha, presiding the entire Dharma and Sangha, establishing the Way to restore you, so you can reunite with Him.*¹⁵⁴

In summary, the doctrine of the Great Way presents a cosmology that encompasses all three facets of an objective system of existence; they are the origin, the operation, and the evolution of the universe and all beings. This cosmology comprises the following essential principles:

Supreme Being – Yin-Yang pair

Heaven-Earth and All Beings are One

One emanates Myriad, Myriad converge to One

These are the guiding principles for the theses about the original essence, transformation, and creation of the universe and all beings.

The theory of evolution is a consequence of these three principles, completing a consistent thesis on the transformation of human microcosm from the visible world to Infinity.

Cosmology of the Great Way also posits the existence of the entire universe with two central subjects: God and Man. The teaching of the Great Way identifies the

year (Sunday, Oct. 24, 1926), pp. 82 – 83, trans. Hum Bui and Hong Bui, CreateSpace, 2015.

¹⁵⁴ Sakyamuni Buddha alias Cao Dai Immortal Bodhitattva Mahatattva teaching in the South; Phước Linh Tự, 15-09 Bính Dần (Dimanche 24 Octobre 1926); *Thánh Ngôn Hiệp Tuyển*, Q.1, tr.52, i.e., *Collection of Selected CaoDai Holy Messages*, séance at Phước Linh Tự on the 13th day of the ninth month of Bính Dần year (Sunday, Oct. 24, 1926), pp. 82 – 83, trans. Hum Bui and Hong Bui, CreateSpace, 2015.

two concepts of impersonal and personal¹⁵⁵ in the category of God (i.e., the subject that operates the universe) and in the category of Man (i.e., the subject that perceives the evolution goal and actively implements evolution). The pair of categories Globe of Divine Light – Spark of Divine Light affirms that the two subjects God and Man are of the same essence, which is divine light.

5. CONCLUSION

Cosmology of the Great Way, with its conception of the evolutionary path of the universe and all beings, suggests the existence of a spiritual universe that transcends and encompasses the universe and all beings. The center of this spiritual universe is the True Spirit of God, which gathers the True Spirit of all the subjects who have achieved or are achieving the liberation.

In other words, cosmology of the Great Way is also the basis for building a system of thought on Man, the World, and Spiritual Method, so practitioners can perceive a consistent ethic that leads to their supreme salvation as unity with God, as well as their mission of saving human community by actively participating with God in the operating mechanism to make all beings evolve together.

¹⁵⁵ Translator's note: Personal God does not mean God is a person. It means that God is the ground of everything personal and that he carries within himself the ontological power of personality.

SECTION 2

THE WAY - GOD

The essence of Heaven-Earth, the nature of man, the instinct of all beings, those three attributes are derived from one principle alone, this principle is called the WAY.¹⁵⁶

The Way is an indestructible, immortal, omnipresent, self-existing, and eternal entity. This entity is the *only* origin of the universe, the *only* fundamental element that makes up all creatures, and the *only* operating motive of the transmutation mechanism. This *only* property is absolute property; and thus, the Way is called *the One*.

1. THE WAY

The Way operates in a cyclical manner: One engenders Trinity, Trinity engenders Myriad, Myriad returns to One.

¹⁵⁶ Đạo Học Chi Nam, chương 1, tiết 1, mục 2.

1.1. One engenders Trinity

Trinity is the three fundamental states of the One, the Way: Non-Being, Supreme Being, and August Being.

1.1.1. Non-Being

Non-Being is the pristine, immutable, and latent state of the Way; it is called Pre-Genesis Energy of Nothingness or simply Energy of Nothingness or Innate Energy. It is the original source of Heaven-Earth; though absolutely empty, but embodying all the virtues of all beings, and therefore is named the True Void (of) Miraculous Existence (Chân Không Diệu Hữu). Those virtues are not yet differentiated; they are intermingled to form a chaotic ensemble. Thus, the Non-Being phase is also called the Primordial Chaos.

In Non-Being, that is Infinity, there are two elements both preserving the immutability essence while operating the transmutation mechanism. They are Principle of Natural Nature and Energy of Adaptive Nature, i.e., the Pre-Genesis Yin-Yang pair of the Primordial Chaos.

*In Infinity there is the miraculous Principle of Natural Nature, along with its antagonist twin, the Energy of Adaptive Nature. Such Principle and Energy are respectively the Yang and Yin in the Primordial Chaos.*¹⁵⁷

Principle of Natural Nature, also called the Celestial Law, is a natural and immutable Truth that forms the

¹⁵⁷ Đức Đại Đức Cao Tiên; 23-9 Bính Tý (1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1950), thiên 43, “Vũ Trụ”, tr.410, i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter The Universe, pp. 243 – 248, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas, 2015.

basis for all the laws of Heaven-Earth; it is also the Principle of Creation of all beings, the operation of the universe, the preservation and nurturing of all creatures.

*Non-Being, or Heaven, or Law, or the Way, is celestial rule, celestial law. It is the law by which the universe and all beings must follow. It is the mould that forms the shape of Heaven-Earth and all creatures. This law is very vivid, imprinted in human mind, in other beings, as well as in Heaven-Earth.*¹⁵⁸

Energy of Adaptive Nature is the eternal source of energy for the creation of life, the source of intangible substance that builds up spiritual and corporal forms of all beings.¹⁵⁹

These Principle and Energy cooperate and create subtle movements within the Infinity, gradually refining the quintessence of Energy of Nothingness to create Supreme Being.

Therefore, macroscopically, Infinity is a chaotic ensemble of the empty, random, motionless, soundless, and formless realm. But microscopically, Infinity operates constantly to gradually culminate a powerful internal force, forming the next state, which is Supreme Being.

1.1.2. Supreme Being

Within Infinity, Principle of Natural Nature and Energy of Adaptive Nature gradually assemble with each other to become a perfect nebula of light. “*At the right*

¹⁵⁸ Đạo Học Chi Nam, chương 1, tiết 2, mục 4.

¹⁵⁹ According to “Phật Mẫu Chơn Kinh” (in Kinh Thiên Đạo và Thê Đạo), the spiritual and corporal forms of all beings are created from the Pre-Genesis Energy of the Infinity.

time”¹⁶⁰, this nebula bursts into a Globe of Divine Light, namely, Supreme Being.

Supreme Being is the intermediate state between the intangible and the tangible; it exists after the *Non-Being-to-be* and before the *would-be-Being*.

Between the two states of Existence and Non-Existence is Supreme Being. Supreme Being comes into play after the Non-Being-to-be but before the would-be-Being...¹⁶¹

Thus, with the advent of Supreme Being, the Way proceeds from the quiescence to the manifest state, that is from a void essence to a creative being.

Supreme Being operates concurrently in tranquility and in action to differentiate Yin and Yang, establishing a creative structure: the movement of Supreme Being engenders Yang, while its standstill inspires Yin. The rise and fall of Yin-Yang delineates in Infinity an invisible realm called the universe or Heaven-Earth.

That Principle of Monad [i.e., the Supreme Being] radiates a cyclone of light, creating the miraculous partition: The pure and light energy elevates to form Heaven, while the impure and heavy energy precipitates to form Earth. The light air rises to become Qian (☰), Qian is Heaven, which is pure Yang energy; the heavy air descends to become K'un (☷), K'un is Earth, which is pure Yin energy. These two powerful Yin-Yang energies undulate, waltz, spiral, attract and repel one another in space.

¹⁶⁰ It is the words used in *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo*.

¹⁶¹ *Đạo Học Chi Nam*, chương 3, tiết 2, mục 2.

*Yang is dynamic, and Yin, static. Yin stays in place, while Yang covers Heaven-Earth.*¹⁶²

Heaven-Earth is the invisible pattern for Yin-Yang assembly to establish time and space to create the universe. The universe is the form built by Yin-Yang to signify the existence of Heaven-Earth.

Yin-Yang is combined in two different ways to form time and space. Time is formed in the Yin-Yang continuation according to the law of “*Extreme Yang becomes Yin, and extreme Yin becomes Yang*”. Space is formed in the Yin-Yang juxtaposition according to the law of “*Yin contains the seed of Yang, and Yang contains the seed of Yin*”. This union is the universe.

*Yin is Vũ (Uni), and Yang is Trụ (Verse). Vũ (Uni) is closed in the firmament. Trụ (Verse) is opened infinitely. Trụ (Verse) is also time, the continuation of Yin and Yang subsequence, whereas Vũ (Uni) is space, the Yin-Yang co-presence and interaction.*¹⁶³

*The time of the creation of Heaven-Earth is the milestone that delineates the line between Pre-Genesis and Post-Genesis: “Pre-Genesis is prior to the existence of Heaven-Earth. Post-Genesis is after the creation of Heaven-Earth and all beings.”*¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Đức Đại Đức Cao Tiên; 03-8 Bính Tý (1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1950), thiên 30 “Tiên thiên cơ ngẫu”, tr.276, i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “The Pre-Genesis Odd-Even Set”, pp. 158 – 163, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas, 2015.

¹⁶³ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 1, tiết 4, mục 2.

¹⁶⁴ Đức Trần Hưng Đạo; *Bát Nhã Thiên Đường*, Tuất thời 23-10 Quý Sửu.

Yin-Yang in Supreme Being is still Pre-Genesis Yin-Yang, as it has not yet manifested despite its activities. When Yang flourishes, the Way exists in the active state of Supreme Being; and when Yin flourishes, the Way returns to the passive state of Non-Being.

When the True Origin is active, it gives birth to Yang, and therefore is called Supreme Being. Supreme Being in dynamic state produces Yang, then in static state produces Yin. This notion is found in the Logics of Changes scripture. In fact, dynamically Supreme Being produces Yang; statically it reverts to Infinity, producing Yin.¹⁶⁵

When Yin-Yang aligns “properly” with each other, the Way manifests into the third state, August Being.¹⁶⁶

1.1.3. August Being

August Being is the Nature and Body of all beings, including mankind.¹⁶⁷ This Nature-Body, which is Yang-Yin in Infinity, condenses into Supreme Being:

What is Nature-Body? It is Yang-Yin, Spirit-Energy that came from the Primordial Chaos (...). Undivided Primordial Chaos (in the Logics of Change scripture it is called Infinity; in Buddhism it is named Oai Âm, the Majestic Negative), in its tranquil emptiness, contains the mystic Promoter, that is the Pre-Genesis or Innate Energy. Extreme tranquility produces activity. Dynamic energy is the fluid that endlessly circulates and infinitely engenders. It

¹⁶⁵ Minh Lý Chơn Giải, tr.12.

¹⁶⁶ Minh Lý Chơn Giải, tr.13.

¹⁶⁷ Đạo Học Chi Nam, chương 1, tiết 4, mục 4.

*has no name but a name, which is the Way, Supreme Being, Nature, Spirit.*¹⁶⁸

As Supreme Being is the Globe of Divine Light, August Being is the Spark of Divine Light. Therefore, the development from Supreme Being to August Being is the development of Globe of Divine Light emanating myriad of Sparks of Divine Light in the universe.

August Being is the combination of both Yin and Yang,¹⁶⁹ on the one hand, because August Being is the result that arises from the Yin-Yang equilibrium between Non-Being and Supreme Being; on the other hand, because in the Trinity, August Being is the entity that acts as the coordination of Yin-Yang to create the neutralization in the universe.

In the previous phase, Supreme Being differentiates into Yin and Yang, engendering the Twin Senses. Then in this phase, August Being coordinates Yin and Yang, forming the Four Forms¹⁷⁰, then together with the Four Forms, August Being forms the Five Elements¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quán; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Hội thời, 22-10 Mậu Ngọ.

¹⁶⁹ Đạo Học Chi Nam, chương 3, tiết 3, mục 3

¹⁷⁰ In “Trời Tiếng Chuông Vàng”, bài “Lý Thiên Nhiên Của Tạo Hóa: Nhứt bản tán ư vạn thù xuất hữu”, August Being – Four Forms is mentioned as a result of the activity of Supreme Being – Yin-Yang (p. 45).

Translator’s note: the Four Forms are four cardinal points (North, South, East, West) mentioned in the Logics of Change scripture.

¹⁷¹ In “Chơn Pháp Lưu Truyền”, chapter 1 discussed “August Being – Five Elements”.

in both “levels” of Pre- and Post-Genesis. The engenderment of August Being is the unceasing continuation of the engenderment of Supreme Being, and this continuity is demonstrated through the Five Elements as follows:

Speaking of the Five Elements, they are omnipresent in Heaven-Earth, humans, and all beings. If there is Supreme Being - Yin-Yang, then there is the Four Forms, so is the Five Elements. The invisible impact of Supreme Being - Yin-Yang forms the Five Elements, the named, material, formed, and visible being. The Five Elements is the intermediate between Existence and Non-Existence. The Five Elements is also the pristine factor contributing to the creation of all beings, so Supreme Being - Yin-Yang is also the opposing but complementing Yin-Yang pair to determine every aspect of mankind and all beings (...). Because it has name and substance, it is called Pre-Genesis Five Elements; because it has form and shape, it is called Post-Genesis Five Elements. In the universe nothing can be engendered and nurtured without the Pre- and Post-Genesis Five Elements.¹⁷²

Each Spark of Divine Light, the August Being, is the miraculous center of a Five-Element structure, that is named the “Earth” element, to regulate the entire operation of this entity.

Translator’s note: the Five Elements (Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, Earth) mentioned in the Logics of Change scripture.

¹⁷² Đức Đông Phương Chương Quán; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tý thời, 04 rạng 05-5 Đinh Tỵ.

The Earth element is the principle of all beings, Nature - Body of all creatures and of humans. Thanks to the Earth element, mankind has both body and soul (...). And the Earth element is also named the August Being.¹⁷³

Therefore, August Being is the essence, the root, the innate point of the Way in all beings.

1.2. Trinity engenders All Beings.

Through the process of self-development of the Way – from Non-Being to Supreme Being to August Being – the Trinity manifests miraculous uses and develops self-serving capacities to engender all creatures.

Non-Being engenders realms corresponding to every evolutionary level in Heaven-Earth universe and operates the evolutionary machinery to nurture all species and preserve all beings.

Supreme Being engenders myriad points of original soul, releasing different ranks of soul into corresponding realms to evolve.

August Being engenders different states of soul, from pure to impure, to enclose the Sparks of Divine Light, forming the bodies of all creatures.

No matter what state it is in the Trinity, the Way is always both the life-bearing energy for all beings and the operating principle for all activities of the universe.

The Way is the source of all beings in the universe. In the endless transformation cycle of the Way, myriad of beings in innumerable forms and states are engendered.

¹⁷³ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 1, tiết 4, mục 4.

This creation work is carried out by the Trinity through the mechanism of Yin-Yang engenderment and Five-Element transformation.

Yin-Yang and Five Elements encompass both the Pre- and Post-Genesis aspects. On the Pre-Genesis aspect, this creation is the creation of the essence of all beings by partitioning the Great Essence of Heaven-Earth universe. But on the Post-Genesis aspect, this creation is merely a virtualization because it is the instant assembly of the Post-Genesis Yin-Yang and Five Elements to give rise to images. Therefore, after each cycle of engenderment of the physical form, the spiritual being of each individual creature is the only one that really remains, and it embodies all the achievements that this individual has reaped after a journey in the Post-Genesis realm.

1.3. All Beings return to One.

The Trinity engenders all beings, placing them in the field of evolution to nourish and preserve them. It is the process of creation of the Trinity.

The process of creation of the Trinity must be continued by the evolution of all beings. In this evolution, the universe must return to its original source, that is, to return to the One, the Way of the entire universe. In other words, evolution is returning, reverting to the Origin. The higher up the evolution level means the closer one gets to the Way.

In this process, August Being plays a very special role:

*The August Being is supreme. It is the common foundation, the communion door in the Trinity.*¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 3, tiết 3, mục 3.

On the evolutionary scale, human stance is a critical position, for it is the intersection between the Pre- and Post-Genesis. Only in that place could the subject of evolution change between the forward and reverse directions. From this position, the August Being in the subject of evolution can play its active role, and thanks to this the subject of evolution can dematerialize and sanctify.

August Being in humans is the center of mystery, identifying with Heaven-Earth, identifying with the Heart of Forefathers and Buddhas. Man should rely on it to attain perfect purity, escape from transmigration, cease ignorance, and become supremely enlightened one.¹⁷⁵

2. GOD

God and the Way are two nouns used to refer to the same entity. Within human perception, the Way - God manifests itself in a multitude of ways, so humans can perceive God from a multitude of points of view and identify God in a multitude of different words such as Heaven, Father God, God Emperor, Buddha, Prajna, True Mind, True Self, Great Essence, Absolutely Enlightened One, Brahma, Jehovah, Allah, Jade Emperor, Supreme Being, Holy Father, Cao Dai, etc....

God has the Trinity that exists throughout space and time, inside and outside of each being. This omnipresence is the basis of the concept of Intrinsic God and Extrinsic God. Extrinsic God creates and administers Heaven-Earth universe; Intrinsic God, hidden in the soul of all creatures, constitutes the

¹⁷⁵ Đạo Học Chi Nam, chương 3, tiết 3, mục 3.

fundamental element for the maintenance of life and the ability of evolution of all beings.

On the other hand, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, God has both facets: personal and impersonal. Impersonal God is the natural Truth, formless, emotionless, and nameless; Personal God is the supernatural Creator, generative, loving, and caring.

2.1. Impersonal God

2.1.1. Impersonal Extrinsic God: The Regulatory Property of Nature

Impersonal Extrinsic God is the regulatory property of nature. It is the property that forces all beings to follow the rules that are natural in the universe. These rules are not dictated by anyone but a natural framework of existence.

This regulatory property is also called Celestial Law or Principle of the Way.

The Way creates Heaven-Earth. Thanks to the Way, Heaven-Earth engenders all beings. Also thanks to the Way, all beings are constantly evolving. Therefore, in all beings there is Heaven-Earth, that means, there is the Way. From minerals to insects, plants, animals, and mankind, all are subject to the Common Law of the Way.¹⁷⁶

That “*Common Law of the Way*” is the ubiquitous Truth of the universe, the supernatural source of all concrete laws in all beings.

It is also the Principle of Natural Nature, which is available since the Primordial Chaos.

¹⁷⁶ Đức Di Lạc Thiên Tôn; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1966-1967, tr.10.

2.1.2. Impersonal Intrinsic God: The God Nature in all beings

Everything in the universe has a universal and uniform nature in its essence, which is called God Nature. This is a Pre-Genesis property, intrinsic and inherent in all beings, serving the basis for the survival and development of all beings.

God Nature is unique in the entire universe. The nature of God is the same in every being and in every person, but according to the level of evolution of each species, that unique nature manifests in the corresponding levels. For instance, God Nature manifests itself as instincts in animals, but as humanness in mankind. Between instinct and humanness, the difference lies only at the levels of evolution, whereas the nature of God is identical in these levels. That is why Cao Dai Holy Teaching states:

The essence of Heaven-Earth, the nature of man, the instinct of all beings, those three attributes are derived from one principle alone, this principle is called the Way.¹⁷⁷

Evolution is a process to promote God Nature. The more one develops God Nature, the higher level in the evolution ladder one can achieve. Compared to instincts, humanness is a more profound development of God Nature, because the ability of humanness to control matter is stronger than that of instincts. Thus, man achieves a higher level of evolution than all beings.

Furthermore, compared to all other beings, man is also the creature capable of promoting God Nature most fully and in the widest range of freedom. When living

¹⁷⁷ Đạo Học Chi Nam, chương 1, tiết 1, mục 2.

by instinct, one can only develop God Nature at the level of an animal. Only when living with human dignity can one develop God Nature at the level of a human being. The choice of the level of evolution for oneself lies entirely in the hands of each individual human being, not of any external force.

2.2. Personal God

2.2.1. Personal Extrinsic God: Supreme God of all beings

On the personal and extrinsic facet, God is Supreme Being, self-existing and eternal, the only perfect model for all mankind on all standards of truth, goodness, and beauty.

In humanity, from primitive and uncivilized tribes to civilized and developed societies, in every space and time, there are always people who recognize Him, worship Him, and live by His standards.

He is the Creator, Conservator, and Destructor. Dwelling in the spirit of Creator, He engenders all beings and all species with great compassion, with boundless generosity and infinite creativity. Dwelling in the throne of Conservation and Destruction, He operates evolutionary machinery to select the good and eliminate the bad so as to bring the entire Heaven-Earth universe gradually to the point of perfect uprightness, goodness, and beauty.

*Preserve the true, good, and impressive,
Eliminate the evil, untrue, and unattractive,
Separate gold from other glitters,*

*Intense flame makes gold purer.*¹⁷⁸

Personal Extrinsic God is the eternal Savior of mankind. From the very beginning of human emergence in this world, God has initiated the Great Way in the heart of every human being, opening the path for mankind to return to its root. Whenever this path is brought to a standstill by mankind, God unblocks it by sending messiahs to the world to establish religions, develop sciences, etc... so as to raise the level of human awareness of morality in Heaven-Earth.

*God preserves all beings by multiple strategies, one of which is to found religions to teach mankind about life. It is because only when humans understand the Way, practice the Way, follow celestial law, and fraternize with all beings, then they can enjoy and demonstrate the mechanism of conservation. Thus, the sciences, philosophy, sociology, spirituality, etc... are given by God to the extraordinary spirits to come to the world to serve all beings.*¹⁷⁹

In the exoteric teaching of all religions, faith in Personal Extrinsic God is always the most important factor. It is so, because it must be with this faith that every religion can establish standards of truth, goodness, and beauty for mankind by following the model of God's truth, goodness, and beauty. Besides, this faith also acts as the link for communication between a person's inner world with the Extrinsic God.

¹⁷⁸ Đức Quảng Đức Chơn Tiên; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, Tuất thời, 07-6 Tân Dậu.

¹⁷⁹ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quân; Thánh Giáo Sưu Tập 1968-1969, tr.203.

Nevertheless, a God-oriented faith is only beneficial when it can evoke in humans the awareness of the enlightenment of their inner God and lead them from the supplication to Extrinsic God for miraculous grace to the exploration of readily available marvels in their own inner world.

Therefore, besides the exoteric teaching, every religion has an esoteric teaching which helps humans to regain True Mind, to free themselves from the narrow confines of the physical world.

2.2.2. Personal Intrinsic God: True Heart in humans.

*Supreme Being is True Heart. Every person, every creature has Supreme Being.*¹⁸⁰

Thus, on the personal and intrinsic facet, God is the True Heart in humans.

Personal Intrinsic God is the true subject of mankind. That subject is as perfect in all aspects of truth, goodness, and beauty as Personal Extrinsic God. This is one of the reasons why in the Third Universal Salvation, Supreme Being often says to mankind: “*I am you; you are Me*”.

The mind of humans when looking inwardly will be the True Heart, and when outwardly it becomes the Transient Mind. One can only experience and perceive God with the True Heart. For those who can only live with Transient Mind, surely God will never exist.

The moment a person realizes True Heart, that moment he experiences Personal Intrinsic God.

¹⁸⁰ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 3, tiết 3, mục 3.

Having come to the fullest logic and nature of Personal Intrinsic God, one will experience all the inconceivable aspects of God.

3. CONCLUSION

Every religion, every science, or every philosophical tendency that has ever appeared in this world from past to present, must worship, prove, or glorify some aspect of the One Truth about the Way - God. The infinite Truth that mankind has always tried to ponder, to seek in countless ways: rationalism, theism, idealism, materialism, etc... in fact is only one, which is the Way, which is God.

The Truth of the Way is where all multicolored and multifaceted rivers of thought arise, flowing through all aspects of human life, from spiritual to temporal, carrying a great deal of philosophical and moral insight to cultivate and create the whole common civilization for mankind. The Truth of the Way gives eternal life to every tendency of thought; but for any stream of thought that declines to express or vaguely expresses the Truth of the Way, that thought is easily blocked in the arid deserts of the human soul.

Now, the teaching of the Great Way glorifies the Truth of the Way to reconcile all the colors of thought, dispel all illusions of antagonistic differences, and revive the vitality that is primitively available, so that all rivers of thought come together in the one essence of mankind. It is this congregation that will manifest a miracle among contemporary civilization: It transforms the Truth from an invisible essence into a purely true entity of the Way for the universal salvation, turning human history from the destruction to the restoration era.

SECTION 3

PRINCIPLE OF HEAVEN- EARTH AND ALL BEINGS ARE ONE

The awareness of the Way and God in Section 2 is very fundamental to the teaching of the Great Way. It exalts the universality, which is the foundation and objective of every religion.

Once intuitively perceiving it, the human subject – standing between Heaven-Earth and all beings – can express a principle that generalizes the entire truth of the present existence, including itself. It is because, from the very beginning of life, the survival of all beings has been always in the habitat of the universe, which is composed of the many elements of nature, of a constantly evolving space-time for engenderment and evolution. The only and eternal sense of life of all beings contained in Heaven-Earth is the essence of the universe. And the above principle is *Principle of Heaven-Earth and All Beings are One*.

This principle can be expressed by the correlations between the categories: Heaven-Earth – All Beings, Heaven-Earth – Man, Man – All Beings, and Man – Man.

1. CORRELATION BETWEEN HEAVEN-EARTH AND ALL BEINGS

Heaven-Earth. In this principle, Heaven-Earth is not cosmic space material. Man of the Great Way sees Heaven-Earth as a whole with immense vitality which, in the teaching of the Great Way, can be interpreted by the category of QIAN (☰) and K'UN (☷). QIAN, or Heaven, is principle of action and engenderment (active-formative principle); K'UN, or Earth, is principle of accepting and nurturing (receptive-nutritive principle).

Thus, Heaven-Earth is an eternal reality whether or not planets and thousands of celestial bodies move, change, explode, or disappear.

All beings. All matter and living creatures are the embodiment of the potential of Heaven-Earth. That potential is the essence of Heaven-Earth and of all beings. The teaching of the Great Way uses the concept of DIVINE LIGHT to refer to this potential in every being.

In the category of *all beings*, the teaching of the Great Way recognizes that innumerable existing species are creatures that not only enjoy a common essence, but also participate in a continuous stream of evolution in which the primitive species are forerunners of the refined ones. This stream of evolution will ultimately bring to Heaven-Earth the most perfect subjects that participate in achieving the objective of the celestial truth-goodness-beauty.

Thus, Heaven-Earth is the essence, the root-base for engenderment, and the perpetual existence for the universe and all beings, even if all beings keep undergoing countless cycles of formation, maturation, disintegration, and nullification. And the very existence of all beings is the field of evolution.

The teaching of the Great Way calls that essence Energy and that root-base Principle, to point out the similarities between Heaven-Earth and all beings in the original mechanism of creation, transformation, and evolution of the universe. Energy is the absolute essence belonging to Infinity; Principle is the Yin-Yang principle of Supreme Being, the Globe of Divine Light.

In short, Heaven-Earth and all beings have close correlations from the origin of creation, formation, application, and evolution. All, according to the teaching of the Great Way, are included in the Way:

The Way creates Heaven-Earth. Thanks to the Way, Heaven-Earth engenders all beings. Also, thanks to the Way, all beings are constantly evolving. Therefore, in all beings there is Heaven-Earth, that means, there is the Way. From minerals to insects, plants, animals, and mankind, all are subject to the Common Law of the Way.¹⁸¹

2. CORRELATION BETWEEN HEAVEN-EARTH AND MAN

All beings – including humans – share the same essence of divine light, but only mankind is the species that achieve the configuration of a microcosm.

