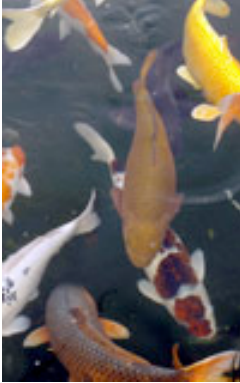


Taoism at a glance



Taoism is an **ancient tradition** of philosophy and religious belief that is deeply rooted in Chinese customs and worldview.

Taoism is also referred to as Daoism, which is a more accurate way of representing in English the sound of the Chinese word.

Taoism is about **the Tao**. This is usually translated as *the Way*. But it's hard to say exactly what this means. The Tao is the ultimate creative principle of the universe. All things are unified and connected in the Tao.

- Taoism originated in China 2000 years ago
- It is a religion of unity and opposites; **Yin and Yang**. The principle of Yin Yang sees the world as filled with complementary forces - action and non-action, light and dark, hot and cold, and so on
- The Tao is not **God** and is not worshipped. Taoism includes many **deities**, that are **worshipped** in Taoist temples, they are part of the universe and depend, like everything, on the Tao
- Taoism promotes:
 - achieving harmony or union with nature
 - **the pursuit of spiritual immortality**
 - being 'virtuous' (but not ostentatiously so)
 - self-development
- **Taoist practices** include:
 - meditation
 - feng shui
 - fortune telling
 - **reading and chanting of scriptures**

Before the Communist revolution fifty years ago, Taoism was one of the strongest religions in China. After a campaign to destroy non-Communist religion, however, the

numbers significantly reduced, and it has become difficult to assess the statistical popularity of Taoism in the world.

The 2001 census recorded 3,500 Taoists in England and Wales.

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Taoist ideas have become popular throughout the world through Tai Chi Chuan, Qigong, and various martial arts.

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Features



- **Physical practices**

Taoism recognises that physical actions have a spiritual effect and regards activities such as yoga, meditation and martial arts as important.



- **Concepts within Taoism**

This article explains some of the basic concepts of Taoism, such as yin yang, ch'i and wu wei.