

# Taoism (Daoism)

The Basics

# Goals

- Legend of Lao Tzu
- Meaning of Tao
- 3 Kinds of Taoism
  - Philosophical,
  - Vitalizing,
  - Religious
- Concepts:
  - Chi (Ch'i)
  - Wu Wei
  - Water
  - Yin & Yang
- Purpose of Taoist Practice



# China = Drama, Man.

Chinese civilization is falling apart. Solutions?

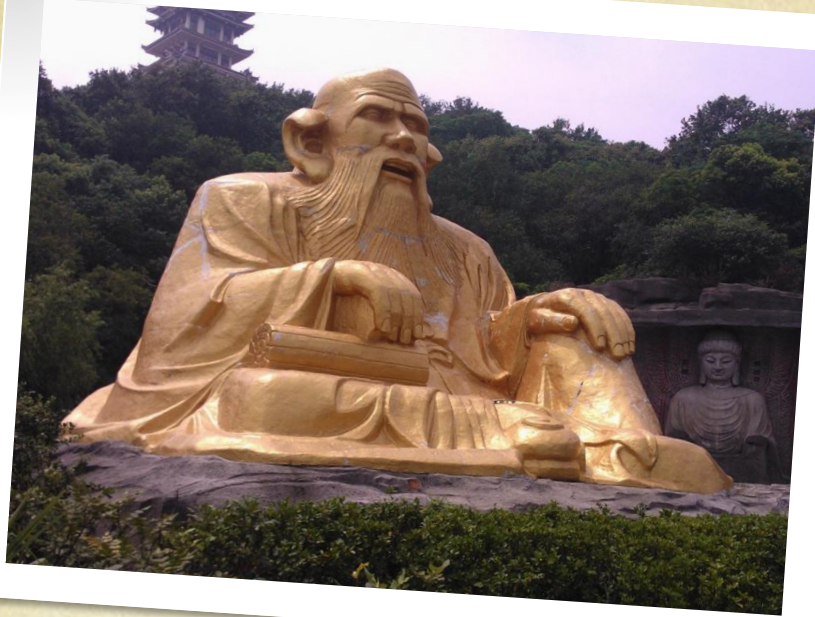
- Confucianism: Reconnect to past and intentionally create traditions.
  - Learn good behavior = Great society.
- Taoism: Reconnect to nature and “The Way”.
  - Connect to path and flow of nature = Harmonious society.





# Lao Tzu

- Born around 600 BC
- Legendary founder: 550 BC
- Both dates contested
- Real or Legend?



# Legend of LT

- Born and old wise man with flowing, white hair.
- Confucius: LT is like a dragon.
- Unhappy with Chinese society, leaves for Tibet.
- Story of the Gatekeeper:
- Writes “Tao Te Ching” in 3 days.
- Never returns.