¹⁸¹ Đức Di Lạc Thiên Tôn; Trúc Lâm Thiền Điện, Ngọ thời, 02-01 Bính Ngọ (22-01-1966); Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1966-1967, tr.10.

*Man is a microcosm,
Man and God do not differ;
Whatever God possesses,
Exactly so does Man.¹⁸²*

In other words, Man is a universe in miniature model, that is, a microcosm, a micro-Supreme-Being.

Thus, besides the same intrinsic essence of divine light, the Macrocosm and Man are also alike in the most complete intrinsic operating machinery of a Supreme Being.

But Man is not an inanimate motor system. The teaching of the Great Way affirms God as Lord of the universe, also recognizes Man as a subject, a micro-ego corresponding to the Great Ego of Supreme Being, that is God.¹⁸³

The root of human subject is the True Nature, the divine light in those creatures that achieve the Man position.

What is that Nature? Nature is the PRINCIPLE that begets mankind; therefore, the spiritual origin of man is Principle. That Principle is very miraculous and sacred; it is distributed

¹⁸² Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 28-8 Bính Tý (13 Octobre 1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1956), bài “Thiên bản”, chương 63, i.e., *Cao-Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, section “Method of Worship” pp. 269 -277, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao-Dai Temple Overseas 2015.

¹⁸³ Đức Vạn Hạnh Thiền Sư; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, Tuất thời, 22-7 nhuận Mậu Thân (14-9-1968); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản: “*With respect to human being, Heaven and Earth is an immense universe. But with respect to a dust grain, human being is really an unfathomable universe. In the universe, human being is like a grain of sand in the barren desert, but it is a thinking grain of sand.*”

*and given by God to every man; then, that Principle is indeed the Nature.*¹⁸⁴

Thus, Heaven-Earth and Man are two unified entities in essence, in structure, in intrinsic motor, and in governing power. The astute interrelations between these two entities are frequently manifested in human physiology and spirituality.

Especially noteworthy is the inductive ability between God and Man. It is this spiritual communication that serves as the objective of evolution and liberation, and it is also the condition for the realization of the mission of REPRESENTING GOD IN TRANSFORMING THE WORLD that Man of the Great Way carries out toward mankind.

*God and Man come from the same Principle, the same Energy; no wonder they can induce each other.*¹⁸⁵

3. CORRELATION BETWEEN MAN AND ALL BEINGS, BETWEEN MAN AND MAN

3.1. Man and All Beings

All beings and mankind have the same Origin as the universe because they all are real beings manifested from the One Great Essence or Infinity. Of course,

¹⁸⁴ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 16-9 Bính Tý (1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1950), thiên 38 “Tôn tâm dưỡng tánh”, tr.366, i.e., *Cao-Dai Geat Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “Maintain the Heart and Conserve the Nature” pp. 217 - 222, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao-Dai Temple Overseas 2015.

¹⁸⁵ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 16-9 Bính Tý (1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1950), thiên 38 “Tôn tâm dưỡng tánh”, tr.366, i.e., *Cao-Dai Geat Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “Maintain the Heart and Conserve the Nature” pp. 217 - 222, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao-Dai Temple Overseas 2015.

these two objects are similar in essence. But the outstanding characteristic is their close correlation in life and evolution.

3.1.1. In life

Humans cannot live in a glass house, separating from the living environment. The ecological habitat is balanced by the life of a world of creatures, from plants to insects, birds and all other animal species.

Second, humans must feed themselves with the natural products. Human body is a synthesis of quintessence of all creatures. The lives of mankind and of all creatures have a harmonious correlation, both directly and indirectly.

Human morality in daily activities and in social life has a profound influence on nature, weather, and the fates of all living creatures:

If people of any place are immoral and cruel, then in that place there must be countless scourges and disastrous calamities, such as wars and battles, bandits and robberies, fire and flood, insects and pestilence, epidemic diseases, that cause harm to this population. If people know to turnaround and exhort to goodness, know to follow their heart, know to do good and avoid evil, know to self-cultivate and practice the spiritual method, then let them remove the darkness that is covering their spiritual heart to gain salvation in the last era.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Vĩnh Nguyên Tự, Ngo thời, 27-01 Ất Mão (09-03-1975); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

3.1.2. In evolution

The relationship between mankind and all beings has been determined to be harmonious in space. The teaching of the Great Way also recognizes the continuous transition between the lives of all beings and mankind through infinite time. That is the evolutionary cycle of the universe and all creatures from Intrinsic Essence of the Globe of Divine Light that engenders minerals, then from minerals to evolve into plants, animals, from animals to mankind through countless reincarnations.

The two correlations in life and in evolution become consistent law in the overall vitality and evolution of the universe according to the Principle of Heaven-Earth and All Beings are One.

It is written in Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo scripture as follows:

*Man is the root of all beings, and all beings is the tip of man; in turn, Heaven-Earth is the root of man, and man is the tip of Heaven-Earth.*¹⁸⁷

Therefore, all beings devote themselves to serve for the survival of nature and of mankind; in return, they are raised and cared to gradually evolve. Mankind and animals are like siblings sharing the same Father the Creator; hence, the wise and older brother must love and guide the inexperienced and younger brother to evolve together in order to be worthy of “*fatherly rights*”.

¹⁸⁷ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 12-8 Bính Tý (1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1950), thiên 33 “Nhơn vật tân hóa”, tr.306, i.e., *Cao-Dai Geat Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “The Evolution of Humans and Other Beings”, pp. 177 - 186, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao-Dai Temple Overseas 2015.

3.2. Between Man and Man

In the Man category, the relationship between the individual and the ensemble is even more intimate.

3.2.1. On the social aspect

Since the emergence of mankind on earth, humans cannot live alone but must live in groups. It is the social population that is the natural living model to preserve and develop the lives of individuals of the same species, the same characteristics, and moreover, the same bloodline in family relationships.

It has been stated that the Way is the guideline to save life, to build trust, to develop happiness for the entire society. Of course, religion and its teaching must aim at the immense entity, the broad activity, that is the human world.

Religious teaching is not only complete in the dogma of scriptures, but must also pervade the world, in the daily practice of humanity. Accepting that, people who study and practice the Way will be aware of creating order and peace to build happiness in human world.¹⁸⁸

3.2.2. On the ethnic aspect

The relationship between the individual human being and his people is very deep, due to the historical process of formation, of struggle to survive, and of labor to progress and to build the common civilization of the nation. Such deeply imbued characteristics is found in each person's national patriotism.

¹⁸⁸ Đức Lê Văn Duyệt Đại Tiên; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tỷ thời, 14 rạng 15-02 Canh Tuất (21-3-1970); Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1970-1971, tr.26.

Society and ethnicity highly demonstrate the unity of the universe with mankind, in which man surpasses all other creatures due to his rational and emotional senses.

Her Holiness the Divine Mother Diêu Trì Kim Mẫu taught:

In a region, a country that you spread love, even though the person is an animal that has just evolved into a human being with an aggressive and rough nature, he would not be harsh and cruel when facing the comfort of appeasement, of spiritual and material provision, or of support for his life. Children! Because people who enjoy happiness do not know how to create more heavenly bliss to their own society and country, that is why there are miseries today.¹⁸⁹

3.2.3. On the human aspect

The relationship between people and people is not merely due to family affection and ethnic love. If that were all, mankind would not be classified in *the Triad* and could not express the *Principle of Heaven-Earth and All Beings are One*. The teaching of the Great Way states that the unity of all individuals, all peoples, and all mankind is humanness. Humanness is the evolutionary value of Man, the ability of reflecting God in the world.

Therefore, considering the evolutionary process, human rights must be respected –no matter what level or class a person is. In terms of human nature, there must be love for fellow human beings, regardless of race or skin color. In terms of God Nature, a peaceful, happy, and

¹⁸⁹ Đức Diêu Trì Kim Mẫu; Vĩnh Nguyên Tự, Tuất thời, 11-11 Bính Thìn (31-12-1976); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

progressive human world must be built, and spiritual elevation must also be realized.

*All scented flowers on one single branch,
Does the missionary know?
Ethnic grace pairs with human love,
Patriotism shares the source with universal
love.¹⁹⁰*

4. MEANING OF THE PRINCIPLE OF HEAVEN-EARTH AND ALL BEINGS ARE ONE

Examination of the similarities and correlations between the categories HEAVEN-EARTH, ALL BEINGS and MAN has highlighted the conclusive term of ONENESS for this principle.

It is the conviction that the universe and all beings are One: Unity in nature, unity in the ability to transform and engender, unity in the law of constant change, and therefore, unity in all forms, in eternity, and in infinite space.

ONENESS, that is the ABSOLUTE BEING.

Thus, this principle refers the universe and all beings to God and concludes the evolutionary ability of all beings, especially the ability of Man, in uniting with God.

With this principle, the teaching of the Great Way reminds people of the love among mankind, and that of mankind toward all other sentient beings.

This principle also gives people boundless hope for their noble future. Opening the Way in the Third Era,

¹⁹⁰ Đức Phan Thanh Giản; Trúc Lâm Thiên Điện, Ngộ thời 08-4-Tân Hợi (02-5-1971); Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1970-1971, tr.211.

Supreme God gave mankind a verdict that is also the good news:

I am you, and you are Me.

Those who have faith in God should have strong faith in themselves, to reach the end of the right path, to evolve back to the One Origin, immortal and eternal.

SECTION 4

PRINCIPLE OF ONE EMANATES MYRIAD – MYRIAD CONVERGE TO ONE

The Way is the One. One engenders Trinity, Trinity engenders all beings, and all beings return to One. That is the principle: *One emanates Myriad – Myriad converge to One.*

The operation of the Way takes place through continuous cycles with two semi-processes. In the semi-process of *One emanates Myriad*, the unity of the Way engenders all beings¹⁹¹ and proceeds in the centrifugal

¹⁹¹ Translator's note: The term 'all beings' is used to translate the Vietnamese term 'vạn pháp' in this context, because 'pháp' is equivalent to the Buddhist term *Dharma* which, in turn, carries many meanings. By combining the English meaning of these words: teachings, truths, phenomena, events, things, facts and natural laws, then emphasizing the definition depending on the nature of the subject being discussed, one can usually understand the meaning of *Dharma* in each instance. For example, the

direction, that is the *mechanism of Creation*. In the semi-process of *Myriad converge to One*, all beings converge into the unity, and proceed in the centripetal direction, that is the *mechanism of Evolution*. The transmutation mechanism of the Way is the coordination between the two mechanisms of creation and evolution. These two processes are both continuous and concurrent. They are *continuous* because with creation there is evolution, and with evolution there is creation in the next cycle. They are *concurrent* because in creation there is evolution, and in evolution there is also creation.

1. ONE EMANATES MYRIAD

1.1. Definition

The semi-process *One emanates Myriad*, even though being a part of the operating principle, is itself an independent principle. That is the Principle of Engenderment and Creation. This principle expresses its content depending on the field. However, its contents can be summarized into four main definitions as follows.

1. *One* is the Way; *Myriad* is all beings. *One emanates Myriad* means the unity of the Way engenders all beings.
2. *One* is the Globe of Divine Light; *Myriad* is Sparks of Divine Light. *One emanates Myriad* means the only Globe of Divine Light self-divides into Sparks of Divine Light.

meaning of *Dharma* in the Three Gems “Buddha, Dharma and Sangha” includes all of the following: teachings, truths, facts and natural laws. (Source: <http://buddhismteacher.com/dharma.php>).

3. *One* is the absolute essence of all beings; *Myriad* is the relative form of all beings. *One emanates Myriad* means the only absolute essence of Heaven-Earth universe expresses into myriad of forms of all beings.
4. *One* is the True Heart, *Myriad* is the deluded heart, when considered in the human microcosm. *One emanates Myriad* is the process of human extroversion: The heart transforms and gives birth to transient mind and emotions.

Among the above definitions, the first one is the fundamental definition; the other definitions are merely interpretive definitions of the first one. Generally speaking, *One emanates Myriad* is the semi-process of creating, opening, establishing, releasing, transforming, and diversifying.

1.2. Related Laws

In the semi-process of *One emanates Myriad*, along with the creation of all beings, the unity of the Way establishes a universal mechanism throughout the universe to govern and operate all beings. This mechanism is characterized by three basic laws: Law of Cause and Effect, Law of Compatibility and Harmony, and Law of Static-Dynamic Yin-Yang.

1.2.1. Law of Cause and Effect

Law of Cause and Effect (or Law of Causation) binds all beings to the whole universe through relationships created by all beings themselves.

Cause and Effect are closely connected, from the invisible realms to the present visible realms

*of your life. Cause and Effect follow you from the past lives to this life, then to the next life.*¹⁹²

In Law of Cause and Effect, there are three factors that partake and make the law work. They are: Cause, Circumstance (or Condition), and Consequence (or Effect). Cause is the origin, the foundation. Circumstance is the condition. Consequence is the result, the effect.

Law of Cause and Effect can be summarized as follows: If there are Cause and Condition, there must be Consequence. The present is the Consequence of the past, also the Cause and Condition of the future; Consequence has the same nature as Cause, but it may be somewhat changed due to the impact of Condition.

Due to the network of Cause and Effect generated by all beings themselves, all beings are closely connected to each other on the cosmic scale. The current activities of each element affect its own future and that of the entire universe. Therefore, in Cause-and-Effect relationship, the universe must naturally exist as a unified complex.

Due to Law of Cause and Effect, from one original single source (Cause) many branches (Effect) can arise that are of the same nature but different from each other. Thus, Law of Cause and Effect creates the mechanism of the process *One emanates Myriad*.

1.2.2. Law of Compatibility and Harmony

Myriad cannot exist if the necessary conditions are not met. It is Law of Compatibility and Harmony that determines the necessary conditions for all beings to exist side-by-side in their differences.

¹⁹² Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Thánh Huân Hiệp Tuyển, Q.1, tr.72.

Law of Compatibility and Harmony can be summarized as follows. To be able to survive, all beings must comply with two indispensable conditions:

Condition of Compatibility: Each creature must be able to adapt (be compatible) with the changes in space-time in which it exists.

Condition of Harmony: Each creature must coordinate (harmonize) with all beings to form a unified entity.

Thus, this law forces each creature to be in harmony with all beings to survive.

All creatures in the universe coordinate themselves in the global firmament. Thanks to that, the machinery of the cosmic wheel constantly revolves, creating growth and action for all individuals in the universe. From human society to planetary society, clouds and stars, birds and fish, they still cooperate themselves to evolve in the harmony of the universe.¹⁹³

On the contrary, discord can only lead to disintegration and destruction:

In Heaven-Earth universe, when Yin-Yang are in discord, storms and floods arise. When human body operates in discord, illness, sadness, anger, and hate arise. If there is discord in a house, the family will be in chaos and happiness will fade. A discordant society gives rise to fighting, killing, stealing, and

¹⁹³ Đạo Học Chi Nam, chương 4, tiết 2, mục 1.

robbing. Discordant world certainly gives rise to world war.¹⁹⁴

No tangible structures can exist forever. But during the existence of an object, Law of Compatibility and Harmony forces that object to adapt to the common life of all beings and operate together following the common order of the entire universe. Thanks to such binding, the entire universe still exists in the continuous engenderment and transformation of all beings.

1.2.3. Law of Static-Dynamic Yin-Yang

Without transmutation, there is only the *One*, not the *Myriad*. In other words, all beings can exist and engender only within the mechanism of transmutation. And Law of Static-Dynamic Yin-Yang is the law that controls the growth and transformation of all beings.

Law of Static-Dynamic Yin-Yang can be summarized as follows: All beings are composed of the two opposing but complementing elements, Yin and Yang, that manifest into two basic states of existence, namely, Static and Dynamic. The Static state creates stability, the Dynamic state creates transmutation of all beings. Thanks to the harmony between these opposing effects (Yin and Yang, static and dynamic), all beings can be engendered and evolved.

Law of Static-Dynamic Yin-Yang proves the opposing effects that involve in the transmutation of all evolutionary subjects arise from the conflict of coordination. Such conflict must lie within Law of Compatibility and Harmony, because if it goes beyond that law all

¹⁹⁴ Đức Liên Hoa Thánh Mẫu; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tuất thời, 10-03 Kỷ Dậu (26-04-1969); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

*opposing subjects will begin to fight and self-destruct. On the contrary, thanks to such conflict the universe can engender and transform, creating a rhythm for life to display sounds and colors through the screen of six consciousnesses in humans. Darkness and light do not terminate each other; instead, they create splendid spectacles of dawn or dusk that thrill many worried people. Whether there is the rhythm of love lies within this law. Thanks to that, people form society, establish human world and countless witnesses that people can perceive.*¹⁹⁵

Due to the innate Yin-Yang configuration and due to the ability to cooperate the inner Yin-Yang with that of the outside world, all beings can simulate the function *One emanates Myriad* of the essence of the Way. Each being of the *Myriad* can play the role of the *One* in the Post-Genesis world to engender other *Myriad*, causing all beings to continuously develop in a tangible way. That is the Post-Genesis mechanism of engenderment, employing Post-Genesis Yin-Yang pair to create palpable and visible forms. So, in addition to the Pre-Genesis innate source, which is the Way, all beings also have Post-Genesis sources, which are the generations of their ancestors.

Through the three laws discussed above, the *Myriad* of the universe is always the expressions of the *One*. When developing into *Myriad*, *One* utilizes the magical transformation of *Myriad* to express its original Principle, and utilizes the sophisticated physical structure of *Myriad* to express its original Energy. Therefore, the Way is not only hidden as the essence of

¹⁹⁵ Đạo Học Chi Nam, chương 4, tiết 2, mục 1.

all beings, but also clearly expresses through all forms of movement and existence of all beings.

3. MYRIAD CONVERGE TO ONE

3.1. Definition

The semi-process *Myriad converge to One* is also both a part of the operation principle and itself the evolutionary principle. The contents of this principle can be summarized into the four main definitions below:

1. *Myriad converge to One* is the semi-process that gathers the function of the essence of the Way, bringing *all beings* from diversity back to unity, from Post-Genesis to Pre-Genesis.
2. *Myriad converge to One* is the semi-process of evolution for all beings to return to the Origin.
3. *Myriad converge to One* is a journey of introspection, self-purification, self-improvement to get rid of the deluded mind and return to the True Heart, return to the Origin in the mechanism of evolution.
4. *Myriad* is the state of differentiation, division, contradiction, and opposition. *One* is the state of uniform, unity, convergence, and union. *Myriad converge to One* means all opposing contradictions can be reconciled, and all dissensions can be syncretized into unity.

It is the principle *Myriad converge to One* that is used by God to open the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation.

3.2. Related Laws

Myriad converge to One is the reverse of the semi-process *One emanates Myriad*. As soon as they were born into the mechanism of creation, all beings must evolve, because there is no interruption between the two processes of creation and evolution. When the tendency to disperse develops to the extreme, it gradually transitions into the tendency to gather; the semi-process *One emanates Myriad* continues into the semi-process *Myriad converge to One*.

In the semi-process *Myriad converge to One*, filtering always takes place to eliminate the degenerate individuals and preserve the evolving ones. This semi-process is characterized by three basic laws: Law of Inducement, Law of Reincarnation, and Law of Evolution.

3.2.1. Law of Inducement

Corresponding to Law of Cause and Effect in the semi-process *One emanates Myriad* is the Law of Inducement in the semi-process *Myriad converge to One*.

In the Law of Cause and Effect, subject is the root and object is the tip, because the subject transmits the impact and the object receives it; thus, the movement initiated by the subject goes from root to tip. On the contrary, in the Law of Inducement, subject is the tip and object is the root, because after the subject initiates movement, the object is the transmitting source of the impact, and the subject is the object receiving the impact; thus, the movement initiated by the subject goes from tip to root. Such a reverse direction of the transmitted impact between 'root' and 'tip' indicates

that Law of Inducement is a retrograde law whereas Law of Cause and Effect is a forward one.

Law of Inducement is a law of interaction of spirituality, mind, and thought. This law can be summarized as follows:

Between Spark of Divine Light and the Globe of Divine Light, and between Spark of Divine Light and Spark of Divine Light, they are all able to sense each other.

If the Spark of Divine Light really concentrates in something, this concentration must naturally become a sense; if a sense exists, a sensation must be induced.

Thanks to the Law of Inducement, all beings at all levels of evolution can receive guidance from Heaven-Earth to avoid getting lost on the way back to the Origin.

Law of Inducement helps all beings in the Post-Genesis world to have channels of communication with God and the Divine to receive assistance on the path of evolution.

3.2.2. Law of Reincarnation

To return to the Globe of Divine Light, each Spark of Divine Light must accumulate the results of evolution over many lifetimes. After each life, if there is not enough achieving power to return to the Globe of Divine Light, the Spark of Divine Light must return to the physical world, borrow another physical body, live another life to continue to accumulate what is missing. Such a return to the physical world to live a corporeal

life is called *reincarnation*, *rebirth*, or *transmigration*.

Law of Reincarnation can be summarized as follows: If in one life the Spark of Divine Light amasses achieving power to a certain value, then right after this life the Spark of Divine Light will be transitioned to an evolutionary level corresponding to that value of achieving power. The position of a Spark of Divine Light on the evolution ladder depends on the value of achieving power that the Spark of Divine Light has accumulated.

Reincarnation is a supporting mechanism of Non-Being and Supreme Being for August Being on the path of evolution.

3.2.3. Law of Evolution

The nature of evolution is related to the three basic elements that make up all beings, they are: Essence, Energy, and Spirit. These three elements come from the Trinity: Non-Being creates Original Essence;¹⁹⁶ Supreme Being creates Original Spirit;¹⁹⁷ and August Being creates Original Energy.¹⁹⁸

Evolution is a machinery that transforms Original Essence into Original Energy and unites Original Energy with Original Spirit. That evolution affects

¹⁹⁶ Chon Pháp Lưu Truyền: “*Essence is the True Divinity of the Divine Mother Diêu Trì Kim Mẫu.*”

¹⁹⁷ Đức Nam Phương Giáo Chủ; 22-9 Bính Tý (1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1950), thiên 40 “Luyện Đạo”, tr. 380: i.e., *Cao Đài Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, Chapter “Practice Esoteric Exercises”, p. 227, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Đài Temple Overseas, 2015: *Spirit is the master, that is, the Spark of Divine Light bestowed by God.*

¹⁹⁸ Dịch Kinh Huyền Nghĩa: *Hoàng Cực là Khí Xung Hòa*, translated as *August Being is the Energy of Harmony.*

every existing scale of the universe from the macrocosm of Heaven-Earth to the microcosm of each being and each person.

Law of Evolution can be summarized as follows:

In the evolution mechanism there are eight steps corresponding to the eight levels of true soul in the order from low to high: Mineral soul, Vegetation soul, Animal soul, Human soul, Deity soul, Saint soul, Immortal soul, and Buddha soul.

When a Spark of Divine Light is on a step of evolution, it must fully carry out the mission corresponding to that evolution level, because that mission is a sacred duty of August Being for the operation of the entire universe.

The progression or regression of each Spark of Divine Light is not decided by the Globe of Divine Light, but by that Spark of Divine Light itself through the level of performance of its mission, duties, and responsibilities.

Law of Evolution is the most important law that creates the semi-process *Myriad converge to One* because, as defined, the semi-process *Myriad converge to One* is itself the principle of evolution.

4. CONCLUSION

Even though there are activities of the entire Trinity, the main character partaking in the transmutation mechanism *One emanates Myriad, Myriad converge to One* is the August Being, the Spark of Divine Light. Therefore, the principle *One emanates Myriad, Myriad converge to One* is the principle that establishes the

closed but endless evolutionary schedule for Sparks of Divine Light.

Principle *One emanates Myriad, Myriad converge to One* reflects two aspects in the transmutation of the Way. On the relative aspect, transmutation means mutable; therefore, all creatures must transform to perfect their own spirituality, that is, to evolve. On the absolute aspect, transmutation means immutable; therefore, people must be aware of the immutability that is the basis for the transformation of all beings, because thanks to that, mankind can stand in the position of a subject free to evolve, instead of an object being bound to evolution.

CHAPTER 3.

MANKIND

SECTION 1. OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPT
OF MAN

SECTION 2. THE EQUAL TRIAD

SECTION 3. THE HUMAN MISSION

SECTION 4. GOD – MAN UNION

SECTION 1

OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPT OF MAN

History of human thought is a journey to find answers to the eternal questions about human existence:

- What am I? Who am I?
- Where do I come from?
- What do I come to this world for?
- Where will I go after leaving this world?

According to the teaching of the Great Way, these questions can only find answers in the principle of the Way. Moreover, these answers can only be meaningful to mankind when they go beyond the theoretical levels to become human beliefs and actions.

Therefore, the doctrine of the Great Way considers Man as the main point of thought and action. As the point of thought, humans are explained about their existence to realize their origin, their status, and their goals in this world. As the point of action, humans are entrusted

with the mission to all beings and are guided to fulfill that noble mission.

Through this theme, the teaching of the Great Way reveals to mankind a path of transcendence right in the answers to the above questions. That path is called the Great Way.

From there, the doctrine of the Great Way helps people to understand that *Man* and the *Great Way* are truly *One*.

1. DEFINITION OF MAN

The prayer for the Holy Shower ritual in the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation contains an answer to the question “What is Man?” in many aspects. In terms of evolution, Man is the most sacred dignity among all creatures. In essence, Man is the quiescent Buddha. In terms of physical structure, Man is a Heaven-Earth universe. In terms of mission, Man is an agent who operates the transformation mechanism of the world.

In origin, “*Man is the Way.*”¹⁹⁹

In terms of power, Man is “*a creation within the Creation.*”²⁰⁰

Therefore, Man is an ethical category used to refer to a free subject existing at the topmost dignity in evolution, who borrows the tangible form of a microcosm to unleash a transcendent power so as to carry out the mission of cooperating with God in assisting all beings.

¹⁹⁹ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, 15-10 Ất Mão.

²⁰⁰ Đức Vô Cực Từ Tôn; Vạn Quốc Tự, Tuất thời, 14-8 Quý Sửu.

2. STRUCTURE OF THE HUMAN MICROCOSM

In terms of structure, Man is a microcosm. This microcosm is a miniature model of the macrocosm, sharing with each other the same rules of configuration and principle of operation.

This microcosmic structure consists of three bodies: The first body is the visible body made up of matter and composed by the temporary assembly of the Four Constituents.²⁰¹ The second body is the Astral Body, True Spirit, the Mind, originated from Non-Being. The third body is the Spark of Divine Light, the Divine Soul, the Original Divinity, the Nature, originated from Supreme Being.

*Human beings have three bodies: The first body is the physical body given to them by their parents; the second one is called the Double-Body, given to them by the Divine Mother; and the third body is the Spiritual Soul, given to them by the Supreme God.*²⁰²

The first body carries the Original Essence; the second body, the Original Energy; the third body, the Original Spirit. Essence, Energy, and Spirit are called the Three Treasures of humans.

