TRAD101
Languages & Cultures of East Asia

Interrelationship of Confucianism, Taoism & Buddhism
Taoism and Confucianism

- Confucianism & Taoism have their common roots in I Ching (or Yi Jing, *Book of Changes*)
- the oldest of the Chinese classic texts
I Ching 易經

- 易 (yì)
  - Adj. "easy" or "simple"
  - V. "to change" or 'to exchange/ substitute one thing for another'.

- 經 (jīng)
  - original meaning: "regularity" or "persistency"
  - "classic (text)" here, implying that the text describes the Ultimate Way which will not change throughout the flow of time.
  - This same character was later appropriated to translate the Sanskrit word 'sūtra' into Chinese in reference to Buddhist scripture.
  - In this sense the two concepts, in as much as they mean 'treatise,' 'great teaching,' or 'canonical scripture,' are equivalent.
Three implications:

- Simplicity - the root of the substance.
  - The fundamental law underlying everything in the universe is utterly plain and simple, no matter how abstruse or complex some things may appear to be.

- Variability - the use of the substance.
  - Everything in the universe is continually changing. By comprehending this one may realize the importance of flexibility in life and may thus cultivate the proper attitude for dealing with a multiplicity of diverse situations.

- Persistency - the essence of the substance.
  - While everything in the universe seems to be changing, among the changing tides there is a persistent principle, a central rule, which does not vary with space and time.
Ba Gua

- set of 64 abstract line arrangements called *hexagrams* (卦 guà)
- Each hexagram is a figure composed of six stacked horizontal lines (爻 yáo).
- Each line is either Yang (an *unbroken*, or *solid* line), or Yin (*broken*, an *open* line with a gap in the center).
- With six such lines stacked from bottom to top there are 26 or 64 possible combinations, and thus 64 hexagrams represented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earth</th>
<th>Mountain</th>
<th>Water</th>
<th>Wind</th>
<th>Thunder</th>
<th>Fire</th>
<th>Lake</th>
<th>Heaven</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☵️🌫️กำไร囵</td>
<td>☵️กำไร囵囵囵囵</td>
<td>☵️กำไร囵囵囵囵</td>
<td>☵️กำไร囵囵囵囵</td>
<td>☵️กำไร囵囵囵囵</td>
<td>☵️กำไร囵囵囵囵</td>
<td>☵️กำไร囵囵囵囵</td>
<td>☵️กำไร囵囵囵囵</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ba Gua

- Terence McKenna Time and the I Ching 1
  [http://youtube.com/watch?v=IyzdbHvwKDU](http://youtube.com/watch?v=IyzdbHvwKDU)
• The ancient Chinese philosophy, science and art that studies the way that life energy (Chi/Qi) flows throughout the environment and the spaces that we inhabit.

• Experience has shown that by creating balanced and harmonious places in which to live and work in, the quality of our lives can be greatly enhanced.
Art of Placement
HSBC in Hongkong
Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre
I Ching & Shinto

- The Chinese 'I Ching' played a significant role in the shifting relations between Shinto and Confucianism during the Tokugawa period (1603-1868) in Japan.
- During the early Tokugawa period, the 'I Ching' was used to support the unity of Shinto and Confucianism.
I Ching & Korean Flag

Korea, 1893
Royal Korean Consulate in Hamburg 1893
I Ching & Korean Flag

Pre-1905

Post 1984
Taoism and Confucianism

- Some scholars claim that:
  - Confucianism focusing on “Order”, inspired by I Ching;
  - Taoism on “Change”, also inspired by I Ching.

- Taoism & Confucianism, as old traditions, shaped Asian culture for more than 2,000 years.
Taoism and Confucianism

• Taoism:
  – spontaneity & natural kinds follow ways appropriate to themselves.
  – Taoism emphasizes natural societies with no artificial institutions.
  – Often skeptical and sarcastic on human values such as morality, benevolence and proper behavior, many Taoists do not share the Confucian belief in civilization as a way to build a better world.
  – They share the will to live alone in the mountains or as simple peasants in small autarchic villages.
Taoism and Confucianism

• Just like Yin and Yang circling together, Taoism complements Confucianism to the wholeness of Asian culture, although they are opposites sometimes on the topic of human perfection.