“MASTERING OTHERS IS STRENGTH;  
MASTERING YOURSELF IS TRUE POWER.”  
- LAO TZU



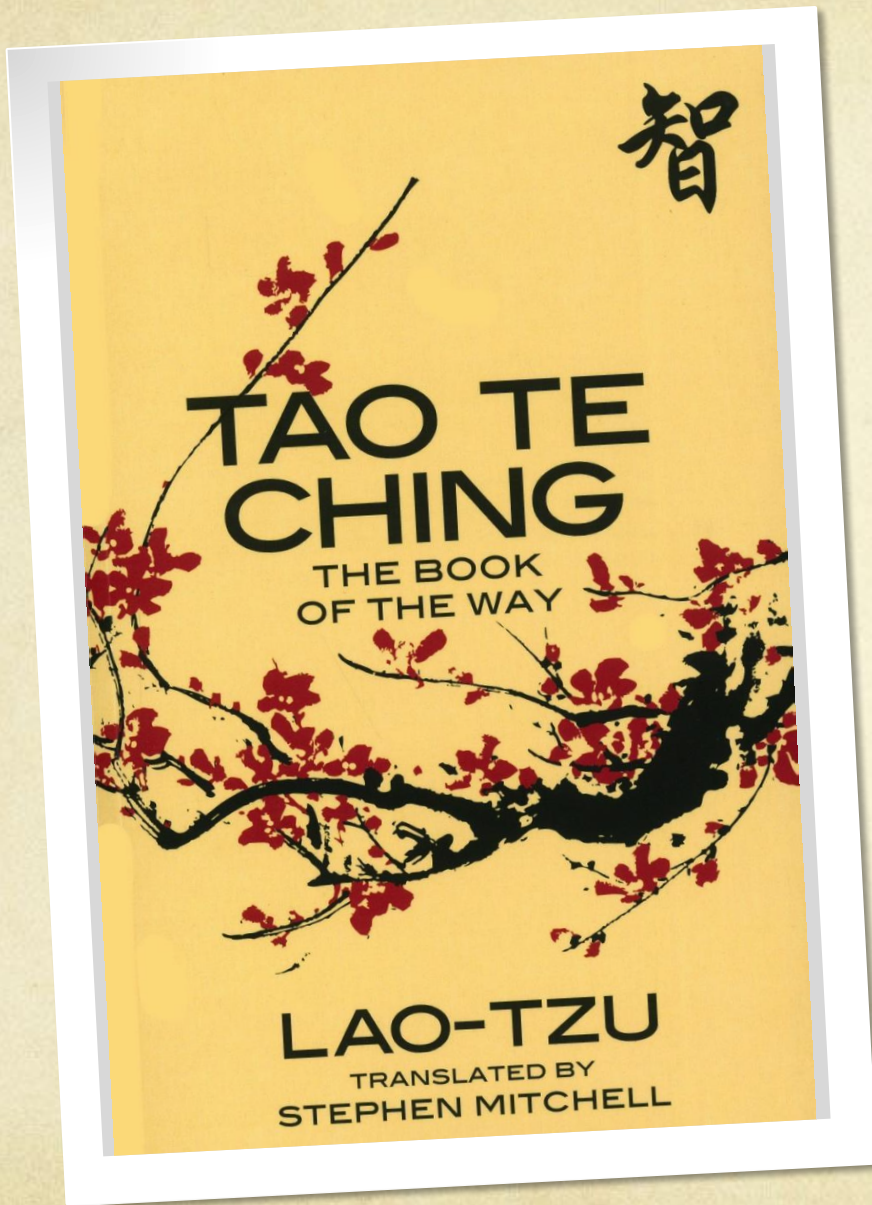
When you are content to  
be simply yourself and  
don't compare or compete,  
everybody will  
respect you.  
-Lao Tzu



<https://www.facebook.com/UniversalMindZendo>

## Legend of LT

- Unlike Buddha: Never taught or preached.
- Unlike Confucius: Never desired any position of power.