Of the three bodies that make up a human being, the Third Body has the most important task, because it must educate the Second Body and help the Second Body to train the First Body. In other words, “*The*

²⁰¹ Translator’s notes: the Four Constituents are Soil, Water, Wind, and Fire or the states of matter: Solid, Liquid, Gas, and Heat energy.

²⁰² Đức Cao Thượng Phẩm; đàn cơ tại tư gia của nhân viên Bộ Pháp Chánh Hiệp Thiên Đài (thuộc Tòa Thánh Tây Ninh), đêm 28-7 Canh Dần (1950); Luật Tam Thể.

*Spiritual Soul operates the Rational Soul to control the Living Soul.*²⁰³

The Spiritual Soul is the *master* of the body, accepting responsibility before God for operating the most sacred machinery of the human body in evolution. If the Spiritual Soul successfully educates the Rational Soul and guides the Living Soul, then humans will attain the Way and achieve a sacred position. On the contrary, if the Spiritual Soul fails its task, letting the Rational Soul and the Living Soul control the body, then the person will sink in the vicious cycle of depravity.

Thus, the human microcosm is a sacred structure, providing sufficient power for humans to carry out their mission in the Post-Genesis realm. If humans do not explore or make use of that super-miraculous capability, they will not only be unable to fulfill their sacred duties but also be subject to the cycle of birth and death.

3. HUMAN DIGNITY

Right at birth in the *Creation*, all beings are equal since they are all Sparks of Divine Light given by God. However, in the *Evolution*, differences in the effort to evolve of individual Sparks of Divine Light have divided all beings into high and low levels of the evolutionary ladder.

Of all beings in the universe, no one is better or worse than the others. They are all the same, that is, points of Original Divinity, establishing the world and formulating the settings for Immortals and Buddhas to have a place to learn

²⁰³ Đức Bát Nương Diêu Trì Cung; đàn cơ dạy nhân viên Bộ Pháp Chánh Hiệp Thiên Đài (thuộc Tòa Thánh Tây Ninh), đêm 15-12 Tân Mão (11-01-1952); Luật Tam Thể.

*and apply their talents, to further embellish their divine dignity.*²⁰⁴

Therefore, in mankind, due to the difference in evolutionary efforts, Original Man and Progressive Man co-exist in the same physical plane, even though, thanks to the equality in God Nature, the sacred dignity exists in every human being.

3.1. Original Man and Progressive Man

Progressive Man is a human being formed by the evolution of matter. This evolution gradually goes from minerals to plants, to animals, then to humans. Such human being is a Progressive Man.

Progressive Man continues to evolve to create sacred positions, that is, the dignity of Deities, Saints, Immortals, and Buddhas. Once successfully attaining those positions, the soul of Progressive Man also becomes a superior spirit.²⁰⁵ Then, to further advance, this superior spirit must return to the world to accumulate more merits and virtues.

Human being, whose soul was a superior spirit in the past, is called Original Man. Original Man is a human being born due to the return to earth of a superior spirit.

It is very difficult for all beings to evolve into Progressive Man then establish sacred positions; it is equally challenging for Original Man to reinstate the former position or advance in sacred dignity. But it is very easy for Original Man to degrade to the levels of other beings. Therefore, whether Original Man or

²⁰⁴ Đức Cao Thượng Phẩm; đàn cơ dạy nhân viên Bộ Pháp Chánh Hiệp Thiên Đài (thuộc Tòa Thánh Tây Ninh), đêm 16-9 Canh Dần; Luật Tam Thể.

²⁰⁵ The term “superior spirit” is used to contrast with the “inferior spirit”, which is demon and mara.

Progressive Man, no one has advantage over the other in the field of evolution, because the laws of progression and regression operate equally on all beings.

The difference between Original Man and Progressive Man lies only in past evolutionary achievements and does not determine future evolutionary results. Once coming to this world, any individual who knows how to *self-cultivate*, that is, who knows how to *preserve True Mind, develop Sacred Heart, and elaborate Sainly Virtue*, will become a holy person, and then gradually evolve into Deities, Saints, Immortals, and Buddhas; otherwise, one will have to suffer transmigration like other ranks of sentient beings.

3.2. Human Status

Status is the gauge, the model, the standard.

Man holds a noble status in Heaven-Earth. In other words, man is an objective gauge, a universal standard to measure the value and significance of all beings as well as of humans themselves.

It is the mind that creates human status. Depending on the state of the mind, human status expresses the values and meaning of the world. If a mind is deluded, the world will appear as a sea of suffering and a river of ignorance; if a mind is enlightened, the world becomes a school of evolution. In fact, the sea of suffering or the school of evolution is merely consequences of perception that vary with each of the impermanent states of discerning mind, as the world itself does not necessarily have any nuances.

Inherent nature does not make life impermanent; it is human desire that makes life temporary."²⁰⁶

Therefore, human value and significance are created by humans themselves. When they research and thoroughly understand the principle of the Way and reach the key point in the relationship between themselves and God, humans will easily establish their own sacred status:

*When humans thoroughly understand the principle of the Way and successfully find the key that serves as the relationship between Man and God, they will self-cultivate, self-regenerate, self-establish, and self-progress to the levels of Deity, Saint, Immortal, and Buddha easily.*²⁰⁷

4. HUMAN POWER

Man is a **supreme power** in the universe, equal to that of Heaven-Earth. This power is the right of creation that humans have received to rule the world:

*Children! You, or mankind in general, are the seeds of spiritual root chosen to be sown in the universe, are given the **right of creation** to establish the reign of the world.*²⁰⁸

With the ultimate power given by God, humans can understand the mystery of Creation, and know the source of life of all beings.

²⁰⁶ Đức Quan Âm Bồ Tát; Trúc Lâm Thiền Điện, Tuất thời, 20-10 Quý Sửu.

²⁰⁷ Đức Vạn Hạnh Thiền Sư; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, Tuất thời, 02-6 Canh Tuất.

²⁰⁸ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, 09-01 Mậu Thân.

*Man is the most sacred creature,
Seizing the Creation and connecting to all
beings.²⁰⁹*

Thanks to that power, every human being can do everything that Deities, Saints, Immortals, and Buddhas have done to create paradise on earth:

*Man can do whatever Buddhas, Immortals,
Saints, and Deities have done; also with one's
own hands, one can create a state of peace,
prosperity, and well settling that can be said to
establish a paradise on earth for the entire
mankind to share and enjoy.²¹⁰*

That power is not ordinary power, but the **freedom** of True Mind. This freedom means not letting the mind be bound, constrained, or forced by any cause.

Therefore, the mastery of Spark of Divine Light, of the self-existing spiritual essence, is the source of power in humans.

5. HUMAN MISSION

According to the teaching of the Great Way, Man is:

*One lord to rule over all creatures,
One power to bless all living beings.
One in Heaven-Earth to perfect the creation,
One among the beings to discern wrong from
right.²¹¹*

Therefore, Man is also a noble mission, a sacred duty in the universe. That mission is to carry out the *Way of*

²⁰⁹ Đạo Học Chi Nam, chương 3, tiết 2, mục 2.

²¹⁰ Đức Như Ý Đạo Toàn Chơn Nhơn; Vĩnh Nguyên Tự, Ngọ thời, 03-12 Ất Ty.

²¹¹ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tuất thời, 15-4 Quý Sửu.

Creation of Heaven-Earth, which means contributing to the projects that the Creator has built to make them complete and perfect.

That is not the mission of any individual, but the common mission of the entire mankind. Each individual and all mankind must share and undertake that common mission:

*Every person has his/her own mission; all mankind is the mission in this school of evolution.*²¹²

Born as humans, regardless of being Original Man or Progressive Man, everyone has a very important role in the grand scheme of the universe and human world. This role is to carry out the vocation of the most sacred creatures of all beings, creating a good *spiritual legacy* in this world.

*As soon as a human being comes out of the mother's womb, he/she already receives grace from Heaven-Earth, and mankind. If he/she does not create or leave behind a **good spiritual legacy** to repay the grace of Heaven-Earth, to repay mankind, then he/she is nothing more or less than a parasite, let alone be called the most sacred creature of all beings.*²¹³

To accomplish the sacred mission, each person should introspect to find one's own master, that is, the intrinsic Spark of Divine Light. Only when one recognizes and lives with the life of Divine Light that one can truly be a Man in the correct sense of this ethical category, and

²¹² Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tuất thời, 18-01 Tân Hợi.

²¹³ Đức Quan Âm Bồ Tát; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tuất thời, 15-9 Quý Sửu.

capable of fulfilling one's Sacred Destiny in the visible world.

*Only by acknowledging the origin of life,
Can Man fulfill the Way of Creator.²¹⁴*

6. CONCLUSION

In general, *Man* is an ethical category in which each individual is a *quiescent God* evolving to identify with the *One existing God*.

Before coming to this world, Man is a Spark of Divine Light emanated from God in its free nature. Endowed with a creative power, it borrows impermanent matter as a means to express universal principles of Heaven-Earth universe and to enter the world to accumulate merits and virtues in evolution.

Once entering and being present in this life, each person has a sacred mission to realize the way of fulfillment in Heaven-Earth to perfect what has been created by God. In this mission, each individual must not only self-evolve but also cooperate with God to assist the evolution of all beings.

Then, where will each individual go after leaving this life? The answer depends on each individual's life in this world. If one fails in one's sacred destiny, one must endure the cycle of birth and death. If one accomplishes one's mission, establishing sacred dignity, and attaining the self-existing way, then one will evolve to unite with God.

²¹⁴ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tuất thời, 14-10 Bính Thìn.

SECTION 2

THE EQUAL TRIAD

The Equal Triad is an argument in the teaching of the Great Way that allows the explanation of the status of Man in relation with those of God. The principle of the Equal Triad refers to human position in Heaven-Earth universe, aiming to equip humans with an awareness of their own capability to unlock the supernatural potentials inherently configured in their bodily structure, and at the same time to show people their own power and mission in Heaven-Earth to all beings, as well as to human society.

1. DEFINITION

1.1. What is the Triad?

The Triad is a system consisting of three general categories, also known as the three Persons – Heaven, Earth, and Man – that are interrelated through the following three basic relationships.

First is *the essence-function relationship between the Trinity and the Triad*. In this relationship, the Triad is

the function of the Trinity, whereas the Trinity is the essence of the Triad. In further details, component Heaven is the function of Supreme Being, component Earth is the function of Non-Being, and component Man is the function of August Being.

Second is *the reciprocal relationship between Yin and Yang aspects in the universe*. In this relationship, component Heaven corresponds to Yang, component Earth corresponds to Yin, whereas component Man corresponds to the Middle based on the statement “*In the Triad, Man positions in the Middle*”.²¹⁵

Component Man is also the intersection of all contradictions in the Yin-Yang duality:

*Man is the superior Virtue bestowed by God,
The convergence of Demon and Deity,
The intersection of Yin and Yang,
The full energy of Five Elements,
and the fulfillment of the Triad.”*²¹⁶

Therefore, any subject who wants to exist in the position of component Man must be able to harmonize the functions of Yin and Yang.

Third is *the spiritual and material relationship*. In this relationship, the Triad can be considered in two aspects. On the one hand, component Heaven corresponds to the *spiritual world*; component Earth, the *material world*; and component Man, the *human world*. On the other hand, component Heaven corresponds to the *idealistic* tendency; component Earth, the *materialistic* tendency; and component Man, the *spiritual-material co-functional* tendency:

²¹⁵ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 2, tiết 3, mục 4.

²¹⁶ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 2, tiết 2, mục 4.

*Component Man includes both Heaven and Earth,
In the dual world, both **material and spiritual**,
The original human nature is the seed,
Materialism: the Yin mind; idealism: the Yang spirit.²¹⁷*

1.2. What is the Equal Triad?

Man – among Heaven, Earth, and all beings – is defined as follows in the teaching of the Great Way:

*Being one of the components in the Triad,
Being myriad in the Principle of Monad.²¹⁸*

According to this definition, Man is a creature of the same essence as all other beings, and also a subject on equal footing with Heaven-Earth.

Equal means *the same*. *The Equal Triad* means the three persons of God – Heaven, Earth, Man – play equally important roles in the creation and evolution of the universe. These three components must also combine with each other, rely on each other, to promote their functions of operating and regulating the universe and all beings.

*[Man] assemble Heaven-Earth in the Grand Harmony,
[Man] marry Yin-Yang in the truly miraculous remedy.
It is the three-legged cauldron standing firmly,
As Heaven, Earth, Man rely on each other,
The universe then becomes one world,
With no more difference or thrilling division.²¹⁹*

²¹⁷ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 2, tiết 2, mục 4.

²¹⁸ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, 30-12 Quý Sửu.

2. MAN IN THE EQUAL TRIAD

What kind of person is the Man in the Equal Triad? The Triad is Heaven, Earth, and Man; though appearing smaller compared to Heaven-Earth, humans still have enough conditions to be on par with Heaven-Earth, because they also have the same penetrating nature, not different from Heaven-Earth.²²⁰

In principle, humans are a sacred source, a miraculous structure, a noble personality, a great power, and an important mission in the universe. Therefore, the equality between Man and Heaven-Earth is also expressed in these five aspects.

2.1. Man is equal to Heaven-Earth in origin.

In the primordial origin, Heaven, Earth, and Man are all created by the Way:

*Creating Heaven-Earth, creating Man,
The Way is miraculous, yet hidden ...²²¹*

By receiving the essence of the Way, as Heaven-Earth does, humans have a sacred nature and thanks to that, humans can create, can transform themselves; that means, they can transmute themselves into Sage or Saint, forge into Divine Beings (Deity, Saint, Immortal, or Buddha), and penetrate the mystery of Heaven-Earth.

Human Nature is inherently Principle. In the context of the equality in origin of the Triad, that Principle can be understood as both the Principle of Preservation and the Principle of Creation. As the Principle of Preservation,

²¹⁹ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 3, tiết 1, mục 3

²²⁰ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 2, tiết 1, mục 2.

²²¹ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 3, tiết 2, mục 3.

the Intrinsic Nature forces humans to comply with the natural necessity of the universe and all beings. But as the Principle of Creation, the Intrinsic Nature opens for humans the freedom to go beyond the laws of Heaven-Earth so as to cooperate with Heaven-Earth in completing the creation task in the universe and all beings. It is the creation ability and the freedom potential of the Intrinsic Nature that are the factors that enable humans to go beyond the cause-and-effect control of space and time to contribute to the great cause of the Creator.

Due to the equality in origin, the three components of the Triad are also equal in configuration of their most sacred apparatus, thanks to which humans can become a regulatory structure to support the achievements of all beings and the perfection of Heaven-Earth. Therefore, equality in origin of the Triad leads to equality in configuration.

2.2. Man is equal to Heaven-Earth in configuration.

Carrying within themselves the “blueprint” of Heaven-Earth, humans are microcosms that are structured accordingly to the Way’s diagram of the universe:

*Man is called microcosm,
Man and God do not differ;
Whatever God possess,
So does every man!* ²²²

²²² Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 28-8 Bính Tý (13 Octobre 1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1956), bài “Thiên Bàn”, tr.63-64. i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, Chapter “Method of Worship”, p. 261, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas, 2015.

Therefore, *the structure of Heaven-Earth and that of Man are also One.*²²³ And because of that, the microcosm in Man is a miraculous machine full of magical functions like the macrocosm.

If people know how to use the configuration of their microcosm to create their sacred dignity, then they will be able to escape from the worldly net; on the contrary, if they waste that structure, then when the day comes to return the body to the Four Constituents, they will have to fall in the reincarnation cycle.

*Considering the visible and invisible,
You should clearly discern form from essence.
Use your body in the temporal life,
To forge the Golden Body and flee from the
worldly net.
Do not pursuit tangible matter,
If you focus your mind outwards, you will fall
into reincarnation.”*²²⁴

In their structure, humans have a miraculous spiritual component. When human Mind is at par with the Universal Heart, then the contemplation of the value and meaning of all beings performed by humans will be as impartial as that performed by Heaven-Earth. Thus, equality in configuration leads to equality in status.

2.3. Man is equal to Heaven-Earth in status.

Heaven, Earth, and Man are three standards, three gauges of the evolutionary levels of all beings. Those three gauges have equivalent values.

²²³ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quán; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tuất thời, 28-5 Tân Hợi.

²²⁴ Đức Quan Âm Bồ Tát; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, Tuất thời, 03-9 Giáp Dần.

The reason why human status can act as a standard for the evolutionary level of all beings – like the standards of Heaven-Earth – is because in evolution, human position is a crucial position: Man is the only point in evolution that allows all beings to escape from the realm of duality.

His Holiness the Supreme God taught:

*Man is the root of all beings, and all beings are the tip of Man; in turn, Heaven-Earth is the root of Man, and Man is the tip of Heaven-Earth.*²²⁵

According to the teaching of the Great Way, evolution is return to the Origin, that is, back to the root. And from the above holy message of Supreme God, all beings must evolve to the level of humans, and humans must evolve to the level of Heaven-Earth. Thus, to return to the Globe of Divine Light, all beings must evolve to the level of humans.

That crucial position in the evolution mechanism makes humans an objective gauge for the evolutionary levels of all beings in the universe.

However, to be able to gauge the value of all beings, people must first achieve *dignity* in themselves, that is, they must achieve *the true value of a human being*. To achieve it, they should live in accord with their Intrinsic Nature:

Humans should live according to their Intrinsic Nature, that is, they should live accordingly with the orders of Heaven and the method of the

²²⁵ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 12-8 Bính Tý (1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1950), thiên 33 “Nhơn vật tân hóa”, tr.306, i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, Chapter “Evolution of Humans and Other Beings”, p. 179, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas, 2015.

*Way so as to achieve human dignity and human divinity.*²²⁶

Once people live accordingly with their Nature, human heart is also the Universal Heart. Having achieved the Universal Heart of Heaven-Earth, human status is no different from that of Heaven-Earth.

Therefore, to achieve human status, people must return to their Intrinsic Nature. Because that Nature contains the power of creation, returning to the Intrinsic Nature will release the power of Heaven-Earth within oneself. So, equality in status leads to equality in power.

2.4. Man is equal to Heaven-Earth in power.

Humans have been given in their own Nature the right of creation to rule the world and help all beings evolve. Such miraculous power is generated by their miraculous machinery that operates according to the principle of Heaven-Earth. If a Spark of Divine Light can conquer this power and control his body, he will be able to establish his own sacred achievement. On the other hand, if the body grasps this power, then such power will become the karmic force that binds people to the cycle of birth and death.

How can the Spark of Divine Light conquer that innate power of creation? The only solution is people should live accordingly with the true Way. Otherwise, they will create karmic hindrances and tie themselves to the cycle of birth and death. The greater the innate power in humans, in their ignorance it becomes the tighter anchor to dock themselves to the cycle of birth and death.

²²⁶ Đạo Học Chi Nam, chương 3, tiết 1, mục 2.

To self-cultivate is to find the radiant and miraculous Heart that has hidden the eternal and immutable nature of the August Being. To find it, one must first quiet oneself to cultivate and wash away the layers of greed, anger, ignorance, and desire that are densely packed along the wall of ignorance so as to see the way of creation of Heaven-Earth. One who follows that path is in harmony with the Celestial Principle and can restore one's Intrinsic Nature.²²⁷

When free from the influence of greed, anger, ignorance, and desire, people can use their power to serve humanity and save sentient beings, just like Heaven-Earth operates in the virtue of mercy and the love of creation. Doing these services is also fulfilling the Heaven-Earth's mission of creation.

Therefore, equality in power leads to equality in mission.

2.5. Man is equal to Heaven-Earth in mission.

Man and Heaven-Earth have the same mission in the edification of the universe and all beings.

The Creator creates the universe. Man also creates his actions in the universe, and those actions help to complete the creative work of the Creator in the universe.²²⁸

²²⁷ Đức Quan Âm Bồ Tát; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tuất thời, 15-6 Giáp Dần.

²²⁸ Đạo Học Chi Nam, chương 3, tiết 1, mục 2.

That mission serves as “*the link for Heaven-Earth to build the Way of Grand Harmony.*”²²⁹

Every human soul, regardless of their penetrative capability, comes into the world for this mission of “*edifying the Way of Grand Harmony*”:

*Having been born in the realm of impermanence, each soul that brings a physical body to life has a mission to self-cultivate, self-advance, and assist the celestial mechanism in operating the universe. Though differing in penetrative capabilities – from the fully enlightened to the mundane – but each of those points of soul has its own mission and task, like each screw, wheel, and bolt in the overall apparatus. No one should ignorantly think that one’s solitary and separate life has nothing to do with the overall life of all beings, then seek a way to enjoy the privacy within a narrow, selfish, and self-centered scope.*²³⁰

As individual microcosm is a ‘link’ connecting Heaven and Earth, the evolution of each microcosm contributes to the evolution of the macrocosm:

*Each human microcosm is a link in the macrocosm. Every transformation and evolution of individual microcosm will progress to the macrocosm.*²³¹

²²⁹ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 3, tiết 1, mục 3, Phần Kinh Văn: “*Man stands between Heaven and Earth, acting as the link for Heaven-Earth to build the Way of Grand Harmony*”.

²³⁰ Đức Quan Thánh Đế Quân; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tuất thời, 15-12 Giáp Dần.

²³¹ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 4, tiết 4, mục 3.

Therefore, to fulfill their responsibilities and mission, people must constantly evolve and help everyone else and all beings evolve:

*Whoever can do the three tasks: promote one's own sincerity, amplify other people's sincerity, and use all the sincerity in each being to assist in the transformation of Heaven-Earth, then one is not different from Heaven-Earth. In other words, whoever has the heart to correct oneself, serve Heaven and people, then one is equal to Heaven-Earth.*²³²

3. CONCLUSION

The existence of Man is the existence of an immortal origin, a divine structure, a noble status, a great power, and a significant mission.

Therefore, due to the Equal Triad, Man is equal to Heaven-Earth through five closely related aspects: equality in origin leads to equality in configuration, which in turn leads to equality in inherent status; and equality in inherent status leads to equality in power, which in turn leads to equality in mission.

In ensemble, all those five aspects mean equality in Intrinsic Essence and Inherent Nature. Man who finds his Intrinsic Essence and Inherent Nature is equal in power with the Creator.

*The basis for people to attain the Way is their nature must be like that of the Creator.*²³³

²³² Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 2, tiết 1, mục 2.

²³³ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tuất thời, 15-4 Đinh Tỵ.

SECTION 3

THE HUMAN MISSION

According to the teaching of the Great Way, humans have spiritual capability that is more miraculous and intelligent than those of all other beings. Thanks to this capacity, humans stand in the superior class of sentient beings. Also, thanks to this spiritual point, humans can self-cultivate and practice to live a moral life in their society, and furthermore they can get rid of all ordinary constraints to liberate themselves.

It is due to their noble position and extraordinary ability among all species, humans are naturally born with a mission that must be fulfilled in their lifetime.

His Holiness the Supreme God taught:

The Great Way is your starting point (...). From the point of Origin, you set out on a mission in

*two phases, one is to bring the Great Way to life, and two is to return to the Great Way.*²³⁴

This mission of two phases is a very noble mission that no one can refuse.

When setting out to bring the Great Way to this world, humans are given the responsibility of representing God to govern all beings.

And returning to the Great Way when humans have sufficient power of self-liberation to evolve.

His Holiness Đức Đông Phương Chương Quân taught:

*The noble mission assigned to the superior species in this world is the human mission, to take the place of God to rule over all beings in accord with the Law of Creation and Transformation, and to have enough power of self-liberation to evolve.*²³⁵

The path of evolution through the history of mankind is the conclusion of the human mission over many generations. The important point of the Third Universal Salvation is to make everyone aware of one's own mission, that is, to affirm one's own journey of ultimate evolution.

That journey is a reference to the operation cycle of the universe. Hence, the teaching of the Great Way has summarized it into two consecutive phases to guide

²³⁴ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Hội thời, 30 tháng Chạp Quý Sửu (22-01-1974); Thánh Giáo Suu Tập.

²³⁵ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quân; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Hội thời, 01-01 Quý Hợi (13-01-1983); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

mankind to accomplish their human mission and to fully realize their evolutionary path.

1. THE LEAVING PHASE – BRINGING THE GREAT WAY TO ESTABLISH LIFE

1.1. For oneself

In this phase, humans have the mission to demonstrate all the potentials, all the powers of a human being. Every individual has gone through countless evolution cycles of living creatures to reach the human status, which is the subject with full power to control all activities on earth. This world is a school of training with very harsh challenges for each individual to continue to evolve. People can only play a proper human role when they know their origin, their status and mission.

Human origin. In terms of intrinsic essence, humans are Sparks of Divine Light emanated from God. In terms of structure, humans are living systems generated from the convergence of Yin-Yang and the Five Elements, creating enough conditions to form a subject between Earth and Heaven. Therefore, Supreme God affirmed:

Children! You, or mankind in general, [are] spiritual seeds chosen to be sown into the universe, are given the right to create, to establish the reign of the world (that you call life). Everything in this world [has] the cause, which is the Principle, the Great Way, the Holy Master Teacher, and the common Father of all beings. You have been born in the Great Way, then you should follow the Great Way to reach

*back to the Supreme Realm of Nothingness.*²³⁶

Human status. Humans are called “the most sacred beings in the world” because they have reached the highest level of evolution compared to all sentient beings. Human status, or human dignity, has noble value in the universe because humans can both evolve and influence the evolution of the universe and all beings. And only mankind can step in the Way of Heaven after fulfilling the Way of Man.

Knowing their precious position, humans have the mission of glorifying the Spiritual Root (or Spiritual Nature, or Natural Nature) bestowed by God and is called the Radiant Virtue (Minh Đức) in the *Book of Great Learning*:

*When the Radiant Virtue is fully developed in people, it is in harmony with Heaven-Earth and can easily handle the world's affairs. That virtue spreads out, making everywhere shine brightly, like the sacred fire spreading flame to the lamps, making every lamp bright. It means Radiating the Virtue is also Renovating the People, benefiting both oneself and others.*²³⁷

1.2. Toward other people

In the phase of bringing the Great Way to establish life, the human mission toward others is to fulfill the responsibility of an individual toward the whole, which already has close relationships with

- family, relatives, ancestors,

²³⁶ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, 09-01 Mậu Thân (07-02-1968); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

²³⁷ Đạo Học Chi Nam, chương 2, tiết 2.

- society, nation, mankind.

Servicing others means servicing the universal essence of mankind, so that all can fully complete their human role in immense love and deep sympathy.

No matter how much people have perfected themselves, if they do not have a sense of servicing others, they have only gone halfway through their mission.

*If everyone soon understands it, they should soon join hands with God to embellish their country in this earthly world. Oh! What a beautiful glory! Yet, people have completely forgotten the pure and sincere nature that God gave them in their infancy.*²³⁸

also

*How to accomplish the human life,
To avoid shame throughout the lifetime.
Debt to country, gratitude to family, love to
humanity,
Let's keep in mind to hold these bonds tight.*²³⁹

Of course, to live means to make a living, but to live also means to dedicate the strength and intelligence to the survival and progress of the human community.

With such awareness, one can find the ethical way of life that drives every action, every thought of an individual naturally towards the contribution to the development and evolution of the whole.