– Confucius: the responsibilities to society.

• A perfect man: loyal to his lord, obedient to his parents, benevolent to others, respect elders and protect the young.

• All these behaviors must be under a good manner and proper courtesy with honesty.

• Individual persons are family members in a family-like society. They fulfill their obligations and then enjoy the rights of society.
Taoism and Confucianism

– Lao Zi praises humans’ relationship to nature.

• He believes that the real good behaviors are spontaneous and natural.

• Circumspect they seemed, like one who in winter crosses a stream, watchful, as one who must meet danger on every side. Ceremonious, as one who pays a visit; yet yielding, as ice when it begins to melt. Blank as a piece of uncarved wood; yet receptive as a hollow in the hills. Murky, as a troubled stream…(Chapter 15)
Taoism and Confucianism

- Confucius focuses on the human.
  - In *The Analects*, when Confucius’ student “Ji-lu ask how one should serve ghosts and spirits.
    The master said, Till you have learnt to serve men, how can you serve ghosts?” (11:11)
  - Confucius also asks Fan Chi to “respect for the Spirits but keep them at a distance.” (6:20)
  - Confucius does not deny the existence of ghosts and spirits, but he asks people to get close to humans more, and to walk on the right side with hard working, rather than beg to ghosts and spirits for favors without any great efforts.
Taoism and Confucianism

• Lao Zi: what transcends the human being
  – Humans existing as individuals have already disappeared into the vast and solitary nature, becoming an endurable and continuous movement in the Tao.

• Confucius roams within society, Lao Zi wanders beyond...Chinese civilization would certainly have been poorer if either had not appeared.
Taoism and Confucianism

• As for individuals:
  – they follow Confucius’ principles in society
  – in the individual spiritual realm, they become Taoists

• Ideal intellectuals are usually considered to be
  “Confucianism outside, Taoism inside,”
  – which enables them free to advance or retreat in their lives.
  – “When the Way prevails under Heaven, then show yourself;
    when it does not prevail, then hide.” (Dao De Jing 8:13)
Taoism/ Confucianism & Buddhism

- Taoism/ Confucianism & Buddhism:
  - influencing each other in many ways
  - competing for influence.
- The arrival of Buddhism forced Taoism & Confucianism to renew and restructure itself and address mystical questioning raised by Buddhism.
- Buddhism was seen as a kind of foreign Taoism and its scriptures were translated into Chinese with Taoist vocabulary.
- Zhuang Zi (Taoist) philosophy especially influenced the Chinese form of Buddhism known as Chan, which later developed into the Japanese form of Zen.
Some Scholars try to integrate these three philosophies:

- Confucianism focusing on “Order”, inspired by I Ching;
- Taoism on “Change”;
- Buddhism on the beginning & ending of “Change”.
Three Patriarchs, Mt. Kongtong 崆峒山, China
Famous Taoist Mountain, Gānsu Province, China
Buddha (curled hair), Lao Tzu (center), Confucius
崆峒山 = Japanese = Mt. Kōtōsan or Mt. Kotosan
Taoism, Confucianism & Buddhism

Three Laughers
by Syōhaku Soga
曽我蕭白 +1730-1781
Birth of Monkey

Demons take away the Master

Country cart slow
Journey to the West

**Buddhism** – for the Buddhism Script

**Taoism** – Monkey King’s Master & Concept of Immortality

**Confucianism** – Master & Disciples
Three Heroes of Three Kingdoms
Trustworthy & Loyalty --- Confucianism
Zhu Ge Liang’s Feng Shui -- Taoism
Dream of the Red Chamber
Taoism & Buddhism