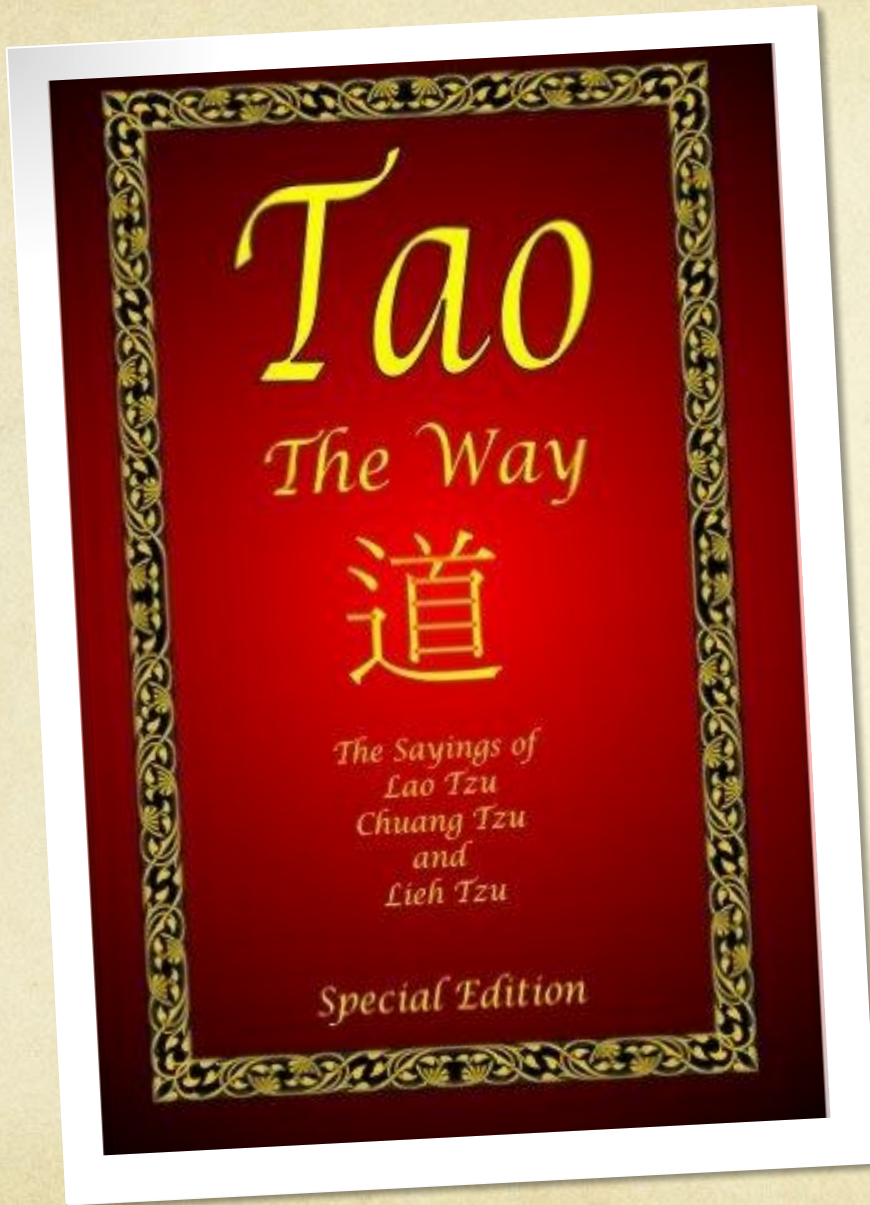


# “Tao Te Ching”

- “The Way (tao) and its Power (te)”
- Foundational text of Taoism.
- Probably written by many authors, around 350 BC.

# 3 Meanings of Tao “The Way”

- (1) The Way of Ultimate Reality
- (2) The Way of Nature (The Universe)
- (3) The Way of Human Life\*