*Use morality to gradually build the Great Way,
Apply human status to create affection.*

²³⁸ Đức Như Ý Đạo Toàn Chơn Nhơn; Vĩnh Nguyên Tự, Ngô thời, 03-12 Ất Tỵ (25-12-1965); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

²³⁹ Đức Lê Văn Duyệt Đại Tiên; Ngọc Minh Đài, Tuất thời, 09-05 Đinh Mùi (16-06-1967); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

*From material to spiritual,
From life to religion, let's contribute to those
relations.*²⁴⁰

2. THE RETURNING PHASE – RETURNING TO THE GREAT WAY

2.1. For oneself

According to the holy messages of Supreme God, the evolutionary path of sentient beings is a cycle, a periodic process, also a rule. Throughout the first half of the cycle, all beings enter the world to develop, mature, and gather the evolutionary capability. In the second half of the cycle, they return to the Origin, or the Intrinsic Essence of the Way, as purely spiritual subjects.

That is the Law of Evolution discussed in the QIAN (☰) hexagram in the *Logics of Change* scripture as follows: QIAN is the origin of the universe. It promotes all beings to evolve from the starting point to the completion with the four virtues of QIAN, which are: *Sublimity – Success – Furthering – Persistence*.

“Sublimity virtue is the beginning of all beings; Success virtue is the bringing about all beings; Furthering virtue is the actualization of all beings. But any moral work must be endured until the end with a result; if the end and result reach its fullness, then the moral work is in accordance with the cardinal virtue of God.

²⁴⁰ Đức Lê Văn Duyệt Đại Tiên; Ngọc Minh Đài, Tuất thời, 03-03 Ất Tỵ (05-04-1965); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bôn.

Hence, Sublimity, Success, Furthering, then next there must be Persistence.²⁴¹

Therefore, on the journey of human mission, after the phase of Secular Way one must continue onto the ultimate phase, the Spiritual Way. Spiritual Way is the path of liberation. Entering the Spiritual Way, cultivators take a turning point in the opposite direction from ordinary people, that is, leaving the mortal path and entering the holy path. While ordinary people are passionate for the material, cultivators long for the spiritual; while ordinary people compete, cultivators humbly resign; while ordinary people are ignorant and greedy, cultivators abandon everything. All are aimed at purifying body and soul so as to promote the Spiritual Way, to spiritually evolve and escape from reincarnation.

*Rolling in this earthly world you activate
ignorance,
And cover up the sacred soul in mortal body.
The three toxins and the four dungeons²⁴²
confine the inner master,
Countless vicissitudes make the body suffer.
Turnaround and be determined to go against the
flow,
Ascend and wilfully self-purify.
Filter out all contaminants and obstructions,
To comfortably transcend into eternal life.²⁴³*

²⁴¹ Phan Bội Châu, Chu Dịch, Văn ngôn quẻ Kiền, tr.73-74

²⁴² Translator's note: The three toxins are greed, anger, and ignorance; the four dungeons are gambling, imbibing, substance abuse, and adultery.

²⁴³ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quán; Nam Thành Thánh Thất, 09-05 nhuận Tân Hợi (01-07-1971); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

2.2. Toward other people

In the returning phase to the Great Way, the human mission toward others is the mission of “representing God to save people”; it means, when one enters the Spiritual Way with a selfless and altruistic heart, one will implicitly be a messenger of God to teach and save sentient beings. That was taught in the following holy message:

*Stepping on the path of Grand Vehicle, cultivators must initiate their own enlightenment to erase the dense darkness of error and segregation. Only then will their hearts be in harmony, naturally integrate with all creatures, and their compassionate wisdom can be revealed to propagate the true method to save mankind in this difficult and chaotic time (...). That is the ultimate goal.*²⁴⁴

Hence, returning to the Great Way or “reversing to the Origin” or cultivating on the “Spiritual Way of Grand Vehicle” is the parallel phase of “self-help” and “help others”, the former is the condition for the latter and vice versa.

If one wants to be able to complete the mission of saving others, one must first self-enlighten, self-liberate, and self-perfect.

If one wants to self-perfect, one must be selfless and altruistic, treat everyone as oneself and oneself as everyone. And it is love, compassion, and sacrifice that overcome all obstacles from the inner and outer world to bring joy, reduce suffering, and enlighten people.

²⁴⁴ Chư Tiên Khai Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tuát thời, 15-10 Kỳ Mùi (04-12-1979); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

Such achievements get the practitioner to integrate into the Great Way.

*Progress disciplinarily on the ladder of Grand Vehicle,
Cultivate the Buddha conduct.
Train your heart with mercy and compassion,
Commit to self-forget to cooperate in saving mankind.²⁴⁵*

and:

*To attain the Cao Dai high tower,
One must accomplish one's mission on earth.²⁴⁶*

The focus of “saving others” in the phase of returning to the Great Way is “propagating the True Method”. This True Method is the Method of Heart that practitioners have experienced and cultivated. At this stage, the mission of practitioners of the Grand Vehicle is to convey that True Method to sentient beings so everyone can board the Ark of Wisdom together; that is why it is named the Mission of Grand Vehicle.

Of course, the Human Mission has existed since the emergence of mankind. The Mission of Grand Vehicle has also developed by the Patriarchs and Saints. But in the Third Universal Salvation, God bless Holy Grace on those who enter the Spiritual Way of Grand Vehicle and take on the mission of saving all beings, fully completing the Triple Work in order to receive the grand amnesty to return and unite with the Supreme

²⁴⁵ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quán; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Hội thời, 15-06 Canh Thân (26-07-1980); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

²⁴⁶ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quán; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Hội thời, 15-06 Canh Thân (26-07-1980); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

God Holy Father. Thus, the Mission of Grand Vehicle is the final step of the Human Mission.

Fulfilling the Human Mission is indeed very difficult. But it is this difficulty that affirms the value of a true Man.

3. CONCLUSION

The Human Mission is truly the exam of a human life. Completion of this mission is not only achieved in this world, but the Spiritual Way of Grand Vehicle performed in this world also helps practitioners advance to the immortal and eternal realm.

The teaching of the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation has affirmed the noble value of human status in the power of mission and the ability to evolve from the earthly world to the transcendent ones.

SECTION 4

GOD-MAN UNION

God – Man Union is the Principle of Salvation. It is also the *key* for humans to control their own destiny in the universe.

*Children! You are divine beings in life,
You and Me are identical in divine light;
You already have the access key,
To the earthly world as well as to the
Paradise.”²⁴⁷*

1. DEFINITION

God-Man union is the coordination between humans and Heaven into a single structure, a single position, a single power, and a single mission.

As those factors – structure, position, power, and mission – are aspects of humans, God-Man Union can be defined differently and more accurately as follows: *God – Man Union is the coordination between Man and*

²⁴⁷ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Thiên Lý Đàn, Tuất thời, 14-01 Bính Ngọ.

Heaven, and that coordination is realized within the very heart of humans.

The phrase “God-Man Union” defines a general relationship between the two categories of “Heaven” and “Man”. In this context, “Heaven” is God in the sense of both impersonal and personal, as well as both intrinsic and extrinsic, whereas “Man” is humans in terms of origin, structure, position, power, and mission. Because “Heaven” and “Man” encompass very broad scopes of meaning, the phrase “God-Man Union” can be understood in specific meaning depending on the different levels of meaning of these categories.

2. UNION BETWEEN MAN AND IMPERSONAL GOD

2.1. Union with Impersonal Extrinsic God

Impersonal Extrinsic God is the *Principle of Monad*, manifested in the laws of nature as well as the laws of society.

In terms of structure, humans are microcosm that can exist only by operating within the Principle of Monad. “*Obeying God, you exist; against God, you perish*”. In such context, God-Man Union means humans must live in accordance with the laws of Heaven.

In terms of position, humans belong to the August Being, which is one of the three Persons of God in the Trinity. If these three Persons separated from each other, the operation of the universe will not be able to achieve harmony, because the human body itself is a micro-Heaven-Earth, a micro-universe. Thus, God–Man Union in terms of position means humans must always maintain the interrelated union between themselves and Non-Being and Supreme Being.

In terms of power, Man can comprehend the Celestial Principle, that is the laws according to which the universe and all beings are operated. God–Man Union in this case means humans must know how to apply the laws of this world to develop themselves, and through which humans develop the world:

*With God-Man Union you surely succeed,
As it flexibly harmonizes differences.
Celestial Principle and human heart are
indistinctive,
Ancient or present, gain or loss, all still longs
for it.²⁴⁸*

If people know how to apply the laws of the world, they will become the most sacred beings in this dual world. It is because they can operate the machinery of creation on any existing beings that they are impacting.

But the reason why humans know how to apply the laws of the outside world is because they innately carry the mystic Essence of the Way, the Impersonal Intrinsic God, the Master of humans. To *master* the laws of the outside world, humans must first awaken their own master. Therefore, to unite with Impersonal Extrinsic God, humans must first successfully unite with Impersonal Intrinsic God.

2.2. Union with Impersonal Intrinsic God

Impersonal Intrinsic God is Spark of Divine Light, or True Nature, or Divine Soul of every human being. Therefore, the general meaning of God – Man Union in this context is as follows: the God component and the Man component in a person’s microcosm must unite

²⁴⁸ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Thiên Lý Đàn, Tuất thời, 20-01 Canh Tuất.

into one. Accomplishing it, that person will attain the Way, i.e., achieve spiritual enlightenment.

In terms of the microcosmic structure of the human body, the soul is the God component, and the body, the Man component. When the soul knows how to be the master to regulate and educate the body, and along with that, when the body knows how to submit to the guidance of the soul, then it is God–Man union between the soul and the body. When uniting with Impersonal Intrinsic God, i.e., the Divine Soul, the human body will become a miraculous structure not different from the mechanism of the Creator in the universe. On the contrary, if a body does not follow the instructions from the Divine Soul, then the life of the person carrying this body is not different from the life of an animal.

In terms of the human position, that position is determined by the human soul. In the human soul there are also two components: God and Man. Belonging to God component is the Original Spirit (that is, the Divine Soul or the True Divinity) because its nature is determined by Heaven; and belonging to the Man component is the True Spirit (that is, the Rational Soul) because it is determined by humans. In this case God–Man Union is the state in which the Original Spirit and True Spirit unite into a single point of Spirit. That is when a person attains the Way.

When returning to the sacred and eternal realm, both True Divinity and True Spirit unite into one and sit on the lotus, which is the merit accomplished by the Living Soul. Such state is

*called the union to return to the origin or the attainment of the sacred position.*²⁴⁹

In terms of human power, humans possess the powers (belonging to the Man component) that come from the Sacred Nature (belonging to the God component). In this context, God–Man Union means looking inward, reflecting, returning to the Sacred Nature, allowing that power to reveal itself.

In short, if one can unite the Man and God components within oneself, one will be able to use the most sacred structure within oneself, determine one’s own divine dignity, release one’s own miraculous capacities, and fulfill the Human Mission. Otherwise, man is only a powerless, positionless creature swept away in the endless cycle of birth and death.

3. UNION BETWEEN MAN AND PERSONAL GOD

3.1. Union with Personal Extrinsic God

Personal Extrinsic God means both the Supreme God and the Divine Beings who represent Supreme God in carrying out His work of salvation.

In terms of structure, humans are microcosm created by Supreme Being according to the model of Heaven–Earth, thanks to which humans can unite with God in their self-architecture. If one receives the true teaching of God, is guided by the Divine Beings, and is determined to do what one has been taught to save oneself, then one must *certainly* become a divine being

²⁴⁹ Đức Bát Nương; đàn cơ dạy nhân viên Bộ Pháp Chánh Hiệp Thiên Đài (thuộc Tòa Thánh Tây Ninh), 15-12 Tân Mão (11-01-1952); Luật Tam Thế.

as the end result of one's path of cultivation. That is God-Man Union in self-liberation:

*Children, you should know that I always say: I am you, and you are Me – Only when I exist that you exist; and only when you exist that Deities, Saints, Immortals, and Buddhas exist – then Man is a microcosm.*²⁵⁰

In terms of position, the gauge of Man *must be* that of God. Because the gauge of God is the virtue of love for life and the love of creation, then human presence in the world must be *the presence of love*. Therefore, God-Man Union in this sense requires humans to be a source of love of Heaven-Earth for life of all creatures:

*You must use the love of creation,
To treat everyone with no discrimination.
Then you no longer create karmic debts,
And no longer slaughter each other.*²⁵¹

In terms of power, humans must cooperate with God to create a power to stabilize the universe:

*As God and Man cooperate, Heaven-Earth is stabilized,
That is the Principle of Cao Dai.*²⁵²

As for the mission, during the universal salvation, up above there is guidance from God and the Divine; down

²⁵⁰ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 03-08 Bính Tý (1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1950), thiên 31 “Luận về Đại Đạo tâm truyền”, tr. 143; i.e., *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “Discussion on the Esotericism”, pp. 174 – 177, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas 2015.

²⁵¹ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Thiên Lý Đàn, Tuất thời, 14-01 Bính Ngọ.

²⁵² Đức Di Lạc Thiên Tôn; Trúc Lâm Thiền Điện, Tuất thời, 17-7 Tân Hợi.

on earth if there is human effort to properly carry out the Divine Will, this world will become Paradise. That is God-Man union in building the world.

*The Church has been formed and the laws have been established. The scriptures, laws, methods established by Supreme God and Buddhas, Saints, Immortals are the **God** component; when applied at the right time in the right place to guide mankind, they are the **Man** component. That is **God-Man Union**.*²⁵³

His Holiness the Spiritual Pope Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo affirmed: *God is not an iconic form of idols, persons, or objects.*²⁵⁴ And He taught: *God does not reside on inanimate objects; instead, He resides in the Heart – the ivory tower of the human soul.*²⁵⁵

Therefore, to search for Personal Extrinsic God, humans should start with Personal Intrinsic God, that is one's own soul, heart, and existence.

3.2. Union with Personal Intrinsic God

Personal Intrinsic God is the True Mind, True Spirit, True Self, or Rational Soul of humans. The existence of Personal Intrinsic God begins with the Self that borrows life to evolve through many higher levels to ultimately become the True Mind. In other words, Personal Intrinsic God exists through different levels of evolution of the mind.

²⁵³ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Ngọc Minh Đài, Tý thời, 04-3 Quý Mão.

²⁵⁴ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tuất Thời, 15-01 Giáp Dần.

²⁵⁵ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Tuất Thời, 15-01 Giáp Dần.

In terms of structure, humans are a part of the holy body of Supreme Being, that means, God and Man are inherently united in the existing structure, forming an indivisible entity. Hence, if each individual knows the existence of “I”, then it is a proof for “I” to know that Heaven-Earth exists, and that the Way exists. If “I” denies Heaven-Earth or denies the Way, then “I” denies itself and thus, denies human existence:

*I exist while Heaven-Earth exists,
From the One Essence we separated.
Without My Self, there would be no Heaven-
Earth,
As Heaven-Earth, the Way, and Man, are only
One.*²⁵⁶

Once knowing that the Self is a part of Heaven-Earth and of the Way, humans should learn to self-cultivate. Thanks to self-cultivation, humans become God, or in other words, Man and God are One:

*Buddha is Supreme Enlightenment,
Humans will be Buddha in the future.
Cultivation is learning to become God,
And not lingering forever in the human
world.*²⁵⁷

In terms of position, the Self should build for itself (belonging to the Man component) a universal standard of value (belonging to the God component). That standard can only be achieved if one is truly sincere and honest, and persistent in self-cultivation. Such standard is the Saint-Esprit within the body:

²⁵⁶ Đức Bát Nhã Thiên Sư; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, Tuất thời, 03-3 Giáp Dần.

²⁵⁷ Đức Lê Văn Duyệt Đại Tiên; Ngọc Minh Đài, Tuất thời, 10-5 Giáp Dần.

*In cultivation you must maintain a firm belief,
Do not think the intangible is different from the
tangible.
Existence turns to non-existence, then non-
existence becomes existence,
Only when the mind is serene can you see the
shadow of Saint-Esprit.*²⁵⁸

The Saint-Esprit in this context is not a supernatural person, but *the intelligence and clairvoyance of the True Spirit within the Self.*

In case the Self has not yet achieved such intelligence and clairvoyance, if one needs to make judgments, one must unify one's position with the position of the entire social community, that means, one must conform to people's heart, because *"To be in harmony with human heart is to be in accord with God's Will."*²⁵⁹

Once the union of human heart is achieved, *"God's Will is determined according to the human heart."*²⁶⁰

In terms of power, the intelligence and clairvoyance of the True Spirit is an internal power, whereas the power of all beings is an external one. To combine these two powers, one must eliminate ego, expand the soul, and spread love everywhere to create fraternity throughout humanity:

*God and you are two but one,
Only then can you understand God's Will.
Children! God is all-encompassing,*

²⁵⁸ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quán; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, Tuất thời, 13-5 Tân Hợi.

²⁵⁹ Đức Quan Âm Bồ Tát; Hoa Linh Nguyệt Điện, Ngọ thời, 14-8 Đinh Mùi.

²⁶⁰ Đức Ngô Minh Chiêu; Minh Đức Tu Viện, Hợi thời, 01-02 Tân Dậu.

*With no discernment of good and bad, nor self
and else.
Do not cling to existence but do open your
heart,
Do not differentiate but do expand your mind.
Spread love to everywhere,
Cherish others and self-forget to carry out
spiritual work.²⁶¹*

In short, recognizing and living with Personal Intrinsic God is **the first step to realizing God-Man Union.**

4. CONCLUSION

“Everything is influenced by God-Man Union.”²⁶² As the law that governs human thought and action in this world, God-Man Union brings the creative, preservative, and destructive powers of God into human history to become the governing and transporting agent for human evolution in the universe.

To unite with Impersonal Extrinsic God, one must first succeed in uniting with Impersonal Intrinsic God. And to unite with Impersonal Intrinsic God, one must unite with Personal Extrinsic God to a certain extent and as a necessary condition. But to unite with Personal Extrinsic God, one must unite with one’s own Personal Intrinsic God, that is to find and follow one’s own heart. Therefore, finding one’s own heart is the first step in the journey of God-Man Union for every person in this world.

²⁶¹ Đức Vô Cực Từ Tôn; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, Hối thời, 14-8 Tân Dậu.

²⁶² Đức Vạn Hạnh Thiên Sư; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, Tuất thời, 15-12 Mậu Thân.

CHAPTER 4.

HUMAN LIFE

SECTION 1. OVERVIEW OF THE
WORLDVIEW OF THE GREAT WAY

SECTION 2. HUMANNESS

SECTION 3. FRATERNITY

SECTION 4. HARMONY

SECTION 1

OVERVIEW OF THE WORDVIEW OF THE GREAT WAY

When the teaching of the Great Way was systematized, the term 'worldview' was used to refer to the part of teaching whose contents are related to the issues of human community.

The worldview of the Great Way refers to human society as the summation of relationships between individuals and individuals, as well as between individuals and society, to determine the roles of community in human evolution and the roles of the individual in social development.

1. COMMENTS ON TEMPORAL LIFE AND HUMAN LIFE

Compared to the entire journey of evolution of a Spark of Divine Light in the universe, the time that a person participates in the worldly life is just a short moment.

Yet, it is a very important phase on the way back to the Origin.

Human society has achieved marvellous advances in science and technology. However, people are immersed in a state of mind–body imbalance, forgetting their human root and divine nature. Besides the achievements of intelligence, human greed and desire has turned life into a sea of grief, a field of fierce struggle. It is because people have accepted the means as objectives and are infatuated with the temporary to miss the permanent.

In other words, within a short lifetime, instead of viewing matter as transient means for temporary use to carry out the noble mission of being human in the evolutionary path, on the contrary, people embrace matter achieved in life; they then have disregarded morality, gradually moving away from humanness, which is the eternal and immortal constituent in every human being; moreover, humanness is the essential core that makes mankind surpass all other species.

For that reason, God opened the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation to ring the bell to wake humans up, bringing them back to an accurate view of life and the clear realization of their true value as Man in the Equal Triad. From there, they can recognize the human mission aiming toward the ultimate goal of spiritual liberation.

*The world is a school for all creatures. Thanks to that school, all beings can develop their intelligence and mental clarity to progress on the noble ladder.*²⁶³

²⁶³ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 22-9 Bính Tý (5 Novembre 1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1956), bài “Tham thiền nhập

The meaning of temporal life is such that human life is not a coincidence. The teaching of the Great Way affirms the Human Mission of human life as follows:

*Coming to this world for a human life,
Each receives from God a Spark of Divine
Light,
To carry a mission into the human world.
Accomplish it, then return.*²⁶⁴

Thus, living in the society with thousands of daily duties, needs, and demands, people must calm their mind to realize the true value of each event in order to take control of their lives and use them for work of evolution.

His Holiness the Zen Master Đức Vạn Hạnh Thiền Sư taught:

The soul that temporarily borrows the body in this corporeal world is just like a snail borrowing hermitage. Do not cling to that shell and hinder the path of evolution. The ultimate goal of practitioners is perfecting oneself to match with the evolutionary level of the Perfect Ones in the Realm of Infinity.

Temporarily borrow the unreal to build the real. Do not think that you only follow the Truth to the extreme and eliminate all the unreal. If so, it is like fishing the moon at the bottom of the water.

định”, tr.40, or *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “Meditation and Contemplation”, pp. 222 – 225, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas, 2015.

²⁶⁴ Đức Vạn Hạnh Thiền Sư; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, Tuất thời, 06-10 Nhâm Tý (11-11-1972); Thánh Giáo Nguyễn Bôn.

The Creator makes it clear that humans in this world must do all the good and bind to the ethical law to serve this world, in order to have a solid foundation as a stepping stone to the realm of truth.²⁶⁵

The Teaching of the Great Way also emphasizes the scheme of “self-help to help others” in the Human Mission. Awakened people should practice self-cultivation to self-advance, concurrently with engaging in secular activities to perfect human society in both temporal and spiritual facets.

Therefore, the worldview of the Great Way clearly indicates this world is the place to promote the Way in which mankind is both the subject and object. The Human Mission is to reveal the Way within oneself to ignite the light in everyone’s heart and brighten up the morality in life. It is humans who determine the fate of heaven or hell in the human world.

2. SOLUTIONS FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE REVIVAL OF SOCIETY

2.1. Restoring Humanness (or Human Root)

Humanness is the origin of human nature, the eternal compassionate nature of humans, which is developed from the Creator’s infinite love for life. Thanks to humanness, people can associate with each other to form social community according to a certain discipline.

The discipline of a society, in essence, is the relationship between individuals in that society. As this

²⁶⁵ Đức Vạn Hạnh Thiền Sư; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, Tuất thời, 08-04 Canh Tuất (12-05-1970); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

is the relationship between humans, it must be based on love. Human rootlessness causes that foundation to collapse, leading to the gradual destruction of social morality and discipline, while also dividing the human community.

The work of transforming a society, indeed, must place the emphasis on restoring the discipline of that society. But this work cannot be accomplished by power or by war; instead, it must only be done through the restoration of humanness. The element that binds people together to form a universal human community in the era of holiness can only be love.

2.2. Creating Human Fraternity

*To create human fraternity is to establish a society that improves all societies in three standards: humanness, peacefulness, and progress.*²⁶⁶

Fraternity is not only a mission of religion but also the common mission of all mankind aiming at the goal of peacefulness and happiness for the survival of all mankind.

Fraternity is the way to resolve all conflicts and entanglements among humans; it is also the indispensable condition to ensure eternal stability for human society.

Yet, to create fraternity, each individual must overcome one's ego to clearly see one's own Origin, which is from God.

²⁶⁶ Đức Lê Văn Duyệt Đại Tiên; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tỷ thời, 14 rạng 15-02 Canh Tuất (21-03-1970); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

2.3. Building Universal Society

Universal society is the ideal human society, in which each member has the common view toward the one origin, which is humanness, thereby levelling out all differences that lead to the discrimination and division in human social community.

From that perspective, people will unify spiritual values while still maintaining national identity. In other words, universal world is a world in which each nation is a unit with the same will and spirit, relying on each other to promote their unique identities, complementing and unifying with each other to form a complete social whole.

His Holiness the Spiritual Pope Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo taught:

If you want to be in harmony with the world, first be in harmony with the society of your people and nation.²⁶⁷

In this sense, universal harmony must be built from human fraternity among peoples, nations, religions, ideological doctrines, and between individuals.

3. CONCLUSION

The worldview of the Great Way, with its spirit of engaging in the world, advocates that life is a place of learning. In this school, people can be forged and moulded to become good and holy. At the same time, people must also try to learn not only the religious or

²⁶⁷ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Nam Thành Thánh Thất, 01-01-Kỷ Dậu (17-02-1969); Thánh Giáo Sư Tập 1968-1969, tr.88-89.

spiritual fields but also extend to all aspects to have sufficient talent and virtue to serve human society.

The worldview of the Great Way also points out that restoring humanness is the key point to remove all boundaries of discrimination and division; from there, people can establish fraternity to build the universal harmony in the Creator's love.

SECTION 2

HUMANNESS

Human social life is an object with a definite essence. That essence is *Humanness*.

1. DEFINITION

His Holiness Đức Đông Phương Chương Quân defined:

*What is **Humanness**? Is it the root of mankind?
-In general, it is.²⁶⁸*

Therefore, it can be broadly defined: **Humanness** means **human root**.

Going into more detail, it can be defined as follows:

²⁶⁸ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quân; Trúc Lâm Thiền Điện, Tuất thời, 17-07 Tân Hợi (06-09-1971); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

First, with the word human as Man – the microcosm, humanness is the source, foundation, core, and model for humans. In this sense, the teaching of the Great Way identifies humanness with human nature (the Original and True Nature) of mankind through the proposition *Human nature is Humanness*.²⁶⁹

Second, with the word human as Humanity – the community life of mankind, humanness is the source, foundation, core, and model for community life of any social scale, from family to all mankind.

The above two definitions of humanness can be synthesized into a single definition: **Humanness is the basis of human nature.**

From there, humanness is the unity between humanity and the universe, realized by mankind. This essence is called the Way in cosmology, True Nature in human philosophy, and humaneness in anthropology.

2. EXPERIMENTAL PHASES OF HUMANNESS

2.1. Phase 1: Humanness through family life

The first phase: Human root is the ancestors, grandparents, and parents. Born from parents and ancestors, people have the duty to remember the merits and achievements of the persons who gave birth to them. Life can only be affectionate and meaningful thanks to the spirit of nostalgia for ancestors and elders. Following the good traditions left by the predecessors to adorn our existing life in the first limited

²⁶⁹ Đạo Học Chi Nam, chương 2, tựa đề của tiết 3.

journey is called “drinking water, remember the source”, or “humans have roots, birds have nests.”²⁷⁰

Every human being has a physical origin, which is one’s parents and further, one’s grandparents and ancestors. But this physical origin is not humanness. It is *the nurturing and educating efforts of the ancestors, grandparents, and parents* are humanness; for it is through these efforts that the family exists as a community. This merit is an embodiment of humanness within the family scope.

Another manifestation is *the spirit of nostalgia for the ancestors and elders of family members*. That spirit not only unites all individuals in the family, but also helps generations of descendants follow the good traditions of their predecessors to use strengths to complement weaknesses, making the present life better and more beautiful.