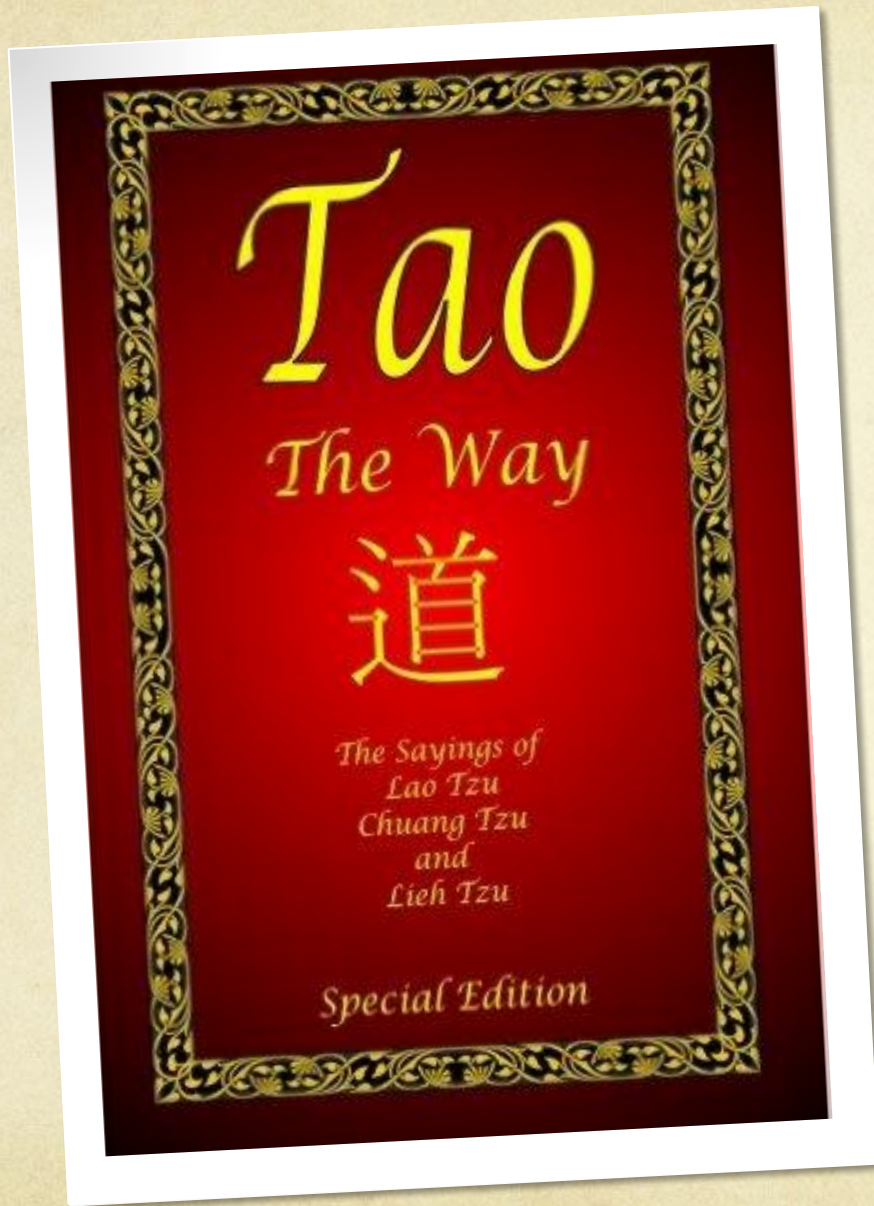


# Tao's closest resemblance

- Like Water...
- More on this later.

Lao Tzu said: "Everything in the universe leads to tao just like various waters flow into the great seas."



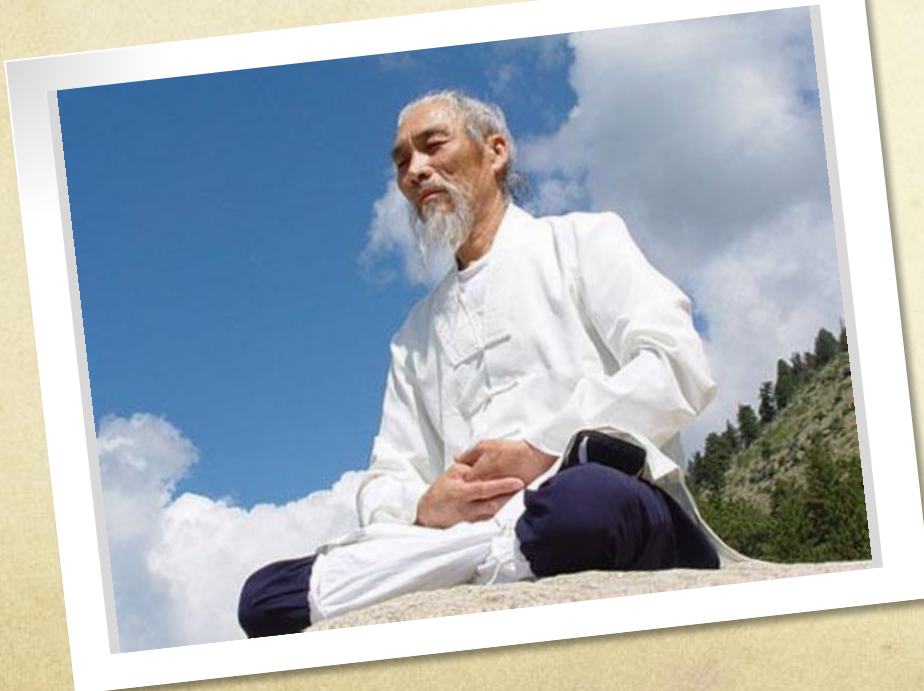


## 3 Kinds of Taoism

- (1) Philosophical Taoism (PT)
- (2) Vitalizing Taoism (VT)
- (3) Religious Taoism (RT)

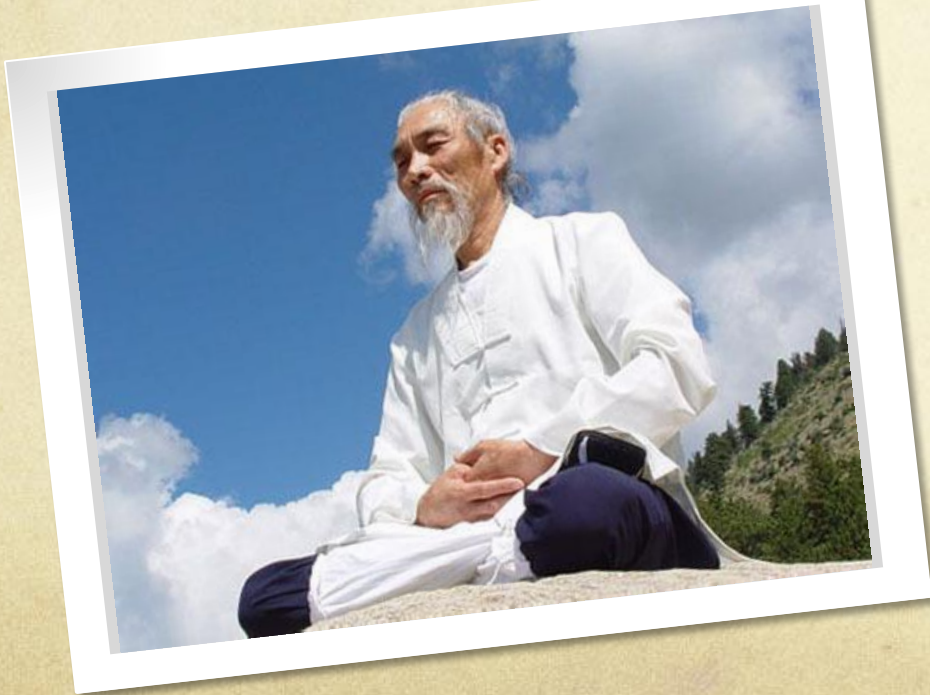
# I. Philosophical (PT)

- Knowledge is Power
- Chi (Ch'i) = Power of Tao flowing through us.
- Wise people conserve Chi.
- Foolish people waste Chi on friction and conflict.



# I. Philosophical (PT)

- We conserve Chi by practicing “Wu Wei”.
  - “Pure Effectiveness”
  - More on this later.
- Best action = Action that minimizes friction and conflict.
- Example?

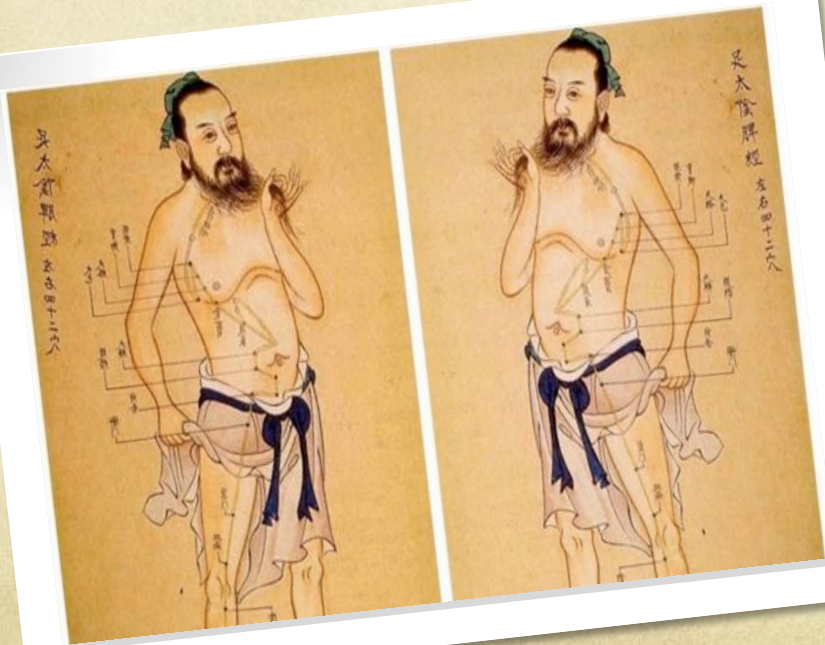


## 2. Vitalizing (VT)

Chi can be increased through training.

We maximize Chi through:

- Matter:
  - Food, Herbs, Sex
- Movement:
  - Dance, Acupuncture
- Mind:
  - Raj Yoga – Meditation
  - Draw Chi to Heart-Mind, spread it to others.





## 2. Vitalizing (VT)

- Clean minds + Clean bodies = Clean slate
- Clean slate = Chi is no longer blocked and flows through us to the max.



### 3. Religious (RT)

- Developed 300 AD
- Speculation, mystery and ritual as an institution.
- Lao Tzu is a god in RT.
- Authority: Bringing power of Tao to the people and empowers them to connect to it.



# All 3 Working Together

Smith: Like different currents in the same river (207).