Thus, in the first phase of this journey, humanness is a spirit to create, preserve, and develop the life of community by harmonizing individuals and generations together in a sincere love within the family.

2.2. Phase 2: Humanness through social life

Going to the second phase – Humanness is originated by society. Society here is divided into two parts, one is the ethnic group, the other is the religious society. There may be many more social forms; but these two are used

²⁷⁰ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quán; Trúc Lâm Thiền Điện, Tuát thời, 17-07 Tân Hợi (06-09-1971); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

*merely to represent a few features to understand the human origin.*²⁷¹

These two social forms are typically selected due to two reasons. First, after the family, national society and religion are the oldest and therefore, the most basic social forms. Second, ethnicity and religion are both social models that are very similar to the model of a family, so they can be seen as natural extensions of the family model.

2.2.1. National society

*In terms of racial and ethnic society, after thousands of years struggling with a life full of suffering and conflicts in exchange for the survival of their lineage, the founding heroes of the country all left behind very heroic and glorious materials as well as spiritual achievements for future generations to follow and inherit. Thus, those who followed felt it was their duty to safeguard the noble **traditions and spirit** left by their ancestors. Even though they must undergo myriads of torment, they still steadfastly maintain that spirit to promote it to future generations, and to move toward private ownership with respect to the multiplying human population on earth.*²⁷²

Each nation has a historical origin from the founding heroes of that nation. But this historical origin is not humanness. It is *the spirit of sacrifice for the nation of*

²⁷¹ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quân; Trúc Lâm Thiền Điện, Tuất thời, 17-07 Tân Hợi (06-09-1971); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

²⁷² Đức Đông Phương Chương Quân; Trúc Lâm Thiền Điện, Tuất thời, 17-07 Tân Hợi (06-09-1971); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

the founding heroes that is humanness in national society.

If preserved and promoted as a tradition, this spirit will become *national character, national spirit*.

2.2.2. Religious society

Taking the religious society of Cao Dai as an example, His Holiness Đức Đông Phương Chương Quân explained humanness in religious society as follows.

*In terms of religious society, it is the hard work and great achievements of those who founded the religion, from the formality to the spiritual revelation and transmission, the teaching, the rules, and their absolute selflessness. Thanks to those people, whose **sacrifices** are ahead of yours, you can now enjoy the nominal achievements. But such achievements in the initiation stage of the Great Way are not necessarily the final success. Therefore, those who follow carry the mission of continuing the task of leading, practicing, circulating, and elucidating the teaching of the new religion, must **voluntarily** continue to follow the momentum of the predecessors in pursuit of successfully preaching the religion and glorifying the name of Supreme God through people on earth.*²⁷³

Each religion has a historical origin, which is the founder of that religion. However, this historical origin is not humanness within the scope of religion. It is *the spirit of absolute selflessness*, that builds the firm

²⁷³ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quân; Trúc Lâm Thiền Điện, Tuát thời, 17-07 Tân Hợi (06-09-1971); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

foundation for the religion, is humanness in religious society.

Thanks to that spirit, the Great Way is elucidated through the founding of the religion by the Patriarch. Also, thanks to that spirit, every religion is an embodiment of the Great Way.

2.2.3. Humanness in social life

Through the meaning of humanness in national and religious societies, it is possible to draw a more general concept that is applicable to all forms of society as follows: **Humanness is the spirit of selflessness, egolessness, sacrificing oneself out of love for social community.**

Every social community is born from the spirit of selflessness and egolessness in the founders of that community. This spirit should be based on an immense compassion, thanks to which people can be gathered to form society.

Such a combination of the spirit of selflessness and compassion forms the basis for human nature in all forms of society. This spirit and this love not only have a sacred value for all mankind but also contain the moral identity of each society. Any society that loses this spirit or this love will become a *rootless society*. On the contrary, if this foundation is preserved and moulded as a model in each member of society, if it is educated and passed down through all generations, then this society is a *humane society*.

2.3. Phase 3: Humanness through humanity life

This is the phase of universal humanity. Therefore, entering this phase, all societies in the world must

contribute good values in their traditions to build the common civilization for the whole mankind.

When God creates all beings, including mankind, under His feet, before Him, humans are always siblings. Because of the same nature and the same essence, human life in the spiritual aspects, such as greed and desires, good-bad, angel-evil, right-wrong, are distinguished by the human mind. No matter here or elsewhere, underdeveloped people judge good-bad, right-wrong based on their underdeveloped thoughts; and civilized people judge good-bad, right-wrong through their intelligent thinking. Though the peoples on earth are differentiated and settled in different frameworks, locations, and social circumstances, those distinctions are not the reasons for mankind to forget their origin is one, and forget their nature is benevolent like God, to mutually protect and support each other, as well as to care for and maintain the stability of inferior species whose fates depend on the intellectual vision of mankind.²⁷⁴

To achieve universal humanity, each society should preserve and contribute its value of truth, goodness, and beauty that have its own unique identities, while filtering out all the exclusive concepts of family, ethnicity, religion, ... Therefore, in the common life of humanity, safeguarding humanness means returning to the moral spirit and preserving common patterns for all mankind.

²⁷⁴ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quán; Trúc Lâm Thiền Điện, Tuất thời, 17-07 Tân Hợi (06-09-1971); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

*Preserving humanness is returning to the moral spirit, remembering the shapes and models for humanity as a whole.*²⁷⁵

At this phase, humanness is God Nature, Heaven Conscience, True Suchness of mankind. It is the self-existing and eternal essence in every human being, endowed by God equally between one individual and another, regardless of their spiritual foundations and/or levels of evolution. Clearly, humanness at this phase determines in each individual the universal, equal, and unique human nature.

2.4. Humanness across all space and time

The above three phases, from family to society and to mankind, are the three stages of experiencing *the spirit of selflessness and egolessness as the source of humanity*. The endpoint of the third phase, that is, the common life of mankind, is also the starting point because it is there that people can find on themselves as well as in fellow human beings the inherent nature of benevolence of God.

This spirit, regardless of time and space, is worshipped as the epitome of human nature. Therefore, in the teaching of the Great Way, people with that spirit are called *eternal persons* or *humane persons*.

²⁷⁵ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quán; Trúc Lâm Thiền Điện, Tuát thời, 17-07 Tân Hợi (06-09-1971); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

3. THE ROAD TO RESTORING HUMANNESS

3.1. *Why should humanness be restored?*

Humanness is the Principle, the Way, that God has given to each individual to join hands in building community life. Thanks to this Principle, since primitive times humans have been able to form societies and survive through drastic changes in nature.

But after thousands of years being developed towards the material-spiritual imbalance of human society, rootlessness has gradually appeared from individuals, to families, and then gradually spread through social communities, and finally engulfed the entire human community.

In current society, internecine war partly demonstrates the obscure of human nature and separation from humanness. Faced together, people are not moved by the suffering of opposing people. Humans are reeling amid a whirlwind with an inhumane nature. They are blind and deaf to all the sounds of conscience and humaneness. They are intoxicated by the madness of instinct and ambition; and they assimilate the righteous man with that dark and sinful person.

That is why humans cannot see and realize how to open a way out. Only if there are people who calmly look and think, then the issues will become clear, then humans will realize the collapse that is gradually burying them in the dust of eternity.

In addition, non-religious teaching

organizations have also contributed to pushing people away from each other to immerse themselves in the abyss of sin and internecine destruction.²⁷⁶

Thus, for mankind to have a peaceful and holy future, restoration of humanness is the most urgent work.

3.2. The Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation is the path of restoring humanness

Restoring humanness to mankind is the main reason God opened the Third Salvation.

*Over the past few thousands or hundreds of years, human evolution has gone deeper and deeper into the end of the cycle of three eras. Therefore, Supreme God, also named Cao Dai Great Immortal, came in the Third Universal Salvation to elucidate the teaching of the Great Way in the oneness, and **bring mankind back to the revival of humanness** so as to recreate the universe and establish the Superior and Virtuous Era.²⁷⁷*

To achieve the goal of “Harmony in Secular Way, Liberation in Spiritual Way”, the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation must restore humanness to all mankind. The steps of cultivation in the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation are a very specific plan to restore humanness, because these steps lead mankind step by step through the Five Religious Branches of the Great Way to return to the Origin of

²⁷⁶ Đức Lê Văn Duyệt Đại Tiên; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tý thời, 14 rạng 15-02 Canh Tuất (21-03-1970); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

²⁷⁷ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tuất thời, 12-02 Nhâm Tý (26-03-1972); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

True Man, of the Man with Deity-Saint-Immortal-Buddha nature.

*What do the Supreme God, Buddhas, and Immortals earnestly teach humans? And where do they guide mankind to? Do they teach mankind to become virtuous, to fulfill duty to humanity, to live in the Creator's love, and to guide them back to **humanness, the origin of True Man, of the Man with Deity-Saint-Immortal-Buddha nature**? That is as clear as the sun, as bright as the moon, with nothing vague or hazy.²⁷⁸*

4. THE PEOPLE OF VIETNAM AND THE MISSION OF RESTORING HUMANNESS

This period is the period of the end of the world, the Inferior Era, and the regeneration of the universe. Thus, the Supreme God, Immortals, and Buddhas themselves must come to earth to open the Way, so as to bring back the celestial destiny to mankind, to establish peace to the country that Vietnamese people must be the first to practice.²⁷⁹

How to carry out this mission? The solution proposed by the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation is: *Revival of the spirit of the nation's ancient traditions is linked to the revival of human civilization, to build an*

²⁷⁸ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tuất thời, 25-02 Kỷ Mùi (22-03-1979); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

²⁷⁹ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Vạn Quốc Tự, Tuất thời, 20-11 Ất Ty (12-12-1965); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

*eternally peaceful era for mankind and create the paradise of ultimate bliss on earth.*²⁸⁰

Vietnam today is inherently *a nation with a glorious culture from ancient times, built on the foundation of the earliest humane civilization of mankind.*²⁸¹ Throughout its history, the Vietnamese people has not only preserved their identity of love and peace but also surpasses other peoples in faith, piety, and devotion to God as well as to the Divine. Supreme God Himself confirmed it as follows:

*You are the Vietnamese people, like other peoples born and raised on this earth. The Creator's love is given to you equally to His other children. But your people have suffered too much. Your country and nation have been trampled for a long time. Yet, your people are superior to them in faith, in piety, in admiration of God and the Perfect Ones. Your love is not lacking, your peace inspiration is abundant; hence, your people is blessed to be the first nominee in the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation.*²⁸²

When accepting the religions of the First and the Second Universal Salvations, the Vietnamese people has grasped the basic moral spirit of the Patriarchs to promote humanness in their Vietnam nationality.

To this day, the Vietnamese people are influenced by the moral spirit of the Patriarchs.

²⁸⁰ Đức Trần Hưng Đạo; Thiên Lý Đàn, Tuất thời, 10-04 Ất Tỵ (10-05-1965); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

²⁸¹ Đức Vạn Hạnh Thiền Sư; Trúc Lâm Thiền Điện, Tuất thời, 30-08 Tân Hợi (18-10-1971); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

²⁸² Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Thiên Lý Đàn, Tuất thời, 30-10 Mậu Thân (19-12-1968); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

*Truth, beauty, and goodness have permeated their nationality. Thus, through thousands of years, although there have been countless ups and downs of success and failure, the Vietnamese people still hold up the inherent traditions, still immerse in the profound philosophies and religious teachings. So, they are heroic in harmony, brave in peace and order, and only use celestial nature to implement celestial destiny.*²⁸³

Therefore, the Vietnamese people have not only accumulated the essentials and principles in a large variety of teachings, but they also know how to apply that knowledge so effectively, to the point that today they can bring these experiences to solving common problems of humanity.

*Although since ancient times there have been many scriptures and many religious founders, at present the essentials of those teachings that are practical and appropriate to this period can only be found here in the country of Vietnam.*²⁸⁴

Nevertheless, in this time of the Degenerate Era when the moral spirit throughout humanity is eroded, neither can the Vietnamese people evade the human rootlessness that has been spreading globally.

The Dragon-Fairy tradition from thousands of years ago has been gradually mixed with the

²⁸³ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Vạn Quốc Tự (Chon Lý Đản), Tuất thời, 20-11 Ất Tỵ (12-12-1965); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

²⁸⁴ Đức Ngôi Hai Giáo Chủ Ngô Minh Chiêu; Bát Nhã Thiên Đường (Long Hải), Tuất thời, 12-05 Giáp Dần (01-07-1974); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

*foreign mundane nuances, lacking the glorious and heroic quality of the past.*²⁸⁵

Although the Vietnamese people cannot escape the common rootlessness of all humanity, Supreme God mercifully considered the moral capital this people have saved, as well as the disadvantages this nation has suffered and endured in its history, to entrust it with the mission of the Third Universal Salvation. Thanks to that great blessing, the Vietnamese people have avoided the disaster of losing their country, as revealed by His Holiness the Zen Master Đức Vạn Hạnh Thiền Sư:

*Coming to this term, Vietnam is blessed. God showers grace and bestows mystical miracles to this world, so that humans can fully understand the mysterious plan of Heaven-Earth, revive the virtuous life, harmonize with the Divine to evolve into the serene celestial sphere. Also in this period, the Vietnamese people were facing the loss of their country, destruction of their families, and miserable suffering. Through many decades of chaos, the Vietnamese people fought and killed each other. If there is no salvation from God, let Me²⁸⁶ tell you clearly, there will be no land left to live in, when the entire Vietnamese people do not cut ties with the immoral tendency.*²⁸⁷

²⁸⁵ Đức Lê Văn Duyệt Đại Tiên; Ngọc Minh Đài, Tuất thời, 22-05 Kỷ Dậu (06-07-1969); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

²⁸⁶ Translator's note: 'Me' in this passage is His Holiness the Zen Master Đức Vạn Hạnh Thiền Sư who identifies himself as the Humble Monk.

²⁸⁷ Đức Vạn Hạnh Thiền Sư; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, Tuất thời, 09-04 Kỷ Dậu (24-05-1969); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

That is first a support specifically for the Vietnamese people. But immediately after that, it is also the beginning of the much broader support for all humanity.

*People do not know that God brought the Way to Vietnam to provide support for all beings in the Third Era to regenerate the world, so human spirit is no longer obscured in superstition, and the material cannot dominate the spiritual.*²⁸⁸

Therefore, since the day Supreme God came to open the Great Way, Vietnam has become *a race that, despite its less dense population in a small territory, has crystalized and gathered quite a few Original Men and Women whose past lives had been the apostle of the Three Ancient Religions.*²⁸⁹

Due to this mission of restoring humanness, the Divine often urge Cao Dai followers of Vietnamese blood as follows:

The Great Way is preached not only for one nation or one people. But first, it should be noted about the good fortune of the Vietnamese people. Thus, if there is one person who does not know the truth of the Great Way, then Vietnam is not yet at peace; and if there is one person who has not learned the truth of the Great Way, then the Vietnamese people are still rootless. Do whatever possible to soon be at

²⁸⁸ Đức Trần Hưng Đạo; Thiên Lý Đàn, Tuất thời, 15-07 Ất Tỵ (11-08-1965); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

²⁸⁹ Đức Bạch Liên Tiên Trưởng; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tuất thời, 10-10 Canh Tuất (08-11-1970); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

*peace to progress in time for the final Dragon-Flower Contest.*²⁹⁰

Therefore, the future and mission of the Vietnamese people depend greatly on the success or failure in the process of their own restoration of humanness.

*Where are you going, Vietnam?
Back to the original humanness.
On the stretch of your nation here
Do not let anyone cuts or divides your race,
Always hold up the moral spirit,
And promote it throughout the globe.*²⁹¹

5. CONCLUSION

*Let's return mankind to the humane life. All activities should be aimed at **humanness**, at the **sacred affection** that Supreme God has for each human being.*²⁹²

Vietnamese people who have identified themselves as Cao Dai followers must be determined to self-cultivate so as to *speak out the invisible voice to gradually convey it into the heart of mankind, to be the driving force to transform humanity, and to exhibit the spirit of confidence and self-advancement on the path to*

²⁹⁰ Đức Lê Văn Duyệt Đại Tiên; Ngọc Minh Đài, Tuất thời, 10-05 Canh Tuất (13-06-1970); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

²⁹¹ Đức Phan Thanh Giản; Trúc Lâm Thiền Điện, Ngọ thời, 08-04 Tân Hợi (02-05-1971); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

²⁹² Đức Lê Văn Duyệt Đại Tiên; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tý thời, 14 rạng 15-02 Canh Tuất (21-03-1970); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

*restoring humanness and reviving the virtuous truth in
human life.*²⁹³

²⁹³ Đức Phan Thanh Giản; Trúc Lâm Thiền Điện, Ngọ thời, 08-04 Tân Hợi (02-05-1971); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

SECTION 3

FRATERNITY

As humanity becomes more and more crowded, life becomes more and more complicated. For thousands of years, the needs for food, clothing, and land; conflicts over fame, profit, and rights; differentiation in awareness and ideology; discrimination of race, skin or hair color, and religion; and even ignorance in identifying problems; all have made the already fierce social relationships even more tense, and have led people into conflicts from narrow range between groups to wars of all kinds in the fields of politics, military, economics, religion, ..., in each region or globally.

Up to now, all the material forces that people use in these conflicts are still only temporary measures and cannot solve all the problems of humanity. Neither can they help people be truly at peace and progress in life. The serious separation between fellow human beings

still weighs heavily on the psychology of races, genders, and even religions.

In such background, fraternity is an urgent need for human social life.

1. MEANING OF FRATERNITY IN THE GREAT WAY FOR THE THIRD UNIVERSAL SALVATION

Mankind is currently in the Inferior Era, the period of intense struggle that potentially leads to the complete destruction. To preserve life, mankind cannot help but pay attention to creating a peaceful environment. Fraternity is a condition to ensure the stability and sustainability of all organizations and societies.

Right from the beginning of the Way, Supreme God has affirmed his intention:

*I come to establish the Third Universal Salvation just for the word Fraternity.*²⁹⁴

*Tranquillity and peace are the two qualities I use to cultivate the Way.*²⁹⁵

The meaning of fraternity in human society is not to coldly dispute, not to win or lose, not to be jealous or rival each other, but to rely on, support, and look

²⁹⁴ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Chùa Gò Kén, 12-01 Đinh Mão (13 Février 1927); *Thánh Ngôn Hiệp Tuyển Q.2*, tr.26, i.e., *Collection of Selected CaoDai Holy Messages*, séance on the 12th day of the first month of Đinh Mão year (February 13, 1927), p. 186, trans. Hum Bui and Hong Bui, CreateSpace, 2015.

²⁹⁵ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 03-03-1927; *Thánh Ngôn Hiệp Tuyển Q.2*, tr.32, i.e., *Collection of Selected CaoDai Holy Messages*, séance on the 30th day of the first month of Đinh Mão year (March 3, 1927), p. 195, trans. Hum Bui and Hong Bui, CreateSpace, 2015.

forward to each other. It is so because in this dual world no one is perfect. Differences in strength and superiority between individuals, groups, religions, peoples, whether it is material or spiritual, need to be reconciled and proportionately compensated for each other in the love of fellow human beings, sharing the common origin, to co-exist and evolve.

In general, fraternity must be shown in all aspects, in all areas of life, from individuals to families, nations, and humanity; from science to politics, and religion; from art and culture to industry and agriculture, ... But first and foremost is fraternity in spirit. If the spirit is passionately peaceful but is not united, it will soon be united. On the other hand, when the spirit is not fraternal, even if there is unity, sooner or later it will disband. Her Holiness Đức Vân Hương Thánh Mẫu has raised a general principle:

*Fraternity is love, peace, harmony, the ability to get along with everyone (...). Fraternity is the pinnacle of love, nothing more, nothing less, no deviation, no self no non-self, no skin or hair color discrimination, no religious differentiation; it is just the ultimate common goal to bring about a happy and peaceful existence for everyone living in the world, without any racial discrimination.*²⁹⁶

Therefore, fraternity is not only the solution proposed by the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation but also the general direction for everyone:

The sacred purpose that has been and is respectfully close to the aspiration of any

²⁹⁶ Đức Vân Hương Thánh Mẫu; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1968-1969, tr.18.

*principle is to fraternize humanity for evolution.*²⁹⁷

The power of fraternity and mutual love is extremely great. Not only does it help mankind escape the fiery blaze of boiling oil to quickly progress in both material and spiritual life, but it can also bring people come to unity with God. In other words, fraternity is the foundation of all success:

*In fraternity, we can even drain the sea.*²⁹⁸

2. THE THREE ELEMENTS OF FRATERNITY

Fraternity cannot be a dream in thought or theory; instead, it must achieve practical and useful goals.

Fraternity is expressed in both human and spiritual aspects, based on the three elements that accompany and complement each other: humanness, peacefulness, and progress. These three elements form a strong foundation; missing any of these elements, fraternity will not be perfect.

2.1. Humanness, the most fundamental element

Today's society with its fierce wars and mutual destruction has partly shown the obscure of human nature and its separation from humanness.

Faced together, people are not moved by the suffering of opposing people. They have no love for each other, because they have lost the love and other sacred

²⁹⁷ Đức Lê Văn Duyệt Đại Tiên; Thánh Giáo Sư Tập 1968-1969, tr.130.

²⁹⁸ Đức Diêu Trì Kim Mẫu; Nam Thành Thánh Thất, Tuất; 25-05 nhuận Tân Hợi (17-07-1971); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

affection that existed when they separated from God. The essence of the problem lies in the fact that each person sees the other as a different enemy, without realizing the connection between people with the same essence of Heaven-Earth, and without realizing that all religions have the same origin.

Building a humane life is bringing people back to their original root. His Holiness Đức Lê Đại Tiên taught:

Mankind has now lost so much of their spiritual fulcrum. Human trust is crumbling. The basics of human nature have departed. That is why fraternity must recreate the humane values to guide people back to the life conforming to the true nature of mankind.

Understanding, acting, servicing, and serving, if they are not part of humaneness, will lead to the most dire consequences for society. Humanness has brilliance, people feel human. Regardless of realms or national circumstances, spiritual life must rely more and more on humanness. Only on this basis, religious dogma would not fall into illusory ambiguity.²⁹⁹

Therefore, all human activity must retain its root: humanness and human love.

2.2. Peacefulness, the element toward a life of peace and joy in both material and spiritual aspects

The first purpose of the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation is to stabilize the material life to the point that there are no more hungry people, no more

²⁹⁹ Đức Lê Văn Duyệt Đại Tiên; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1970-1971, tr.30-32.

illiterate people, and no more aggressive people. In other words, everyone's right to live as a human being must be respected in both aspects of economics and social security.

When the society is stable and peaceful, the actual daily life no longer has worries about food, clothing, housing, and employment; the spirit is no longer tense because of fear, terrorism, threats, violence, wars, ...; it means that people have gradually moved toward happiness and have condition to make life more and more progressive.

The closest target of the fraternity problem is to improve the current society, on how individuals create their own fraternity (...)

A possible way is the one that is compatible with humaneness and agreeable with society. People only accept it when they feel their spirituality and life are practically secured in that society.³⁰⁰

2.3. Progress, the element promoting the flourishing of life in both material and spiritual aspects.

Life does not stop at peacefulness but must always improve according to the law of evolution. Progress will be the driving force that brings mankind closer to the perfection in all directions of spiritual and material life.

People do not only satisfy with plentiful food and warm clothing; but they also want to eat delicious food, wear decent clothing, and enjoy the amenities and comfort brought by science and technology.

³⁰⁰Đức Lê Văn Duyệt Đại Tiên; Thánh Giáo Sưu Tập 1970-1971, tr. 30-31.

They do not satisfy only because their bodies are secure, their dignity is respected, their society is in order; but they must also promote the humane values so that Man is on par with Heaven-Earth in the Triad.

In other words, there must be harmony between science and religion, between spiritual and material, so that the people of society are naturally perfect, and no longer feel constrained by laws or punishment. At that point, fraternity is fully established.

3. WAYS AND METHODS OF IMPLEMENTING FRATERNITY

None of the conditions that compel people to devote themselves to fraternity is one way or another. But all human conditions are symbolic of fraternity.³⁰¹

Establishing fraternity requires the leaders, those who represent God to transform the world, a lot of patience to overcome all ambitions and hindrances that compromise fraternalism.

Also said before, one conscious person is not yet all conscious to determine the outcome of the issue. It is important to evoke common sense in everyone and agree to work together to open up the source for the endless stream of salvation to circulate.³⁰²

Religions will greatly contribute to the realization of fraternity by teaching people to do good. This is a

³⁰¹ Đức Lê Văn Duyệt Đại Tiên; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1970-1971, tr. 30-31.

³⁰² Đức Lê Văn Duyệt Đại Tiên; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1970-1971, tr. 30-32.

measure of guiding people to act according to their conscience so that the seeds of morality can multiply more and gradually spread to all mankind.

*Teaching people to do good is to bring moral knowledge to the conversion of people's hearts...*³⁰³

In other words, teaching people to do good is an education in humanness, human nature, and love.

*Only piety and love can convey and realize the realm of peacefulness.*³⁰⁴

Therefore, it is necessary to *reform religious consciences and beliefs in general to be in tune with the teaching. Education on humanness leading to true fraternity must be built as soon as possible.*³⁰⁵

In short, every method is based on humanness, love toward fellow human beings, and requires that national and religious leaders have enough wisdom and compassion to resolve worldly issues in a rational and humane way.

Standing in the spirit of the mission of the Third Universal Salvation, it can be said as follows:

If fraternity is established, the universal harmony has a chance to be formed. If fraternity is established, the mission to saving all living beings will be accomplished. If fraternity is

³⁰³ Đức Quan Thánh Đế Quân; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1968-1969, tr.188.

³⁰⁴ Đức Đông Phương Lão Tổ; Trúc Lâm Thiền Điện, Ngọ, 18-07 Kỷ Dậu (30-08-1969); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

³⁰⁵ Đức Lê Văn Duyệt Đại Tiên; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1968-1969, tr.130.

*established, the torch of morality will be illuminating to the ends of the earth.*³⁰⁶

³⁰⁶ Đức Lê Văn Duyệt Đại Tiên; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1970-1971, tr.29.

SECTION 4

HARMONY

Cosmology of the Great Way has stated that the most important point of human beings at the cosmic level is God Nature, the essence of the Spark of Divine Light, which is identical to that of the Globe of Divine Light. Thanks to it, Man is seen as an equal entity with the Creator in terms of his position ahead of all beings and in terms of the prospect of evolution to the level of omnipotent perfection in the future.

Humans have been asserted the potential to attain enlightenment and become eternal in Heaven-Earth universe. But in earthly life, nature, history, and the process of human development over many generations in different regions of the globe have inculcated in human heart many different imprints, leading to inhumane discrimination and oppression. On the verge of progress, whether intentionally or unintentionally,

human ingenuity and skill have turned to divide and trample on fellow human beings. People lose their own virtues and abandon their rightful places on the path of evolution; sooner or later they will destroy themselves, if not improve.

Therefore, entering today's era of extreme division in mankind, the worldview of the Great Way raises the ideals of harmony as a remedy for the severe illness of discrimination and division.