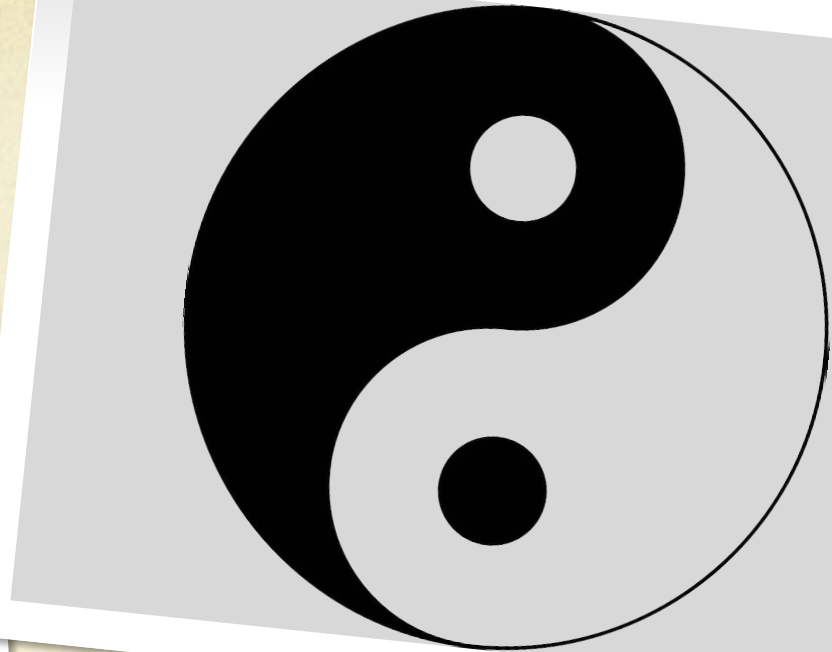
- To know X (PT)
- To be X (VT)
- To be capable of X (RT)
- Together, they let people rise above the material world.





**“Silence  
is a source  
of great  
strength”**

Lao Tzu



# Concepts of Taoism

- Chi (Ch'i) – Got it?
- Wu Wei
- “Being like water”
- Ying and Yang

無為

**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
WU  
WEI**

## More on Wu Wei

- “Inaction” doesn’t mean “Non-Response”
- Implies the ideal action or “pure effectiveness”
- Ideal action = Action with no friction.



## Ex. Boulder in Our Path

Q: Best Action?

- A. Move it.
- B. Climb over it.
- C. Walk around the boulder.
- D. Blow it up, dude.



## Ex. Boulder in Our Path

Solution: What would water do?

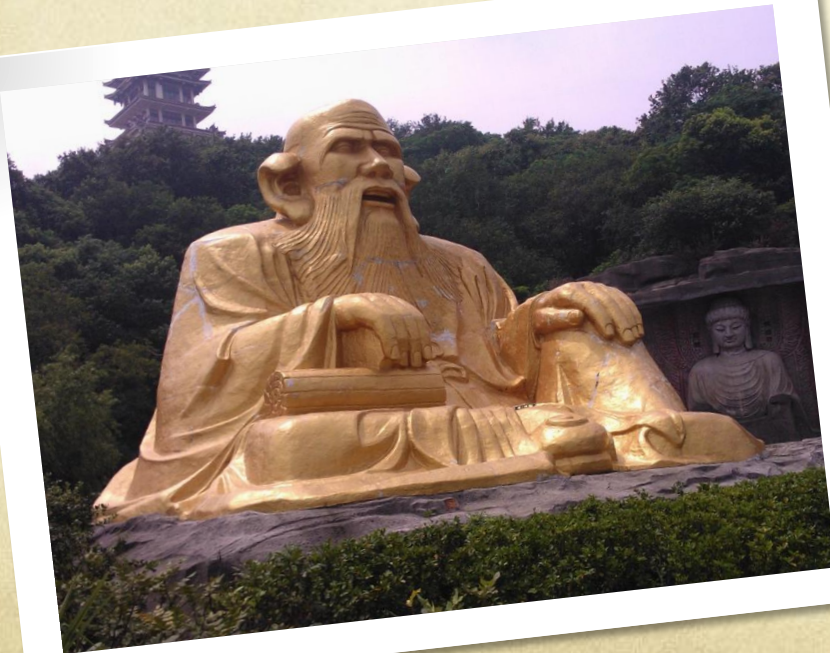
- A. Move the boulder. (Confucius)
- B. Climb the boulder. (Western Culture)
- C. Walk around the boulder. (Tao)**
- D. Blow it up, dude. ('Merica)



# Opposite of Confucius

**Confucius:** Make a path, learn the patterns, practice the patterns.

- Intentional and willful mastery of the self.



**Taoism:** Discover the path, discover the patterns, connect to the patterns.

- Spontaneous and organic knowledge of the self.

# Tao of Water

- Sustains life
- Needs no directions
- Not slow or fast...water moves as it should.
- Does not compete...water just flows as it should.
- Soft but can carve great canyons.



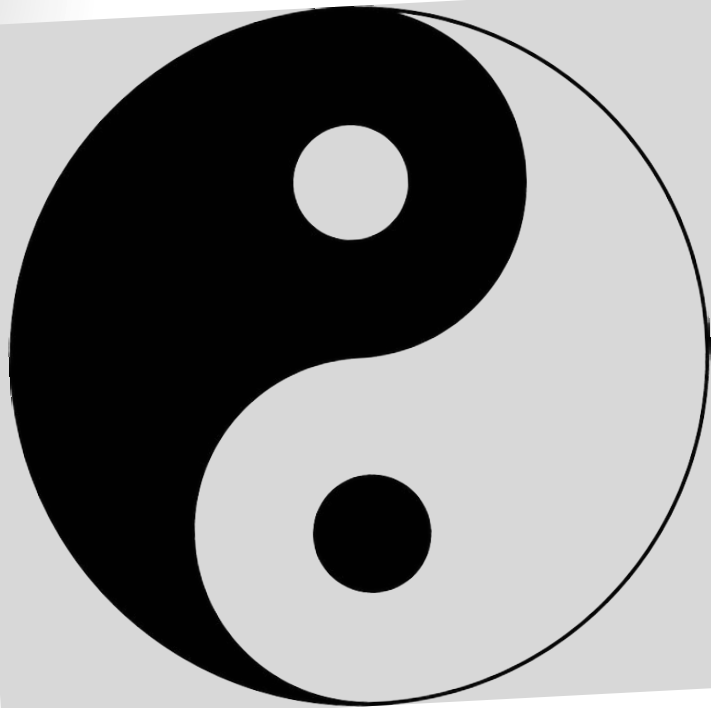
Lao Tzu said: "Everything in the universe leads to tao just like **various waters flow into the great seas.**"





## Taoism: Be Like Water

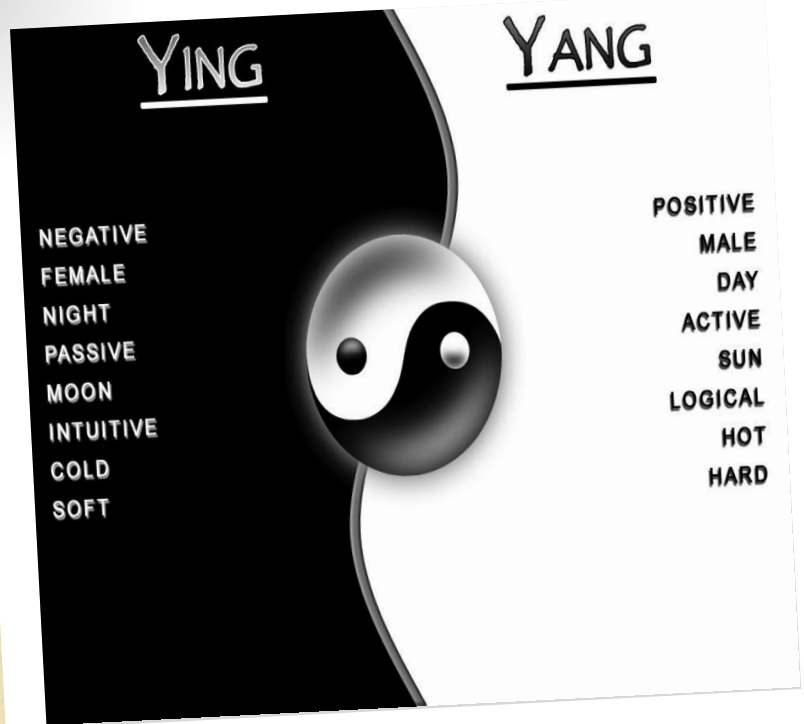
- When we are being as water, we are just being.
- When we live as water lives, we are just living.
- We are one with ourselves, nature and the universe.