In the Classics of Change scripture, the commentary on the hexagram Fellowship (☵☲) says:

“Dignified man, who successfully carry out the policy of universal harmony in the people, can do great work. Thanks to his wisdom and courage, he righteously corresponds and harmonizes with like-minded people”.

“(…) Trinh Di's commentary says: People have different will, but the Principle is only one. Dignified man knows the Principle well; so, he can understand the will of people. The Holy One regards the will of millions of people as one, merely because He comprehends the Principle.

He who is literally clear can understand the Principle and thus, know the meaning of harmony; he is also strong and wise and thus, can overcome his own ego, that is, to forgo his personal interests and focus on the matters of all his fellow citizens, so that he can accomplish the Way of Harmony. Then he can be righteous, in accordance with the motion of Heaven and the will of people in all over the world.”³⁰⁷

³⁰⁷ Commentary on the hexagram Fellowship.

1. MEANING OF THE GOAL OF HARMONY

2.1. The Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation has outlined a direction of harmony in the origin of mankind.

The Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation has set the goal of harmony not just to raise a banner of solidarity in the face of human division, but to define the equality between humans based on the oneness in their essence.

Every human being from birth has the same capital of humanness; thus, everyone is entitled to the right to live and an equal right to evolve. Anyone whose treatment disrespects the humanness of other people also loses one's own human nature.

2.2. Harmony does not require the stereotyping of every form of human civilization, culture, or thought.

The colorful human nuances of all peoples are rooted in humanness. The spirit of harmony is the acceptance and appreciation of the values and of the works toward truth-goodness-beauty, regardless of wherever on earth they come from.

Harmony does not mean erasing the cultural identities of all peoples to create a world without differences. According to the teaching of the Great Way, harmony is unity in diversity, the unity of the human spirit based on the recognition of the existence of human nature (humanness) in the diverse manifestations of ethnicity.

2.3. Harmony is the goal of Human Mission.

The meaning of human life is to serve others, to service society, race, nation, and human world. Noble people claim that their mission as human beings is to build the virtuous life, in which all activities and aspects express equality, love, and humanness.

Everyone has the common mission, which is: to self-cultivate and practice the Way, to make a name for it, to implement it to save mankind from the sinful and devilish state to the moral and virtuous path, so as to transform the current world into the Paradise of eternal bliss and restore the Superior Era of Saintliness. By then, people would love each other like siblings and treat each other in mutual support.³⁰⁸

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF UNIVERSAL SOCIETY AND UNIVERSAL PEOPLE

Speaking of humanity, there are two aspects to consider: social and personal.

2.1. Universal society

Universal society is a society *without discrimination, in accordance with the trend of progressive civilization;*³⁰⁹ *it is a realm of peacefulness, earthly happiness, and worldly transcendence.*³¹⁰

³⁰⁸ Đức Ngôi Hai Giáo Chủ Ngô Minh Chiêu; Cao Đài Hội Thánh (Dương Đông Phú Quốc), Tuất thời, 14-03 Đinh Mùi (23-04-1967); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

³⁰⁹ Đức Cao Triều Phát; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, 11-02 nhuận At Sửu (31-03-1985); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

³¹⁰ Đức Cao Triều Phát; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, 11-02 nhuận At Sửu (31-03-1985); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

2.1.1. A society without discrimination and division

Universal society still recognizes the existence of independent differences and tendencies. However, such differences do not lead to conflicts; instead, it is these compensatory exchanges that enrich the variety of tendencies present in the community.

If people aim for a common direction accepted by the majority to bring peacefulness, happiness, and progress to all mankind, even if they start differently, then all different tendencies will converge into the ideal of universal harmony.

Therefore, universal society is a whole composed of many components: peoples, religions, ideological tendencies. The spirit of universal harmony is a necessary premise to bring together all the possibilities of all constituents and to organize them in a harmonious order, to optimally flourish the power of humanness in human community so as to revive and develop the world in which this community lives.

2.1.2. Universal society is a progressive civilized society.

For the common civilization of mankind to achieve a perfect development, all nations recognize the need for inter-regional and international development regardless of race, politics, or religion. Thus, the goal of universal harmony promotes the spirit of multinational cooperation. The key element for the implementation of universal harmony is cooperation.

Next, all achievements of human civilization must be universalized throughout the world. Discoveries that have practical value to protect the good life of people

must become common works. Advanced countries have an obligation to translate essential inventions into common means for all inhabitants of the planet to enjoy. That is the Principle of Universal Use in the teaching of the Great Way.

But the most fundamental point of the mission of implementing a universal society in accordance with the trend of progressive civilization is to make sure that every person in each nation is a civilized person who advances in knowledge, thought, and technology. The progress should really occur in human mind, not in enjoyment. It is this fundamental point that brings about freedom and true equality in every social community and between nations.

2.1.3. Universal society is the realm of peacefulness, earthly happiness, and worldly transcendence.

Around the world, the ideal of universal harmony has been promoted many times. But until now, poverty, hunger, and war have continued in many places. Therefore, a universal society must show a peaceful life.

For people to live peacefully, they do not require extravagant wealth, but first they need to have a career, a long-term self-sufficient job. Of course, universality means sharing and support. But that is only temporary. Universality must bring about the possibilities of self-development in each person in the State governmental policy of equality and freedom. *Straightforwardly speaking, let's universalize the socio-economy of humanity.*³¹¹

³¹¹ Đạo Học Chi Nam, chương 4, tiết 3, mục 3.

But according to the teaching of the Great Way, mankind should move towards comprehensive evolution. Peaceful life on earth needs to be built on spiritual basis. If human life only aims at material affluence, people will be dominated to the point of material dependence. They frame themselves in the finite human life with the multitude of consequences, without unleashing their innate point of Divinity. On the contrary, by spiritually self-enlightening, people can be at ease in the face of all external developments. That enlightenment is the ultimate source of worldly peace and transcendence.

Therefore, the ideals of universal harmony are not extreme in terms of material life or spiritual life.

Like it or not, the spiritual and material go hand in hand, two aspects in one person. Leaving the material, there is no spiritual; leaving the spiritual, there is no material. Therefore, the Mission of Great Vehicle is to realize the salvation of sentient beings from all sufferings, and to engage themselves in human society (...) Essence and application co-manifest, symbol and instrument co-exist, spiritual and material co-operate. It is all perfect in a free and equanimous life.³¹²

2.2. Universal people

To have universal society, there must first be universal people. Universal people are those who have the spirit of universal harmony, which means:

³¹² Đức Quan Thế Am Bồ Tát; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, 15-07 Đinh Tỵ (29-08-1977); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

They must be aware of the same nature, the same essence, the common origin, the identical characteristics shared between mankind and Heaven-Earth as well as all beings, to recognize the role and mission of Man in creating a peaceful state for all beings in general, and for mankind in particular.

They must be aware of the right to live equally in the human community so as not to bias; and they must know the obligation to help each other to progress, as well as to share and support each other so that everyone can contribute to the common progress of the whole society.

They must aim toward the common ideal, the comprehensive evolution to sublime into omnipresent people, capable of transcending the world.

In short, universal people are those who live according to their true identity, conscious of their mission of establishing fraternity in human society.

3. REALIZING UNIVERSAL HARMONY

3.1. Strategy

The status of current human community is created by human will. Therefore, people must be self-aware that only they can solve their own problems.

To realize the goal of universal harmony, right in the current society full of division and conflict, it is necessary to build a collective of people who truly live in the universal ideology. Such a collective is the point of mystic power that serves as the driving force for establishing fraternity. It is this exemplary collective that is the center for unleashing energies to launch the

human community in the direction of realizing the universal harmony.

Establishing such a universal collective is indeed building the entity of world redemption for the third era. On the standpoint of the Third Universal Salvation, this entity can be successfully built only on God-Man Union and on the realization that all religions are of the same Truth. As long as religions are torches that illuminate the moral path of the world, stop clinging to semblance, put an end to self-pride, and unite in the ideology of the Great Way (which is saving and guiding mankind to the one God), then the single entity of world redemption can be achieved.

3.2. Implementation Progress

According to the teaching of the Great Way, the creation of the universal world is carried out in four phases:

3.2.1. Phase 1: Harmony in theory

This is the phase of spreading the idea of harmony to build the universal ideology throughout humanity. Supreme God taught:

Here I explain clearly. The first phase is HARMONY IN THEORY. I had to set up an assembly of people to spread ideas throughout humanity so everyone knew that the universal period would be unified and reverted to the Origin, in order to reach the natural state of ultimate bliss. Then the leaders in this period must be perfectly virtuous, with sufficient energy to circulate everywhere to sow the idea of

*harmony in human mind (...)*³¹³

3.2.2. Phase 2: Harmony in action

In this phase, divinely appointed missionaries must attain self-enlightenment, so they can directly communicate with God and apply mystic power to improvise in all situations while establishing human fraternity. For humanity, this is the phase of effort to make reconciliations between opposing tendencies and find common ground among heterogeneous trends, to escape extinction in a period when human history is transitioning from the Inferior Era of Destruction to the Superior Era of Saintliness.

Harmony in action also signifies the ability to compose one's mind and receive God in one's Heart, so God can bless him/her to sustain through tribulations. God is the only Supreme Compassionate Being and gives his love equally to all beings. Then each sentient being must also exert one's own indiscriminatory love for all sufferers, to realize the universal function of one's charity inherited from God.

Now that humanity is amid a scene of flying sand, rolling rock, swirling wind, and roaring dust, it is necessary to tell them to close their eyes, compose their mind without wavering, and fully concentrate in the thought that I am still in their heart, always sustain them, and remind them to have special affection for those who are in similar situations as theirs. That means

³¹³ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Vĩnh Nguyên Tự, 01-03 Kỷ Mão (1939).

*people must go from HARMONY IN ACTION to gradually transition to harmony in ideology.*³¹⁴

3.2.3. Phase 3: Harmony in ideology

As a result of the above phases, nations around the world start pursuing the universal political line to build prosperous countries, equal peoples, and peaceful humanity. Universalism becomes the banner that has been highly raised in the world.

Universalism will be first manifested in the One Church according to the tradition that Supreme God gave to his Apostles since the inauguration of the Great Way:

*As humanity has fraternized, universal harmony becomes a doctrine. Each of you has been serenely stable. Then one day I will choose your senior brothers for the right to form the Church and reformulate my traditional policies that, in the past, I gave you a map and you knelt in front of Me to receive it (...).*³¹⁵

3.2.4. Phase 4: Harmony in formation

Harmony in formation is the final phase in the process of realizing universal humanity, so that living the Way and living the life become a whole on the evolutionary path of all human beings.

As you have united in the Holy See, I will preside the Congress of All Beings to arrange the body of the Way to suit the level of humanity, and I will make it even more noble

³¹⁴ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Vĩnh Nguyên Tự, 01-03 Kỷ Mão (1939).

³¹⁵ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Vĩnh Nguyên Tự, 01-03 Kỷ Mão (1939).

*than it was, to pass down for millions of years.*³¹⁶

This is the period when all social activities, all aspects of spiritual and/or material life in a family, in a country, and in all nations fully exhibit the universal characteristics. All individuals and all peoples enjoy full human rights, complete freedom, and worldly peace in the common cause and achievements of human civilization.

4. CONCLUSION

In this dual world, it would be unrealistic to perceive universal society as a realm in which all differences are levelled, all local identities are eliminated, leaving only a uniformity in all aspects, in all tendencies, and in all values. The teaching of the Great Way affirms that the fundamental point in the universal problem is to break all attachments in human thought so as to go beyond one's ego to integrate with the Great Self. Mankind can only meet and agree with each other thanks to their unique and universal essence, which is humanness. Upholding a unique ideal for mankind that lacks humanness can never achieve universal results. Universal world – universal humanity – should contain boundless love among peoples, in which every organization, every work is for humans, helping each person to live in peace, in civilization, and in comprehensive advance.

³¹⁶ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Vĩnh Nguyên Tự, 01-03 Kỷ Mão (1939).

CHAPTER 5.

BACK TO THE ROOT

SECTION 1. OVERVIEW OF THE RETURN
TO THE ORIGIN

SECTION 2. MISSION OF GRAND VEHICLE

SECTION 3. NATURE-BODY CULTIVATION

SECTION 4. OUTLINE OF THE SPIRITUAL
CULTIVATION

SECTION 1

OVERVIEW OF THE RETURN TO THE ORIGIN

On the path of evolution, awareness of the RETURN TO THE ORIGIN marks a person's spiritual awakening and motivates him/her to undertake the journey of liberation. The path of returning to the origin starts at the turning point of leaving the extroverted lifestyle to preserve internal vitality and maintain inner tranquillity. It is the beginning of the journey of leaving the tip to get to the root.

This journey must be a continuous sequence of stages of body and mind training to achieve human dignity. From there, to find the origin of the universe, one must master one's own microcosm. The master in this case is the human True Heart, whereas the essence of True Heart is the Spark of Divine Light and the function of True Heart is the Conscience.

1. THE RETURN JOURNEY

1.1. Returning to the Origin is Reverting to the True Heart

Returning to the Origin means get back to the Way, the absolute essence, the primordial human root or the Globe of Divine Light.

The Spark of Divine Light in humans is called True Heart; it is the soul in a body. Thanks to this heart, people can think, perceive, and act. The heart controls the life of the individual and promotes the intellect. If one's heart has good intentions, one will evolve and flourish; otherwise, one will degenerate and corrupt. Therefore, to return to the origin, one must get back to the heart, that is, returning to one's own inner self to direct the activities of the heart in the direction of humanness, so as to find one's true self and enhance the improvisational power of the heart. Thus, returning to the Origin is reverting to the True Heart, unique and immutable.

Reverting to the True Heart is also a law of nature. Although humans have the freedom to choose and decide their evolution, while not yet self-conscious, they will be affected by the laws of nature that gradually exert to direct them toward the transcendental direction. That is *Returning to the Origin via the path of Reverting to the True Heart in the Law of Periodicity*.³¹⁷

Returning to the Origin also relies on *spiritual union* and *self-consistency*, so that *the return to the Origin starts from the individual, to family, to society, and*

³¹⁷ Đức Quan Thánh Đế Quân; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập, 1972-1973, p. 67

*finally reaching humanity with the boundless tolerance and compassion of the Supreme God.*³¹⁸

1.2. Routes to return to the Origin

On the ordinary path to return to the Origin, humans must go through many reincarnations in the universe – around the Three Thousand Worlds, Four Grand Continents, Seventy-Two Earths, Thirty-Six Heavens – to reach the destination.

The Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation opens a shortcut route that includes many stages of cultivation and evolution suitable to everyone’s circumstances. With this shortcut, humans can achieve their desired goal of uniting with God in a short period of time, such as a single lifetime on earth.

In Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo scripture, the Supreme God taught as follows:

*The Three Stages and the Nine Initiations were also created by the rules of the Three-Teaching Religion that I made as a shortcut to bring you back to the original stance.*³¹⁹

The Three Stages comprise the First, the Second, and the Third Stage. Each Stage includes Three Initiations: Upper, Middle, Lower. The First Stage teaches mankind how to live religiously in society. The Second Stage guides mankind to take on the burden of

³¹⁸ Đức Quan Thánh Đế Quân; Thánh Giáo Suu Tập, 1972-1973, p. 67

³¹⁹ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 09-8 Bính Tý; Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo (bản in 1950), thiên 23 “Khởi trung tâm Đạo”, tr.212, i.e., Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching, Chapter “The Universal Center”, p. 123, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas, 2015.

organizing and managing collectives in society according to the principles of morality. The Third Stage guides mankind to go deeply into the Method of Heart to intuitively perceive the True Heart and achieve complete liberation. These are the cultivation steps that *transform sentient into Saint, Immortal, and Buddha. These steps must be in continuous sequence, with no gap nor disruption. That is true for the Way or the Great Way.*³²⁰

The Three Stages correspond to the two areas of cultivation: the Spiritual Way and the Temporal (or Secular) Way. With the Temporal Way, the cultivators – through their lives – will contribute to rebuild peace and progress in this world, starting from their families to their people, and to mankind. After that, they will step in the Grand Vehicle of Spiritual Way, perform spiritual exercises and restore the original humanness to serve as a condition to save others.

Temporal Way and Spiritual Way are the two areas that ordinary cultivators must approach sequentially. From the Temporal Way to the Spiritual Way is a turning point for a cultivator who has awakened and is determined to self-cultivate to return to the original root. However, if the cultivator is in convenient circumstances and wishes to expedite the cultivation process (or to take further shortcut), it would be better that he/she practices concurrently both the Temporal and Spiritual Ways, which is named the *merit – wisdom co-cultivation*. In this way, the cultivator can achieve what is called ***cultivating in a lifetime, achieving enlightenment all at once.***

³²⁰ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo Thái Bạch Kim Tinh; Thánh Giáo Sư Tập 1972-1973, p.78.

2. THE METHOD OF HEART

2.1. The Heart is the basis for returning to the Origin.

From ancient times to the present, religions have been opened to spread countless methods to guide mankind along the path of morality, that is, to know and practice the Way. But people often mistakenly think scriptures are the Way, religious rituals are the Way. On the other hand, the Sages all believe these are merely the means to awake mankind so they can live by the heart and cultivate by the heart.

*Indeed, beyond the heart, the Way does not exist; beyond the heart, Buddha or Immortal does not exist; Heaven-Earth and all beings, all are due to the heart.*³²¹

2.2. The Heart must be used to master human beings.

The heart in this context is not a visible organ in human body; it is an invisible subject that improvises depending on situations and constantly generates emotions, consciousnesses, delusion, thought, ..., impacting human life without respite. Therefore, the principle of the Method of Heart is to master the seven emotions,³²² the six sensual attractions,³²³ the six roots

³²¹ Đức Đông Phương Lão Tử; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, 14-06 Ất Mão (July 22, 1975); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

³²² Translator's note: The seven emotions are joy, sorrow, love, hate, pleasure, anger, and fear.

³²³ Translator's note: The six sensual attractions are color, form, carriage, voice, textures, and features.

of sensation,³²⁴ the six conceptions,³²⁵ the six sense objects,³²⁶ and to direct them to the direction of morality so they can help the cultivator evolve. The heart being mastered is the True Heart; the heart being dominated and perverse is the deluded heart.

*Practicing the Way, you know it is in your heart,
Turning into myriads of beings is also by the
heart.*

*The Three Thousand Worlds are held in your
palm,*

It is by this heart you penetrate the Principle.³²⁷

2.3. Stop clinging to attain the Heart of Heaven-Earth.

Indeed, it is necessary to look inward to cut off all the surrounding disturbances; if not bothered by external circumstances, the heart can be tranquil. That is to eliminate external obstacles. But hindrances are still present internally due to prejudices and biases that build up into clinging to the self, clinging to Dharma, clinging to consciousness.... These disturbances make the heart perverted, petty, entangled, and no longer improvisational. Then how can the cultivator get along with other people and sympathize with the world, let alone harmonize with the universe? It is why there is a

³²⁴ Translator's note: The six roots of sensation are eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and the discerning mind.

³²⁵ Translator's note: The six conceptions are sight consciousness, hearing consciousness, scent consciousness, taste consciousness, body consciousness, and mind consciousness.

³²⁶ Translator's note: The six sense objects are seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, and thinking.

³²⁷ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tuất thời, 14-10 Bính Thìn (04-12-1976); Thánh Giáo Nguyễn Bôn.

saying: *The heart is the heart, the scene is the scene, that is truly the Heart of Heaven-Earth.*³²⁸ This is the heart of a being who completely severs from all attachments, also known as the unhindered Heart or empty Heart.

Attaining the Heart of Heaven-Earth is when the Heart and the Way are One. That Heart has a Principle to keep everything in balance, every work in harmony, and everybody in peace. It is the truly eternal Heart, like a clear mirror shining and displaying everything but never retaining any image. The teaching of the Great Way calls this state *Attaining the Oneness*. The Heart attaining the Oneness is the non-conceptual Heart by which the cultivator can practice the Middle Way.

*When the Heart attains the Oneness, the world
is pacified,
To get the Heart attaining the Oneness,
meditation is required;
In meditating, the Heart and all beings
harmonize,
That harmony creates the Way of association
with God.*³²⁹

2.4. The Method of Triple Work

To save all living creatures and guide them to return to the primordial Origin, the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation proposes a syncretic method – the Triple Work – so that everyone, regardless of their diverse penetrative capacities, can practice attaining enlightenment and liberation.

³²⁸ Đức Như Ý Đạo Toàn Chơn Nhơn; Vĩnh Nguyên Tự, 15-03 Bính Thìn (April 14, 1976); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

³²⁹ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, 15-07 Ất Mão (Aug. 21, 1975); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

The Triple Work is a method of cultivation that comprises three aspects: Work of Merit, Work of Discipline, and Work of Wisdom. In terms of effectiveness, the Triple Work is also called Practice for Blessing, Practice for Virtue, and Practice for Enlightenment.

Depending on the circumstances of each stage in a person's life, the cultivator may design an appropriate combination that emphasizes one method over the others. But for a lifetime of religious practice, these three methods complement each other to create a balanced training in both secular and spiritual aspects, solving all human problems.

Work of Merit is the effort to do works that are useful to others in the spirit of voluntary and unselfish devotion, to alleviate the cultivator's karmic burdens on the journey back to the Origin, while also helping others to carry out their works on their own returning paths.

Work of Discipline speaks of the effort to train the cultivator's personality in the spirit of non-self to conform to the original human nature of perfect goodness.

Work of Wisdom is the effort to practice meditation for nature - body cultivation in the spirit of no clinging and no semblance so as to be in harmony with the original essence of Heaven-Earth.

All the three methods of Triple Work are based on the Heart and on the human effort to evolve. Although all three methods are of great value, the Work of Wisdom is the final decision for the return to the Origin.

It can be said that the Triple Work is a necessary and

sufficient condition to realize the return to the Origin. For those who carry out the mission of preaching the Way for their own liberation and for the liberation of others, the Triple Work must be fully practiced.

In the Third Universal Salvation, God has privileged all creatures with the Grand Amnesty, in which the cultivator who is determined to practice the Way will get his/her Work of Merit multiplied by a factor of three. As a result, the cultivator's past karma is especially reduced. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to encourage humans to be more proactive in freeing themselves from the accumulated karma from their many past lives. Nevertheless, the Third Grand Amnesty cannot be the reason for the cultivator to slacken frivolously.

Therefore, having encountered this luck in the Third Era, humans should proactively practice the Triple Work method to reach the achievements commensurate with the privileges they have received. In case the cultivator's life is ended when he/she has not yet fulfilled all the required steps of cultivation prescribed by the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation, the Law of Grand Amnesty allows him/her to enjoy the privilege of achieving the spiritual enlightenment and divine rank corresponding to his/her cultivation levels.

God initiated the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation with the aim to save all mankind, opening a wide path for people to return to their root. However, God no longer come to this world in an embodied form. Instead, He opened the Way using the principle of God-Man Union and entrusting the missionaries with the mystic power to guide sentient beings back to the Way.

Every Original Man coming to earth has a unique mission. They do not descend to earth

*merely to cycle in evolution from low to high. The mission of each Original Man is that in addition to one's self-cultivating and self-evolving work, one must also preach the Way to save the world, and wake sentient beings so they can reverse the course of action, leaving the evil to follow the good, giving up the wrong way to return to the right one, so as to gradually improve from oneself to human society, until reaching the perfect goodness and perfect beauty.*³³⁰

3. CONCLUSION

Returning to the Origin is the path of spiritual liberation for mankind. With the favorable conditions that God created in the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation, humans are fully capable of finding again their true self and seeing them in God.

³³⁰ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quán; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, 30-12 Tân Hợi (14-02-1972); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

SECTION 2

MISSION OF GRAND VEHICLE

History of religion from past to present has shown that every Patriarch who wants to preach the teaching must have Messengers and Apostles to help. These are awakened disciples who soon receive the revelation of the Patriarch, receive the original teaching, and voluntarily take up the mission of initiating the religion.

The teaching of the Great Way affirms that the Human Mission is the journey of training people to become holy in human life, that is, fulfilling the Way of Man; it also points out the return to the Origin, leading mankind into the Spiritual Way for spiritual liberation.

Entering the Spiritual Way, cultivators are of Grand Vehicle. From here, with the ideal of worldly transcendence, the cultivators dedicate their lives to the grand cause of saving sentient beings. Hence, the Human Mission for devotees in the Great Way becomes

the Mission of Grand Vehicle for the divinely favored messengers.

1. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MISSION OF GRAND VEHICLE

The term GRAND VEHICLE has emerged since the birth of Buddhism in the era of the Second Universal Salvation with the meaning of liberating oneself along with liberating others; it is beyond the way of Small Vehicle which is the practice capable of liberating oneself only.³³¹

When the Great Way was inaugurated to open the Third Universal Salvation, the term GRAND VEHICLE was often associated with the term MISSION to emphasize the integral and thorough salvation of the Great Way in the Last Era.

The historical circumstance of which the Mission of Grand Vehicle arises is the extreme division of humanity since the beginning of the twentieth century to present.

It is the Mission of Grand Vehicle that counteracts the inhumane issues of social and racial discriminations, as well as the collapse of all spiritual values due to the intense impact of material civilization on human life.

It is the Mission of Grand Vehicle that restores the True Teaching and reiterates the goal of building a humane portrait of mankind that many religions have mostly forgotten when they embraced the literal aspects of scriptures and enthralled themselves with the glorious forms. Mission of Grand Vehicle lights up the

³³¹ 'Grand vehicle' (in Sanskrit: Mahâyâna) means the advanced teaching at higher level than the small vehicle (in Sanskrit: Hinayâna), which means the small teaching.

ONENESS of all religions so that all religions can come together at the common Origin.

Through the history of the establishment of Cao Dai religion, it is clear that the Mission of Grand Vehicle was bestowed from the beginning. Sir Ngô Minh Chiêu, the first disciple of God, received the original method of Spiritual Way of liberation, and then he himself carried out the mission of transmitting this Method of Heart to his disciples. At that same time, Cao Dai God accepted other disciples to undertake the mission of propagating the doctrine, educating people to believe in God and understand the Way so as to build a peaceful society.

When Sir Ngô and the religious leaders of the propagating branch³³² assembled with each other, which was at the time the Great Way was about to be inaugurated, the meaning of Cao Dai Mission of Grand Vehicle in the Third Universal Salvation became a reality and was illustrated by its purpose: HARMONY IN SECULAR WAY, LIBERATION IN SPIRITUAL WAY.

2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE MISSION OF GRAND VEHICLE

There are two objectives: One is the integral salvation for each individual and for all humanity; the other is the establishment of a doctrinal foundation for the realization of the UNIVERSAL HUMNANITY.

³³² They were the gentlemen: Cao Quỳnh Cư, Phạm Công Tắc, Cao Hoài Sang, Lê Văn Trung, Nguyễn Trung Hậu, Vương Quang Kỳ...

2.1. Integral salvation and total salvation

These are the ultimate goals of the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation. *Integral* means comprising both aspects of humanity and spirituality. *Total* bears the ideal of the universal harmony.