# Ying and Yang

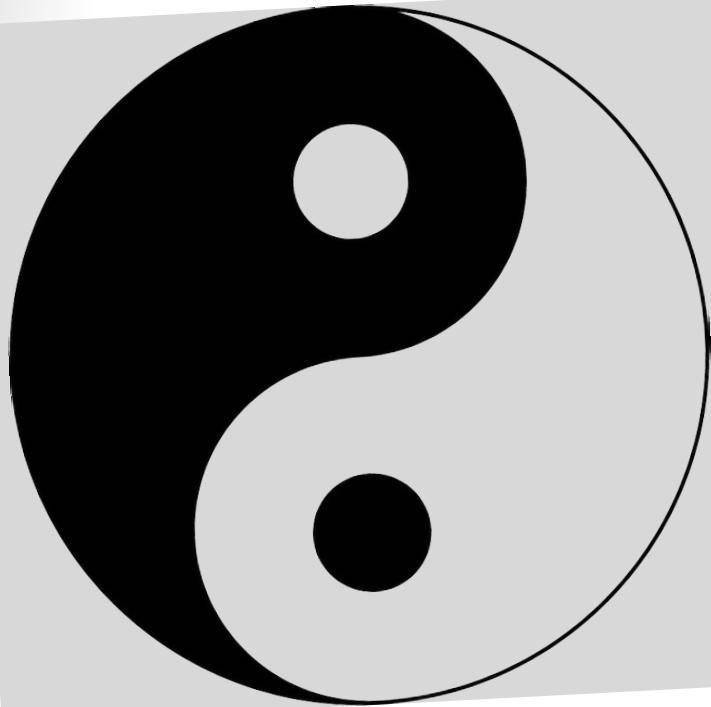
- Represents natural balance and harmony
- Doesn't mean true opposites (war).
- Means necessary tension and difference.
  
- Q: How can tension and difference create balance?
- Q<sub>2</sub>: How does it reveal truth?





## Character of Ying/Yang?

- Male – Female
- Dark – Light
- Hot – Cold
- Good – Evil\*
- Confucianism – Taoism
- Etc.
  
- NOT Right – Wrong!

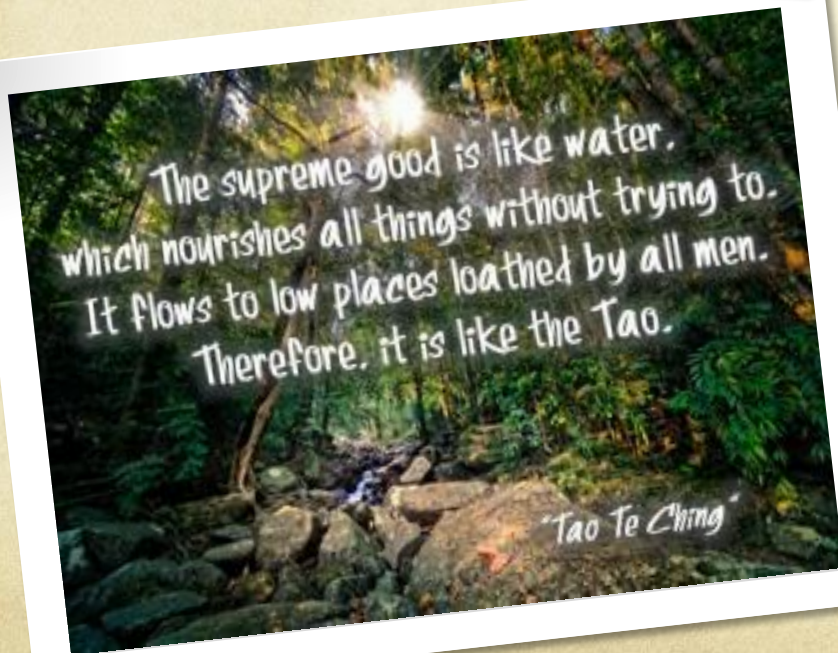


## Balance? Truth?

- One needs the other to be recognized and appreciated.
- When we meditate on the Yin/Yang, we recognize the truth of ourselves, nature and the universe.
- What does Yin and Yang reveal to you?
- How does the right image relate to Yin and Yang?

# Purpose of Taoist Practice

- Connect with the flow of nature (the universe).
- Achieve harmony with the ultimate reality.
- Achieve inner peace and spread it to others.
- ...Sound Familiar?
- Buddhism + Taoism = Zen!





# Recap

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# Recap

- Concepts:
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  - Wu Wei
  - Water
  - Yin & Yang
  
- Purpose of Taoist Practice



# End of Taoism