*Mystic power of the entity for world redemption must be responsible for overall mankind. It does not just solve spiritual problems; it is about solving all the problems of the whole human individual.*³³³

*Like it or not, the spiritual and material go hand in hand, two aspects in one person. Leaving the material, there is no spiritual; leaving the spiritual, there is no material. Therefore, the Mission of Grand Vehicle is to realize the salvation of sentient beings from all sufferings, and to fraternize themselves in human society (...).*³³⁴

Mission of Grand Vehicle affirms that caring for humanity is first caring for life; living peacefully, living the secular life as well as living the religious life of existing human beings; then next is tending toward the life of the omnipresent man, the liberated True and Perfect Man.

Therefore, those who carry out the Mission of Grand Vehicle must transform people according to their own circumstances, and not depending on social situation. That is all about the duty of the person, who practices the Grand Vehicle of

³³³ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Nam Thành Thánh Thất, 01-01 Kỷ Dậu (17-02-1969); Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1968-1969, tr. 91.

³³⁴ Đức Quan Thế Âm Bồ Tát; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo, 15-07 Đinh Tỵ (29-08-1977); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

Spiritual Way, to create happiness for the world. That being said, I want you, brothers and sisters, to be aware that any changing processes are opportunities to practice the Way for yourselves and for others, thanks to your unhindered Heart. If you wait for normal times, history has nothing to record.

*Spiritual Way circulates forever throughout all species,
To miraculously transform their evolution machineries.
Missionaries of Grand Vehicle exerting Spiritual Way,
Never mind hardships in their long journey.³³⁵*

2.2. Building a doctrinal foundation for the realization of universal humanity

This is a vast and profound area that belongs to the doctrine of the Great Way. It should be emphasized that the doctrine of the Great Way goes beyond the framework of religion. That is the ideology of the Great Way.

The essence for universal humanity is the one common soul of humanity, which is crystallized in human culture and civilization throughout history.

The essence for universal humanity is indeed humaneness. Thus, Mission of Grand Vehicle must accomplish a doctrine that comprises the following elements: *moral culture, modernity, ethnicity, and*

³³⁵ Đức Đông Lâm Tiên Trưởng; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tuất thời, 15-10 Đinh Tỵ (25-11-1977); Thánh Giáo Nguyễn Bôn.

*universality.*³³⁶ The spirit of Grand Vehicle in this context dictates that the doctrine itself must transcend all ideologies while respecting values that reflect humanness of all peoples, of every person from any place and time. Thanks to that spirit, the doctrine of the Great Way becomes magnetic fields that attract all human communities to accept each other, to live together in peace and progress, because *from the past, present, future, all rivers flow back to the sea. The mission of the devotees in the Great Way is the sea, the boundless essence.*³³⁷

2.3. Solution of the Mission of Grand Vehicle

Solution of the Mission of Grand Vehicle must, of course, be the historical solution corresponding to the Third Universal Salvation:

Through the two initiations of the Way, religions have been propagated to save and guide all beings back to the moral base. But they are not as perfect as they were in the Virtuous Age of the First Era. It is because in the evolution, people are more and more inclined toward the external material, abandoning the inner spiritual, so human life is like a spindle circulating with the flow of rotation. Now,

³³⁶ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, 14-02 Bính Dần (28-3-1986); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản: “*Building a doctrinal foundation to keep up with the level of scientific civilization to propagate throughout humanity (...) It is necessary to promote national, cultural, and moral traditions (...) highlighting the pure character of the nation that is always associated with the essence of universal humanity.*”

³³⁷ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Hợi thời, 15-04 Canh Thân (28-05-1980); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

*brothers and sisters, you make up your mind to study the teaching of the Great Way to penetrate the constant and regular principle, to learn how to live the life of nature and creation. That is the group of missionaries to preach the Way on behalf of God in the Third Universal Salvation. Not only this one organization, this one country, but the entire world will also be completely saved and given amnesty.*³³⁸

The characteristics of this historical solution are:

- Returning and converging into the One
- Upholding the ideal of Harmony
- Using the stance of God-Man Union

2.3.1. Returning and converging to the One

It means applying the spirit of *All religions are of the same Truth* to neutralize the degenerative dissociation of beliefs. Upholding the Principle of Unity: *the Way, God, and All Beings are One* to direct humanity toward a common evolutionary end, which is God. Indeed, Supreme God taught as follows:

*Here is the return to the Origin of the Three Religions,
Also the hint to secure the nation,
And the hope to save and sustain life
For the entire mankind in terror.*³³⁹

Or as His Holiness Đức Cao Triều Phát taught:

³³⁸ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quán; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tuất thời, 01-12 Đinh Tỵ (09-01-1978); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

³³⁹ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Ngọc Minh Đài, 10-07 Ất Tỵ (06-09-1965); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

*Try the mission to save the current mankind,
It is the Grand Vehicle of Spiritual Way to
progress in cultivation,
In the era where One engenders All,
All converging to One is the work of
transcendence.³⁴⁰*

2.3.2. Upholding the ideal of Harmony

This era is the epoch in which science takes over the obsession in human knowledge. Mission of Grand Vehicle cannot merely bring faith to convince mankind. Instead, it must use science to shed light on the eternal laws of the universe and all beings; from there, these laws must be referenced to the constant and ordinary principle in life and in human evolution. This solution successfully points out the universality between science and ethics, and then links them together so that *science helps people achieve Earth (the material), ethics helps people attain Heaven (the spiritual)*³⁴¹, the two aspects sharing the same evolutionary endline for mankind.

Literature, philosophy, and art are also greatly be expanded. These are areas of light reflecting from the depths of human soul, the spiritual value, the colorful quintessence of thought. Mission of Grand Vehicle must also recognize in them the value that touches the spirituality of the devotees in the Great Way. The missionary's spirit of Grand Vehicle in this case is to identify, receive, and promote the most common and best property, which is humaneness.

³⁴⁰ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Hời thời, 29-02 Mậu Ngọ (06-03-1978); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

³⁴¹ Đức Cao Triều Phát; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, 15-07 Giáp Dần (01-09-1974); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

In short, by upholding the ideal of universal harmony in all aspects of human life, Mission of Grand Vehicle will eliminate *the gap between being the intellect of scientific invention on one hand and the ethics of conscience on the other*,³⁴² to offer mankind an exit.

Mission of Grand Vehicle needs to prove that *the Great Way is the widest path to lead mankind to universal harmony, without discrimination or division, in line with the trend of civilization and progress, creating a realm of peace and happiness on earth as well as the worldly transcendence. It is also the Boat of Wisdom that brings people all over the world to the endline of complete salvation.*³⁴³

2.3.3. Using the stance of God-Man Union

God-Man Union is the principle of initiation, inauguration, and practice of the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation. It is God's rare privilege for the third salvation and also the special condition for the Mission of Grand Vehicle regarding the goal of complete salvation for mankind.

The sole human intellect cannot achieve the Grand Vehicle standard of the mission in the third salvation. God arranges celestial mechanism, but the missionaries must sanctify themselves to be able to integrate with the celestial law. Celestial law moderates their sacred heart so they can perform and accomplish divine tasks. His Holiness the Zen Master Đức Vạn Hạnh Thiền Sư taught:

³⁴² Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Hối thời, 11-08 Bình Dân (14-09-1986); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

³⁴³ Đức Cao Triều Phát; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, 11-02 nhuận Ất Sửu (31-03-1985); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

*God from the realm far above
Selects people who wilfully cultivate.
He creates the inducive mechanism,
To enable God-Man communion.³⁴⁴*

Her Holiness the Goddess of Mercy Đức Quan Thế Âm Bồ Tát also taught as follows:

The complete salvation of all beings must rely on the envoys. Who are God's messengers? They are predecessors of the Patriarchs, the transcendent human beings who attained enlightenment, and the divinely appointed individuals who are currently leading religion, leading humanity.³⁴⁵

3. MISSIONARIES OF GRAND VEHICLE

To fulfill the above-mentioned purpose of the Mission of Grand Vehicle, of course, there must be missionaries of Grand Vehicle.

3.1. Missionaries of Grand Vehicle are devotees in the Great Way

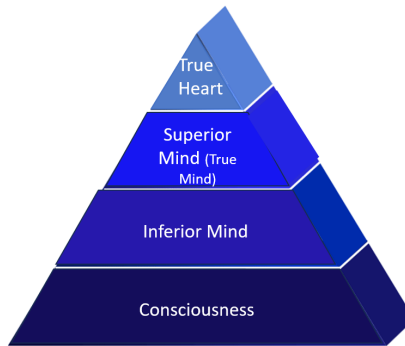
The divinely appointed mission of the devotees in the Great Way is the sea, the boundless essence.³⁴⁶

Then what are the characteristics of the devotees in the Great Way that help them accomplish this mission? It can be visualized through the following diagram.

³⁴⁴ Đức Vạn Hạnh Thiền Sư; Thánh Giáo Sư Tập 1970-1971, tr.296.

³⁴⁵ Đức Quan Thế Âm Bồ Tát; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, 15-07 Đinh Tỵ (29-08-1977); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

³⁴⁶ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, 15-07 Đinh Tỵ (29-08-1977); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.



Devotee in the Great Way: True Heart + Superior Mind + Inferior Mind + Consciousness
 Original Man: Superior Mind + Inferior Mind + Consciousness
 Ordinary Man: Inferior Mind + Consciousness

First, devotees in the Great Way must be Original Men and Women. They are people who attain the level of Superior Mind, which is the True Mind mastering all knowledge (limited mind) and consciousness. Next, they intuitively recognize the spirit of Oneness (belonging to the Bodhi realm) to use the wisdom of Superior Mind to carry out the mission.

Thus, the essence of the missionaries of Grand Vehicle is the Great Way, the loving-kindness and inclusion that make the missionaries act impartially, unifying all subjects on each evolutionary level toward the ideal of truth, goodness, and beauty of mankind. Only the nature of the Great Way can neutralize all breakdowns, separations, and hatreds in people's hearts that cause so many turbulences in human life. Therefore, *the ultimate ambition of the rupture in human spirit also aims at the*

*adhesive nature of love derived from the boundless source of living the Way.*³⁴⁷

3.2. Missionaries of Grand Vehicle are practitioners in the Spiritual Way

His Holiness Đức Như Ý Đạo Toàn Chơn Nhơn taught this: *Cultivators who wish to be liberated must carry out the Mission of Grand Vehicle,*³⁴⁸ and he continued: *Cultivators of Grand Vehicle must practice the Spiritual Way.*³⁴⁹

Thus, in the term GRAND VEHICLE there is the meaning of MISSION, and in the term MISSION there is the meaning of GRAND VEHICLE.

The way to exercise that power of salvation and liberation is the Spiritual Way of Grand Vehicle. Therefore, His Holiness Đức Như Ý Đạo Toàn Chơn Nhơn also said: *Spiritual Way is the way of liberation for the cultivator.*³⁵⁰

In short, it is the power of spiritual liberation, coming from the determination to engage oneself in the great cause of the universal salvation, that has led the missionaries to dedicate their lives to building happiness for the world, while climbing the evolutionary ladder to Heaven. Spiritual Way helps

³⁴⁷ Đức Phan Thanh Giản; Trúc Lâm Thiền Điện, 08-04 Tân Hội (02-05-1971); Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1970-1971, tr .214.

³⁴⁸ Đức Như Ý Đạo Toàn Chơn Nhơn; Vĩnh Nguyên Tự, Tuất thời, 10-06 Bính Thìn (06-07-1976); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

³⁴⁹ Đức Như Ý Đạo Toàn Chơn Nhơn; Vĩnh Nguyên Tự, Tuất thời, 10-06 Bính Thìn (06-07-1976); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

³⁵⁰ Đức Như Ý Đạo Toàn Chơn Nhơn; Vĩnh Nguyên Tự, Tuất thời, 10-06 Bính Thìn (06-07-1976); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

missionaries achieve the virtue of complete detachment in order to be capable of the universal salvation.

3.3. Missionaries of Grand Vehicle are angels, people of Heaven.

When the cultivators, who dedicate to contributing to the great cause of universal salvation, are given the mission by God, they receive heavenly grace and become divinely favored missionaries. These divinely favored missionaries are not ordinary individuals; they manifest the divine forces of correspondence between human and human, between human and God.

Therefore, the divinely favored missionaries are those who see *themselves as the Way, must represent God to operate self-reliantly and constantly*.³⁵¹ For the universe, they are *co-creator*.³⁵² For the human world, they are those who *turn foes into fans, haters into friends, (...); they see themselves as everybody, everybody as themselves*.³⁵³

4. CONCLUSION

To achieve the complete and ultimate salvation, to fulfill the goal of *Harmony in Temporal Way, Liberation in Spiritual Way*, so as to unleash mankind thoroughly from humanity to spirituality, the Mission of Grand Vehicle is an indispensable condition.

³⁵¹ Đức Vân Hương Thánh Mẫu; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tuất thời, 13-08 Kỷ Mùi (03-10-1979); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

³⁵² Chư Tiên Khai Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tuất thời, 15-10 Kỷ Mùi (04-12-1979); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

³⁵³ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tuất thời, 14-01 Canh Thân (29-02-1980); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

Mission of Grand Vehicle is characteristics of the Great Way in this era, as a convergence of dynamic energy between Heaven and humans to operate the salvation mechanism.

In the Second Universal Salvation, there were many spiritual masters such as Laozi, Sakyamuni, Confucius, Christ, and some of the Apostles of these Patriarchs, who received and carried out the Mission of Grand Vehicle.

Now in the Third Universal Salvation, there is only one Patriarch of the Great Way: the Supreme God; but missionaries may include millions of Original Men and Women who are enlightened and walking the path of Heaven, the Spiritual Way.

Mission of Grand Vehicle of these envoys is the sacred mission from God to sufficiently empower them to carry out the Third Universal Salvation in life and in all mankind.

Indeed, it is the characteristics of GREAT VEHICLE that is key to the success of the divinely favored missionaries.

SECTION 3

NATURE AND BODY CULTIVATION

The path of returning to the origin is the path of introspection to restore the true and righteous person, so that the Spark of Divine Light can reunite with the Globe of Divine Light. It is taught in holy messages as follows:

*The Nirvana is in everyone's heart,
Practice self-cultivation to restore it.
Whoever willfully persist,
Can return to the Origin sacred.*³⁵⁴

But return to the Origin is not merely an introspection, as the cultivator must also go through an elaborate cultivation process to train the mortal nature into sacred Nature, the mortal body into sacred Body. With the sacred Nature and sacred Body, one becomes the true and righteous person. His Holiness the Spiritual Pope Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo taught this:

³⁵⁴ Đức Di Lạc Thiên Tôn, Thánh Giáo Sư Tập, 1970-1971, tr.198.

Every human being has Nature and Body. Nature is the sacred Nature, Body is the sacred Body, the two sacred energies of Yin and Yang that form the essence of Heaven-Earth universe and all creatures. Cultivating the Nature means not letting the Nature to be blinded by greed and desire, obscured by fame, profit, lust, and wealth. These impermanent items have caused people endless catastrophes from one life to another. Cultivating the Nature means not greedy but still having food to eat and clothes to wear, not struggling but still having a place to live, not rolling in suffering but still have human status. Therefore, cultivating the Nature is the shining light in thousands of holy paths. As for cultivating the Body, it is the everlasting sacred Body, not biased, not deviated, not soiled by greed and desire; it harmonizes with God above, pacifies the four realms below, engages in everywhere, treats others as oneself, sees one's heart as God's heart, lives saintly, dies sacredly. Oh! A saint inside and a king outside, living forever in the realm of ecstatic paradise; what else do people dream of? Buddha, Immortal is just that.³⁵⁵

1. NATURE

1.1. The Original Nature

The foundation germ of the Original Nature is already innate before a person is born. This germ is God-given, equal among all, and serves as the Nature for self-creation, self-actualization.

³⁵⁵ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, 30 rạng 01-01 Đinh Tỵ (17-02-1977); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

That Nature is the intrinsic root, the intrinsic essence of humans. In terms of intrinsic essence, that Nature is the Spark of Divine Light; in terms of intrinsic root, that Nature is the True Spirit. His Holiness the Spiritual Pope Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo taught:

*Of God, it is Principle; in Man, it is Nature. Principle and Nature are the same. That is why God and Man can communicate very intimately. Therefore, whatever man wants to plot, even undone, God already knows.*³⁵⁶

Original Nature is the profound foundation deep within human consciousness, the origin of human wisdom.

Coming in this world, the Original Nature must carry the corporeal body – formed by the Post-Genesis material – in addition to all permutations of the Post-Genesis realm that affect from the outer body to the inner Heart. So, the Original Nature is obscured by the worldly dust and becomes the mortal nature.

1.2. The mortal nature

Mortal nature is the nature that exists immediately after a person is born.

Humans breathe temporal air and are fed with earthly food. Hence, the Spark of Divine Light is also affected and overshadowed, prone to acquiescing to the bad and deviating from the good. Therefore, the Original Nature has no chance to promote, and the mortal nature is also called the temperamental nature.

³⁵⁶ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; 16-9 Bính Tý (1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1950), thiên 38 “Tồn tâm Dưỡng tánh”, tr.366, or *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “Maintain the Heart and Preserve the Nature”, pp. 218 – 221, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas, 2015.

Mortal nature is the nature of each person in human society, and usually called a person's personality or a person's mind. That nature is inconsistent, sometimes good, other times bad, sometimes happy, other times sad... and differs from one person to the other. If people do not care about training and changing their life habits, the mortal nature will remain in them forever through the cycles of reincarnation.

2. BODY

2.1. *The True Body*

True Body belongs to the Pre-Genesis Innate Energy, which predates the birth of a person (while still in the womb). Thanks to the Innate Energy, Heaven-Earth is everlasting and engenders all creatures.

As for humans, thanks to the absorption of Innate Energy, their True Body is restored, sublimated, capable of living as long as Heaven-Earth. Also, thanks to Innate Energy, the corporeal body is well maintained in its finiteness. That Innate Energy can be absorbed into human body through the practice of contemplative meditation.

*Nature in man, the Original Nature,
Body from God, the Innate Energy.
Nature-Body detachment, unsteady,
Body-Nature separation, unsustainable.*³⁵⁷

³⁵⁷ Đức Đồng Phương Chương Quán; Bát Nhã Thiên Đường (Minh Lý Thánh Hội), Tý thời, 10 rạng 11-08 Đinh Mùi (13-09-1967); Thánh Giáo Suu Tập 1966-1967, tr.170

2.2. The corporeal body

Corporeal body is the flesh and blood of humans. Corporeal body is formed by the father's sperm and the mother's blood, which belongs to Post-Genesis. In theological terms, corporeal body is the body assembled by the Four Constituents: Earth, Water, Air, and Fire.

Corporeal body is commonly called the live body or the born body. In other words, corporeal body is the physical body, the life and vitality of humans.

Corporeal body is born so it will be dead, that is impermanent. But thanks to the corporeal body, people have the means to cultivate and evolve.

It can be said that the True Nature (belonging to Principle) and the True Body (belonging to Energy) have the same Origin of God, which unite. But coming to the dual realm, they split into two: Nature is the inner essence, body is the manifestation of the inner essence through the outer layer of the body. Development of the essence gives rise to the role of humans in the universe. But in terms of subjective being, the Heart is the master of both Nature and Body. Therefore, to promote the role of human beings, one should rely on the Heart and the Nature-Body cultivation.

3. NATURE-BODY CULTIVATION

The Way of God is just Principle and Energy, or Yang and Yin, or Heaven and Earth, whereas the Way of Man is Nature and Body, or Spirit and Energy, also Yang and Yin. His Holiness Đức Đông Phương Lão Tổ taught: *For the Nature-Body of the Great Way to reach*

*its fullness, only the Spirit-Energy in human can make it.*³⁵⁸

3.1. Cultivating the Nature

Cultivating the Nature is training the Spirit so the Spark of Divine Light becomes lucid, miraculous, and capable of matching with Heaven-Earth in the Triad.

However, training the Spirit can only be complete when it is prepared and supported by the discipline training to tame the seven emotions and the six desires, so that the Spirit is tranquil and the mortal nature becomes the True Nature, the Original Nature.

3.2. Cultivating the Body

Cultivating the Body is forging the Energy and Quintessence, but mainly the Energy.

Although there is a distinction between cultivating the Nature and cultivating the Body, these two aspects are inseparable because there must always be a synchronous combination of Quintessence, Energy, and Spirit in the cultivation process.

Only the tranquil Spirit can actively lead the Post-Genesis Energy (commonly oxygen gas in the air) in each breath to refine it into the Pre-Genesis Energy that is the basis of the creation of the Double-Body. The first obvious effect is the corporeal body becomes healthy, the appearance is fresh and radiant, the mind is clearer and more active, life and vitality develop. The more Pre-Genesis Energy one accumulates, the longer one's life will last.

³⁵⁸ Đức Đông Phương Lão Tổ; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tuát thời, 19-07.Đình Ty (02-09-1977); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

If cultivating the Nature is to form the Original Spirit, then cultivating the Body is to gain the Original Energy. The full Spirit-Energy is the unified Yin-Yang, capable of coordinating with Heaven-Earth. His Holiness Đức Như Ý Đạo Toàn Chơn Nhơn taught:

In the decadent time, the Universal Salvation is operated, cultivators should take this opportunity to amass Work of Merit and accrete Virtuous Credit to break the past karma; and in parallel with the Salvation Mission, they must elaborately cultivate the Nature and train the Body to liberate from the cycle of reincarnation, making themselves the ability to be worthy of the ranks of Deity, Saint, Immortal, and Buddha.³⁵⁹

3.3. Nature-Body Cultivation and the Path of Return to the Origin

His Holiness Đức Đông Phương Lão Tổ taught:

The Great Way is very simple, having only Yin-Yang, Spirit-Energy, Nature-Body. He, who knows the Nature-Body and knows how to use Yin-Yang, Spirit-Energy to nurture Nature-Body, can live in harmony with nature so that the Heart is lightened and stable; then he will be in harmony with the world to build a peaceful life.³⁶⁰

The world is the most favorable environment for learning and training. The body is the most suitable means for training in this world so that the mortal

³⁵⁹ Đức Như Ý Đạo Toàn Chơn Nhơn; Vĩnh Nguyên Tự, Hội thời, 18-01 Nhâm Tuất (11-02-1982); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

³⁶⁰ Đức Đông Phương Lão Tổ; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tuất thời, 04-06 Tân Dậu (05-07-1981); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

nature and the corporeal body can sublimate into the True Nature and the True Body, everlasting, immutable, and miraculously transformative. These results will benefit the cultivator when living as well as after exiting the body.

When living, the body is healthy and strong, the mind is lucid, one can deeply understand the Principle of Heaven above and the Principle of Earth below, as well as penetrate the Heart of people around; in society, one acts to benefit humanity, teaches people to aspire toward goodness, guides fellow human beings on the way back to the Origin, and fulfills the Mission of Grand Vehicle. When exiting the body, one meets all the requirements to return to the realm of eternal bliss. Her Holiness the Goddess of Mercy Đức Quan Thế Âm Bồ Tát taught in a holy message as follows:

*Though the body is still in the impure realm,
The spirit already exits the grievous world.*³⁶¹

or in another holy message:

*Eliminating ignorance, seeing the Nirvana,
Eradicating ignorance, bringing peace to
village,
People are no longer dreaded or terrified,
By the tragedies of sulk and misery.*³⁶²

Nevertheless, saying so does not mean requiring everyone to reach the same level. As the penetrating capacity of humans is vastly diverse, the method of

³⁶¹ Đức Quan Thế Âm Bồ Tát; Thánh Thất Bình Hòa, Ngo thời, 08-04 Canh Tuất (12-05-1970); Thánh Giáo Sưu Tập 1970-1971, tr 66.

³⁶² Đức Quan Thế Âm Bồ Tát; Thánh Thất Bình Hòa, Ngo thời, 08-04 Canh Tuất (12-05-1970); Thánh Giáo Sưu Tập 1970-1971, tr 66.

Nature-Body cultivation also has many levels for everyone to follow and benefit themselves. If one knows to tame greed and desire, live a life of moderation, maintain oneself in morality, speak less, control sorrow and anger, be neither luxurious nor austere... then one has created a happy life in this world, because one does not feel needy nor sick.

*Diligently practice the work of wisdom,
As everyone can easily self-cultivate,
Daily life intertwines with morality,
No need to be in mountain or cave.³⁶³*

4. CONCLUSION

Cultivating the Nature and Body according to the New Method for the Grand Amnesty of the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation, human beings are more likely to evolve in life on earth and even after exiting the corporeal body. Supreme God affirms it as follows:

I, your Holy Master Teacher, initiate the spiritual cultivation for mankind, so that you, my children, can learn and exercise the True Method correctly; on the day your work reaches its fullness, you will get back to reunite with Me. At that time, you are Me, your Holy Master Teacher, Buddha, Immortal, Deity. That is the ultimate policy of the Great Way.³⁶⁴

³⁶³ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Ngọc Minh Đài, Tuất thời, 15-01 Kỷ Dậu (03-03-1969); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

³⁶⁴ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Thiên Lý Đàn, 14-02 Ất Ty (15-02-1965); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

SECTION 4

OUTLINE OF THE SPIRITUAL CULTIVATION

1. OVERVIEW OF THE METHOD OF HEART

Cao Dai teaching and other Eastern theologies affirm that there is a single Essence or Being that exists and infinitely transforms. From this Original Essence, Heaven-Earth universe was created, and the world was established. That Being has a multitude of titles. Buddhists name it the Nirvana, the Absolutely Enlightened One, the True Heart. Taoists call it the Way, the Master of all Forms (Vạn tượng Chủ thể). Confucians name it the Non-Being, the Supreme Being, the Impartial Heart, the One Heart. Caodaists refer to it as the Master, the God Eye, the Globe of Divine Light, the Supreme God, the Almighty One.

From that Absolute Being came all things; each has a different form, different spiritual foundation, and different level of evolution. But they all follow the Law of Evolution. The Law of Evolution of the universe keeps revolving until it reaches a certain phase of the evolutionary peak; then it returns to the original point

of birth of everything, which is the Absolute Essence. In that process, the Law of Elimination also takes place. Only those who have attained sufficient power of concentration in the spiritual cultivation are capable of cooperating with God and with the universe. Such transcendent ability only comes from the elaborate cultivation of the Method of Heart.

Since ancient times, in the two previous eras, the patriarchs, who were messengers of God, also applied the Method of Heart to teach mankind the cultivation for liberation. In this current era, God Himself – being the Founder of Caodaism as well as the Absolute Essence – initiates a syncretic method from all existing ones, including the ancient methods and the new method of Cao Dai, to save all mankind. He also opens the Grand Amnesty to redeem those who cultivate the True Method of the Great Way.

The True Method of the Great Way bestowed by God is extended to awakened people who are determined to seek the cultivation method of deliverance.

2. DEFINITION

Here is the definition from His Holiness the Zen Master Đức Vạn Hạnh Thiền Sư:

*Method of Heart is the method, the lead, the key for the cultivators to open the door to the center of the creation of Buddhas and Immortals, to liberate from the temporary life in the world of dust that is overloaded with grief and suffering, to return to the eternal, serene, and immortal realm.*³⁶⁵

³⁶⁵ Đức Vạn Hạnh Thiền Sư; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, Tuất thời, 04-09 Quý Sửu (29-09-1973); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

And His Holiness Đức Đông Phương Lão Tổ taught:

*As for the Method of Heart, it is the first step for the cultivator to moderate the breath and soothe the heart, so the energy can prosper...*³⁶⁶

Method of Heart is also the esoteric method, the celestial secret of the Saint, that is only transmitted verbally to the cultivators to forge into Immortals.

Method of Heart is the path that clearly indicates the Creator's mechanism, harmonizing the Yin-Yang machine and refining it into the Golden Body to attain enlightenment.

3. METHOD OF HEART AND THE UNIVERSE

It is taught in Đạo Học Chỉ Nam scripture as follows:

*Method of Heart must be something extremely immense, covering from the grandeur of the universe to the minuteness of a grain of dust.*³⁶⁷

Method of Heart is the operation of the grand universe. Thanks to the functioning of the Method of Heart, the laws of the universe circulate in order, moderation, flexibility, and transformation accordingly with the Law of Being and Non-Being, the Law of Mutual Harmony, the Law of dynamic-static Yin-Yang, and the Law of Evolution in the causal environment.

According to the Law of Being and Non-Being, within everything in this world and in the universe, the being and non-being always intertwine with each other. Being at some point and non-being at other point; being then becomes non-being and while non-being, it appears

³⁶⁶ Đức Đông Phương Lão Tổ; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, 10-11 Bính Thìn (30-12-1976); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản

³⁶⁷ Đạo Học Chỉ Nam, chương 4, tiết 4, mục 1.

being. It does not come, yet it appears; it does not leave, yet it disappears; it has no future nor past. Thanks to that, all creatures are stable, exist, and develop.

According to the Law of Mutual Harmony, all beings work together to evolve in the regulation of the universe.

According to the Law of dynamic-static Yin-Yang – a law that strictly governs everything – there are two opposing and contradictory forces in every being or phenomenon, but the tendency of these two forces is always towards mutual harmony, creating balance, and never completely destroying each other.

According to the Law of Evolution in the causal environment, in every evolutionary and transformative cycle of the three states – past, present, and future – cause and effect are endlessly intertwined so that everything revolves in the Law of Evolution.

4. METHOD OF HEART AND HUMAN BEING

Look at the majesty of Heaven-Earth, look at the grandeur of the universe. People see themselves as minuscule points in the universe. In fact, Man is not small; Man is also grand and just as majestic as the universe. Man and the universe are two-in-one, impossible to say either one or two. Mankind and all beings exist in the world to express the glory of the universe.

*Humans do not live merely to be living; to live in its fullest meaning is to express the glory of the universe.*³⁶⁸

³⁶⁸ Đức Vạn Hạnh Thiền Sư; Minh Lý Thánh Hội, Tuất thời, 14-08-Mậu Thân (05-10-1968); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

Humans are of the same essence as that of the universe and mutually interact with the universe. It is stated in Đạo Học Chí Nam scripture as follows:

*Man, with his whole body and spirit, is governed by the universe. On the other hand, all changes in human spirit as well as all activities of human body mobilize the universe.*³⁶⁹

Therefore, the Method of Heart is indispensable in human beings and in the universe. Humans place themselves in the light of the Method of Heart to receive the seal of transcendence, to reach the ultimate point of evolution. Through the spiritual cultivation, the universe and humans work together in the operational laws of the grand universe.

4.1. Method of Heart is the evolutionary ladder for all beings.

Đạo Học Chí Nam scripture states:

*The purpose of this present life is to build genuine happiness for the current humanity. The purpose for the past is to settle and pay off all outstanding debts. The aim toward the future is to set a foundation for human liberation to create an evolutionary ladder after the present human life.*³⁷⁰

Like it or not, humans are bound to the Law of Evolution of the universe. It means only through the process of spiritual cultivation can humans determine their evolution in the present life and keep up with the operation of the universe. Beware that in the operation of evolution there is also the Law of Elimination,

³⁶⁹ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 4, tiết 2, mục 2.

³⁷⁰ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 4, tiết 4, mục 3.

stagnation, and degeneration. The spiritual cultivation is the only evolutionary path that helps people reach the noble end, free from all constraints of the three states that have always tightly worked with people since many past lives. To untie all the knots of the spindle of cause and effect, there is only one path: The spiritual cultivation. However, *there are innumerable cultivating practices corresponding to innumerable enlightenment capacities of sentient beings*. Man must have a supreme spirituality, an enlightened mind, and an intrinsic capacity to choose for oneself a perfect means of achieving the objectives. The (transcendental) Method of Heart will lead mankind to the eternity, as stated in Đạo Học Chí Nam scripture:

*Be conscious of the visible and impermanent matter to recognize the eternal reality, so as to enter the doorstep of the spiritual cultivation, to choose one single means, to resolve to go back.*³⁷¹

The path to the intrinsic essence of the True Heart is not difficult, so long as people are determined to step into the Way.

4.2. Method of Heart is the path of Returning to the Heart

Determination to return. That is the will throughout the process of spiritual cultivation. There are innumerable practices from low to high, from rules and precepts to elaborate training; they are important stages, but human heart is the most decisive factor.

Returning to the Heart is introspection. The Heart has many names, because from ancient times until present,

³⁷¹ Đạo Học Chí Nam; chương 4, tiết 4, mục 3.

Patriarchs, Zen Masters, as well as Taoists have all come from that Heart to attain enlightenment. Buddhists call it the Perfect Enlightenment (Viên Giác), the True Suchness (Chơn Như), the Noumenal Heart (Chơn Tâm), the Absolute Enlightened One (Như Lai), or the Original Face (Bản Lai Diện Mục). Taoists call it the Spiritual Ravine (Cốc Thân), the Golden Court (Huỳnh Đình), the Immortal Pill (Đon). Confucians call it the Oneness (Nhất), the Noumenal Center (Chính Trung) of Man. Caodaists refer to it as the Holy Master Teacher who dwells in the human enlightened heart, God Nature, God Eye, the Heart.

His Holiness the Zen Master Đức Bát Nhã Thiên Sư taught:

*The Method of Heart is profound and unfathomable. But it is necessary to know and ascertain that all the universe has only one Heart, one Way. Apart from the Heart, the Way, there is nothing. Realizing it, one can stand firmly in the state of liberation.*³⁷²

In another séance He taught:

Buddha said: “The three worlds are but one Heart, the myriad of things are but one Mind”. [I, Humble Monk, state that] only the Heart is the noumenal being, beyond the Heart everything is illusory. That Heart, when being ignorant, becomes deluded cognition. If one knows to turn cognition to Heart, deluded mind will no longer exist, and illusion spontaneously fades. Huineng’s statement is so obvious: “Fundamentally there is not a single thing.

³⁷² Đức Bát Nhã Thiên Sư; Bát Nhã Tịnh Đường, 18-05 Ất Mão (27-06-1975); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

Where is the world of dust? ". Nothing appears to be the world.³⁷³

Practitioners of spiritual cultivation must always keep their Heart every second, every minute, every hour on the path of cultivation by the introspective method. Introspection is to find the root of the six consciousnesses. The True Heart, the Original Nature, is serene, tranquil, natural, intangible, original, without consciousness. Then from where do the six consciousnesses arise? It is from the cognitive mind that consciousnesses arise. Cognition leads to discernment, which in turn, enters the cycle of grief, death, and rebirth. The six consciousnesses are attracted by the sumptuous multitude of the world, in which myriads of external scenes make the six roots of sensation induce into the six passions, and the six consciousnesses become the six turbulent demons. Thus, it is due to the six passions that induce the seven emotions, tying a person to grief and making him/her gradually depart from the Way.

Human beings are inseparable from social life. By practicing introspection without respite, people can achieve the perfect equanimity for enlightenment and deliverance. They still live and integrate in humanity and society; yet, they always have in mind the transcendence, getting beyond the splendor of fame, fortune, love, and wealth that rush mankind into abysses. May everyone pursue the permanence, and not waste a lifetime of energy to culminate the impermanent things in this world.

³⁷³ Đức Bát Nhã Thiên Sư; Bát Nhã Tịnh Đường, Tuất thời, 26-05 Bính Thìn (23-06-1976); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

In Đạo Học Chí Nam scripture, His Holiness Đức Thánh Trần and His Holiness the Zen Master Đức Vạn Hạnh Thiền Sư taught as follows:

*Be conscious that there are countless methods to train the Mind, direct the Heart to the supreme apex. To cross the river, one should use a dingey; but after reaching the shore, one should leave the dingey. Nothing, even a blurred shade, can be left in the human enlightened spirit. What a great Method of Heart for the ultimate objective of saving all beings!*³⁷⁴

Enlightened people should demonstrate the outcomes of their cultivation in human society, and culminate the four boundless minds: love, compassion, inner joy, and detachment, because:

*Love will redeem all sources of sin, will be the miraculous medicament to cure all illnesses of mankind. Love is the key to freeing people from the sea of worldly grief, the path that takes people up the evolutionary ladder. The throne of Buddha and Immortal is appraised by love.*³⁷⁵

4.3. Method of Heart is the path of body preservation.

In addition to the spirit, humans also have the body. The body is also an important issue on the path of spiritual cultivation. The body helps humans cultivate to evolve. The body is formed by the Four Constituents (soil, water, wind, fire), and thanks to the interactions of the Yin-Yang and the Five Elements, the body is

³⁷⁴ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 4, tiết 4, mục 3.

³⁷⁵ Đạo Học Chí Nam, chương 4, tiết 3, mục 3.

preserved. The cultivator must nurture and maintain the body intact, respectfully preserve it until the end of one's lifetime, protect it from damage, imbue it, or retardation. It is because the body is the means; lacking it, the cultivator can hardly restore the Golden Body. The body is like a ferry, the boat for the cultivator to cross the sea of grief and arrive at the basin of True Suchness.

The reason why the body is not disintegrated or corrupted when the person is living is because the Absolute Being is the lord of all creatures, also is the root of the dynamic Spirit-Energy in humans as well as in all beings. That Spirit-Energy encompasses everything, nowhere is without it. The primordial energy in the universe and the original energy in humans are one. That original energy becomes the Pre-Genesis Energy when the cultivator practices the Method of Heart. Empty Heart results in transparent Spirit; therefore, Energy follows Spirit to become penetrating and enlightening.

Eastern Medicine teaches people to understand and nurture the body and mind, so that the pure essence in human body is abundant to activate the Spirit, flow the Energy, and invigorate the Quintessence, resulting in a radiant composure, a good-looking built, and a calm and transcendent appearance.

How do those Three Treasures circulate in the body? And how do they relate in the body? Medicine states: Blood is the root of Quintessence. Quintessence is the origin of Energy. If in the body, for some reasons, Spirit is not sufficiently dynamic to lead Energy, and Energy is not adequately flowing to preserve Quintessence, then Quintessence cannot transmute into Energy, resulting in the imbalance of these Three Treasures. Consequently, illnesses are generated, both

body and mind are unstable and weak, let alone the ability to cultivate and form the Immortality Pill.

In addition to the internal cultivation to preserve Quintessence, Energy, and Spirit, there are also external methods for body invigoration and the magic of mouth-water production to assist in the cultivating process. That is the comprehensive cultivation of body and mind in the spiritual method of the Great Way.

5. CONDITIONS FOR RECEIVING THE METHOD OF HEART

These are the rules for those who want to enter the Spiritual Way and are intended to remind newcomers to the path of spiritual cultivation. From the beginning, they must determine their intents and will, so that later they will not get into difficulties. At least they should meet the following conditions:

1) Enter the door of Cao Dai. His Holiness the Spiritual Pope Đức Lý Giáo Tông taught:

*For those who enter the school of spiritual cultivation, the first thing is to come before Cao Dai and knock on Cao Dai's door. The door of Cao Dai will open when comes the person having predestined disposition with Cao Dai.*³⁷⁶

2) Observe the precepts and rules. His Holiness the Spiritual Pope Đức Lý Giáo Tông taught:

³⁷⁶ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Hội thời, 15-01 Tân Dậu (19-02-1981); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

The second condition is to learn the rules of Cao Dai and next, is to observe the precepts and commandments of the Great Way.³⁷⁷

3) Have predestined disposition. His Holiness the Zen Master Đức Bát Nhã Thiên Sư taught:

You were fortunately destined to receive the true cultivation method of spiritual tradition directly passed down, to practice and attain the superior status; and all humans were also fortunately destined to be in the Grand Amnesty at the end of the three-era transformation cycle of the universe.³⁷⁸

4) Have the willpower to cut off intimacy, fame, money, hatred, In the Verbal Quotes for the Preparatory Level of Meditation taught by Her Holiness Đức Hà Tiên Cô, there is a passage as follows:

*Leave out the worldly matters,
Observe rules of the cultivating methods,
Escape all abysses,
End intimacy, fame, money, and hatred.³⁷⁹*

5) Be determined to seek the Method of Heart, maintain full vegetarianism, and terminate intimacy. Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo scripture states this:

Plant-based diets benefit the spiritual, whereas animal-based foods nourish the temporal. If animal-based dieters practice esoteric exercises, their True Spirit is heavy and sullied

³⁷⁷ Đức Giáo Tông Vô Vi Đại Đạo; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Hội thời, 15-01 Tân Dậu (19-02-1981); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

³⁷⁸ Đức Bát Nhã Thiên Sư; Bát Nhã Tịnh Đường, Hội thời, 21-05 Quý Sửu (21-06-1973); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

³⁷⁹ Đức Hà Tiên Cô; Căn Bản Dự Bị Huyền Công.

*by the energy of the temporal and can barely exit the Intermediary Realm.*³⁸⁰

6) Amass work of merit and boost work of discipline.

Work of merit is the foundation for work of meditation. Work of discipline is the persistence in doing something. These two types of work form a solid foundation for work of meditation; if they are weak, the cultivator's steps in exercising the Method of Grand Vehicle will not be stable.

7) Walk the path the sooner the better.

His Holiness Đức Bảo Pháp Chơn Quân Huỳnh Chơn once reminded as follows:

*Those who have entered the spiritual cultivation in the Great Way, especially the youth, having full vitality and plenty of energy, can easily achieve enlightenment...*³⁸¹

His Holiness the Zen Master Đức Bát Nhã Thiền Sư also emphasized:

Indeed, in the Third Universal Salvation, particularly here in Vietnam, this people definitely need the virtuous children who devote their full lives to the spiritual cultivation so that they are of value commensurate with those of

³⁸⁰ Đức Nam Phương Giáo Chủ; 22-09 Bính Tý (5 Novembre 1936); *Đại Thừa Chơn Giáo* (bản in 1956), bài “Điều Cần Yếu Của Người Luyện Đạo”, tr. 185, or *Cao Dai Great Way: The Grand Cycle of Esoteric Teaching*, chapter “Practice Esoteric Exercises”, pp. 225 – 227, trans. Anh-Tuyet Tran, Cao Dai Temple Overseas, 2015.

³⁸¹ Đức Bảo Pháp Chơn Quân Huỳnh Chơn; *Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Hội thời*, 12-11 Tân Dậu (07-12-1981); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

*the divinely appointed missionaries in the Third Universal Salvation.*³⁸²

8) Be able to receive the oral tradition and heart-to-heart correspondence. Her Holiness the Divine Mother Đức Vô Cực Từ Tôn taught this:

*The Way is sublimely mystic, but the Way is also very conspicuously empty. The reason why the teaching must still be orally transmitted like before is because when your delusional mind is not completely terminated, you perform the meditation erroneously, deviating from the basis, attracting misfortune to your own body. That is why the Method of Heart must be orally or heart-to-heart transmitted.*³⁸³

9) Be initiated in the Way. His Holiness Đức Đông Phương Chương Quân taught:

*Indeed, the ultimate mission of the Third Salvation is not the same as in ancient times when the True Teaching was passed down by mortals; now it requires the initiation of the Divine.*³⁸⁴

6. STEPLADDER OF THE METHOD OF HEART

The True Teaching of the Great Way bestowed by God comprises multiple steps of the spiritual cultivation from the beginning to the more advanced levels in the

³⁸² Đức Bát Nhã Thiên Sư; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Hội thời, 12-11 Tân Dậu (07-12-1981); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

³⁸³ Đức Vô Cực Từ Tôn; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tuất thời, 20-11 Ất Ty (12-12-1965); Thánh Giáo Sư Tập.

³⁸⁴ Đức Đông Phương Chương Quân; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Tuất thời, 28-05 Tân Hợi (20-06-1971); Thánh Giáo Nguyên Bản.

Method of Heart. The goal is for the cultivators to move forward sequentially. Those steps are not separate methods and none of them is lower or higher than the other. Each practice follows the sequence for the purpose of training the body, training the mind, and cultivating the virtue before practicing the meditation method. Spiritual cultivators who want to proceed easily and stably in their practice should not get entangled in scenarios such as:

Delaying the spiritual cultivation for too long and/or leaving considerable lapse of time between two consecutive levels in the cultivation process. (For instance, fifteen to twenty years between the two consecutive classes). Time flies fast, age piles up, spirit wears out; when the delaying person is eager to start the cultivation, his death may readily come in procession.

Rushing in the cultivation process to hastily level up while insufficiently spending time in the lower level. That is like ‘young bananas are pressed to quickly ripen’. Due to such desire and false hope, the cultivator would hardly succeed in the Method of Heart.

Skipping steps to reach advanced levels without acquiring the first ones. Due to the discernment of low and high level, the cultivator has not yet acquired virtues but wants to cultivate at high levels. That is also a hindrance in the cultivating process.

God imparted the True Method of the Great Way for humans to exercise until attaining enlightenment to evade the cycle of birth and death. He also wanted the

ultimate salvation of mankind; hence, at the same time as the transmission of the True Method of the Great Way, He opened the opportunity for salvation of the Third Grand Amnesty. Those who enter the cultivation of the True Method of the Great Way are saved or blessed or relieved from pre-existing karma. The True Method of the Great Way is arranged in a sequence of levels and each level has a sense of elaborate cultivation and transcendent virtue. In each level, there are learning assistants who explain and perform the demonstration, so the cultivators can grasp the method significance and implement it. These learning assistants received the initiation from the Divine and were blessed with the privilege to teach as well as to monitor the cultivator's progress. All are imparted by the Divine. That means spiritual cultivators learn the intangible Way from the impersonal Master via the demonstration performed by the learning assistants in charge. It is an expression of God-Man Union in Cao Dai religion, which is very special and very meaningful.

The True Method of the Great Way is bestowed and transmitted throughout the Cao Dai Churches. Even the Method of Heart practiced by disciples of Chiếu Minh Esoteric Cenacle is also originated from the True Method of the Great Way. At Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý Đại Đạo (Institute for the Teaching of the Great Way), the Method of Heart is organized in the following sequence of levels:

Cấp Dự Bị (the Preparatory Level) mainly teaches the cultivators to take control of the body, the breath, and the mind.

Cấp Sơ Thiền Cửu Cửu (the Elementary Level of Meditation, the Class on the Nine of Nine-Days Practice) teaches the training of

body, speech, thought, and the shutting-off of the five senses.

Cấp Sơ Thiên Cẩm Đoạn, Sơ Thiên Tiên Đạo bậc 1 và bậc 2 (the Elementary Level of Meditation, the Class on the Exercises of Immortals; and the Upgraded Level, Class 1 and Class 2) teaches the method to forge a radiant composure and well-built body.

Cấp Nhị Cơ (The Second Level) teaches the method to unblock the energy flow in the Ren and Du meridians.

Cấp Ngũ Hành Âm Dương (The Level on the Five Elements and the Yin-Yang pair) teaches the method to circulate the energy flow through the breath and the blood.

Cấp Bá Nhật Trúc Cơ và Thập Nguyệt Hoài Thai (The Level on the One-Hundred Days Practice and the Ten Month of Conceiving) teaches the method of self-forging.

Cấp Tam Niên Nhũ Bộ (The Level on the Three Years of Nurturing) teaches the method to prepare the Immortality Pill.

Cấp Cửu Niên Diện Bích (The Level on the Nine Years of Wall Facing) to attain enlightenment.

And other advanced levels ...

At all levels, there is a coordination between the Ancient Method and the New Method of the Great Way, the perfect coordination for the path of spiritual cultivation.

7. BENEFITS OF SPIRITUAL CULTIVATION

If the cultivators strictly follow the True Method of the Great Way, persistently practice the exercises being taught, wholeheartedly cultivate, and devote every hour, every minute, every second to the elaborate meditation, they will gain results such as:

Result 1:

Freeing from all illnesses.

Being in harmony with the universe and humanity in the spirit of transcendence.

Living in wisdom throughout one's lifetime.

Result 2:

Attaining enlightenment right on earth (becoming Saint), capable of guiding mankind into the path of holiness.

Achieving the Golden Body and evading the cycle of reincarnation.

Result 3:

Achieving the six transcendental powers, being able to enter and exit all realms, saving sentient beings.

Ascending to the nine heavens, having the ability to contact the divine realm.

Penetrating the three worlds, attaining enlightenment, having the ability to enter and exit all worlds.

All of the above is just an outline. Those who are predestined will receive the True Method of the Great Way. May they step on the ladder of spiritual

cultivation to transcendently evolve and build the eternal happiness for themselves as well as for others.

8. CONCLUSION

Heaven-Earth and all beings begin from the One, the Center, that is called the Way, the Origin of the universe and all creatures. From there, all beings are engendered; thanks to it, all beings are stable; due to it, all beings operate in order, in harmony, and lively transform. Among all beings, mankind is the most miraculous. By the path of spiritual cultivation, people are more capable than other species in attaining spiritual enlightenment to return to God.

Indeed, spiritual cultivation is essential for humans. Entering the path of spiritual cultivation, one must leave the tip to search for the root, not be dominated by external circumstances that are only ephemeral and temporary illusions. Instead, one should turn inwards, control emotions and cognition, nurture body and mind, and improve virtues. In secular life, one should participate in building a peaceful and strong community, applying the Four Boundless Minds - Love, Compassion, Inner joy, and Detachment – in interactions with other beings. In that way, people can stand firmly among the Triad of Heaven-Earth universe.

And in this way, man will reach the ultimate point of evolution, the final destination of the journey to achieving Buddhahood or attaining Immortal stance or becoming a Sage to lead mankind. These are the results of the deep practice of the True Method of the Great Way to save all beings.

OVERALL SYNOPSIS

A COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY

The essentials in the teaching of the Great Way are like the cross-sections of a diamond, depending on the angle, they reflect every ray of light of the Truth. These essentials, harmonizing with each other like the beauty of a diamond, must be a combination of colorful rays of light emanating from its section. The issues that these essentials have raised one after another, regardless of which of the aspects being discussed, are not isolated or separated from the others. None of these essentials can be independent; they are always related or involved in one or more other issues, and vice versa.

Therefore, although the essentials are divided into chapters and sections, after all, they are so intertwined with each other that it is hard to separate them. But if one fully comprehends all the essentials and summarize all the chapters and sections, one can realize that the most basic content of this informative presentation about the essentials encompasses three main correlations:

- Correlation between the universe and humans

- Correlation between God and humans
 - Correlation between individual humans and social humans
- 1) Correlation between the universe and humans is the one-root, one-nature, and one-essence relationship. One root because everyone comes from the same essence, which is the Way, the Primordial Energy of Nothingness, the Non-Being. One nature because everyone is a Spark of Divine Light emanated from the one Globe of Divine Light, which is the Supreme Being. Such a human being is an intrinsic constituent closely associated with the universe. The presence of humans in the universe is to coordinate with the universe, adorn the universe, and promote the evolution of the universe, including the evolution of humans themselves.
 - 2) Correlation between God and humans is the one-essence (the divine light) relationship. Therefore, God is omnipresent, innately exists in every human being and is called God Nature (or the nature of God). Faith directed to God is not to shape religious worship rituals, but to unleash the God Nature hidden in humans. To realize God's existence, one should look inwardly to find the God within oneself (the Intrinsic God). Feeling the Intrinsic God is the basic step for humans to develop God Nature and perceive the Extrinsic God in everywhere, in everyone, in everything.
 - 3) Correlation between individual humans and social humans is the natural consequence of the two relationships mentioned above. One recognizes that every member of the human community shares the

one-essence with God, also shares the one-root (one-origin) and the one-nature with the universe; it means everyone has God Nature. Therefore, the evolution of individual human beings is necessarily associated with the common evolution of human society. In other words, the correlation between individual humans and social humans is the spiritual and temporal relationship.

The evolutionary mechanism operates collectively throughout the universe. Like it or not, each individual and each society is influenced and dominated by this mechanism. On the level of individual humans, those who are evolving promote human root, live and act according to human dignity, and are worthy of being human. Individuals who promote human root are the seed, the glue in this corruptive and divisive humanity; they will develop and link communities into an evolutionary society, in which mankind will live in love, fraternity, and harmony. It is the love that humans receive from God and they follow God's example to spread and share it with fellow citizens, with fellow human beings, and even with all living beings.

Recognizing the three basic correlations is not merely for intellectual satisfaction, but to use this knowledge to direct and guide actions so they are practical in life. To be more specific, thanks to the recognition of these three basic correlations, humans can:

- Assert one's own root and one's noble lineage.
- Know where one comes from and what one must do to be worthy of human stance in the **Equal Triad**, Heaven-Earth-Man.
- Know that the **Human Mission** must be accomplished to bring happiness to oneself, to fellow

citizens, to fellow human beings, and to all living beings.

- Know the **Mission of Grand Vehicle** that humans are honored to undertake in the stance of **God-Man Union**, to cooperate with God and contribute to the implementation of the Third Universal Salvation.

- And finally, **return to the Origin**, closing the cycle:

*Your Holy Master Teacher assigns you a two-way mission,
One is leaving and the other, returning to Him.*³⁸⁵

Throughout the journey of leaving and returning to God the Holy Master Teacher, thanks to the illuminating teaching and the invigorating Method of Heart, one can step-by-step fully implement the Work of merit, Work of discipline, and Work of meditation according to the method of Triple Work of the Great Way for the Third Universal Salvation. People of the Great Way are determined to move up on the evolutionary ladder and help all beings to advance, to rise to reunite with God the Holy Master Teacher. When humanness is fully developed, the God Nature in humans is unleashed, developed, and manifested in the people of the Great Way, creating *mystic power* of the entity for redemption in the third era.

To ensure that human society will be happy in love without boundaries, not only between races and/or social classes, but also between mankind and all beings; to successfully experiment with the *principle of*

³⁸⁵ Đức Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế; Cơ Quan Phổ Thông Giáo Lý, Hội thời, 30 tháng Chạp Quý Sửu (22-01-1974); Thánh Giáo Sư Tập.

Heaven, Earth, and All Beings are One, proving that all are brothers and sisters on the path of evolution, expressing universal love that spreads across the frontiers with its full meaning; then ***humanness must be the forefront in people of the Great Way***.

To achieve the ***complete liberation***, the *Spiritual Way of Grand Vehicle*, including the Method of Heart for Nature-Body Cultivation and the mission of *thorough salvation – the True Method of the Great Way* or the *New Method of Cao Dai* – in the Third Universal Salvation, will achieve the comprehensive salvation of individuals and of all humanity.

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