

The Third Universal Salvation

大道三期普度

Tây Ninh Temple

The Junior Sacerdotal Council

Hội Thánh Em



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The League of the Junior Sacerdotal Council

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A contrapuntal couplet on the Main Entrance, which announces the purpose of Caodaism:

"Worship God and join Caodaism for democracy, peace, and freedom "

« Cao thượng Chí Tôn, Đại Đạo hòa bình dân chủ mục »
« Đài Tiên sùng bái, Tam Kỳ cộng hưởng tự do quyền »¹

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Liên Hiệp Hội Thánh Em

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¹ Đấng Chí Tôn ở trên cao hơn hết, mở ra một nền Đạo lớn, hướng tới hòa bình và dân chủ
Kính phục tôn thờ Đức Cao Đài, thời kỳ ân xá lần ba, cùng chung hưởng quyền tự do.

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Văn Hóa Cao Đài
Hệ phái Cao Đài
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2005 Le Cao daïsme, Théorie des Trois Trésors et des Cinq Fluides, Chân Tâm Publisher, California.
1995 Triết Lý Đạo Cao Đài, Minh Thiện xuất bản, Canada.
1994 Văn Hóa Việt, Năng Mới xuất bản, Canada.
1992 Religion et adaptation: les réfugiés vietnamiens au Canada, Université Laval, Canada. *
1990 Fleur de lotus et feuille d'érable, La vie religieuse des Vietnamiens du Québec, Université Laval, mars 1990*
1988 Exile in a cold land, a Vietnamese community in Canada, Yale Center, U.S.A. *
1984 Les Vietnamiens du Québec : profil sociolinguistique, Centre international de recherche sur le bilinguisme, B.136, Québec *.
1972 Hiện tình kinh tế Việt Nam, 2 tập, Lửa Thiêng xuất bản, Saigon.

Bài khảo cứu

2008 Des poids et des mesures dans les campagnes du Vietnam, École française d'Extrême-Orient, (Institut de Recherche sur le Sud-Est Asiatique, T.2, Paris*
1998 Le *Thờ Mẫu*, un chamanisme vietnamien? Anthropologie et Société, Université Laval, Québec *
1993 De quelques usages du sel dans la culture vietnamienne, Collection Grand Sud N° 4, Prince of Songkhla University, Thaïland
1990 Le caodaïsme, Fleur de lotus et feuille d'érable, La vie religieuse des Vietnamiens du Québec, Université Laval, mars 1990*
1987 Les Vietnamiens à Québec et leurs problèmes d'intégration, Centre international de recherche sur le bilinguisme, publication B-164, Canada *.
1985 The survival of the Vietnamese language in Quebec, the Vietnam forum No.6, U.S.A. *
1974 Les marais salants de la province de Bạc Liêu, Société des Études indochinoises, T.XLIX.
1968 Les formations latéritiques à Bình Dương, Société des Études indochinoises, T.XLIII.
1962 Une agglomération de sampans habités à Saigon, C.O.M., T.XV, Bordeaux. *

* co-author

Preface

Being a non-Caodaist researcher and ex-Professor of Caodai University in Tây Ninh Temple, I want to put this question to all Caodaist believers.

- The original Caodaism has legally and practically been eradicated by the evil power (accompanying document, Chap.3).
- Witnessing the eradication, which is the same as that of Judaism in the past, what do you think and do?

Consulting my worrying Caodaist friends and reading His Holiness Hộ Pháp's instructions on the role of the Junior Sacerdotal Council in chaotic times, I came up with an idea that I would write about it, especially copy the relevant papers by the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council so that all Caodaist believers can find out what to do in this bad time.

In the current situation, when there are no Caodaist leaders in Tây Ninh, whose instructions should you Caodaists follow? Everyone will definitely answer that we will follow God and Divinely Ordained Dignitaries. Hence, all Caodaist believers can practice Caodaism according to:

- Caodaist Canonical Code.
- His Holiness Hộ Pháp's Instructions on the role of the Junior Sacerdotal Council.

If everyone agrees to follow God and His Holiness Hộ Pháp, I would like to present some essential points as follows:

- The Caodaist Canonical Code.
- The Junior Sacerdotal Council in the materials of a Caodaist training course to reject the idea that the Junior Sacerdotal Council is not in accordance with the Caodaist Canonical Code or it is impractical or unknown.
- The Administrative Team of the Junior Sacerdotal Council.
- His Holiness Hộ Pháp's instructions on the situation when Caodaism is eradicated.
- The materials "The Missions of Caodaist Petty Dignitaries" by the course "Thánh Đức" 27th of the 2nd month, Year of the Dragon (March 22nd, 1952).
- The similarities between Judaism and Caodaism.

The purpose of this book

Purpose 1: for Caodaist believers to gain an insight into the Junior Sacerdotal Council.

Everyone knows Thánh Thất (Caodaist Temple) and Bàn Trị Sự (the Administrative Team), but few know about the Junior Sacerdotal Council. When asked, they answer they do not know, there are not such organizations, it is impractical or it is not in accordance with the Caodaist Canonical Code. Those answers surprise non-Caodaist believers like myself because the Junior Sacerdotal Council is the Caodaist Administrative Team in a village, which was:

- Explained in the Caodaist Constitution by His Holiness Hộ Pháp.
- Instructed what to do in chaotic times by His Holiness Hộ Pháp through the Instructions No 257.
- Elaborated in the Caodaist Dictionary by Hiền Tài Nguyễn Văn Hồng.

- Taught in Caodaist Training Courses for dignitaries before 1975.

Purpose 2: for Caodaist believers to have more ideas of the role of the Junior Sacerdotal Council.

The relevant documents are copied and presented in this book so that all Caodaists together can find out how to carry out what His Holiness Hộ Pháp taught.

The contents of the book

Due to a lack of knowledge of some Caodaist believers and dignitaries about the topic, the book mainly contains the copies of popular relevant documents:

- Explanation of the Caodaist Constitution.
- His Holiness Hộ Pháp's instructions.
- Caodaist Dictionary by Hiền Tài Nguyễn Văn Hồng.
- Materials for Caodaist training courses in 1970.
- The document "The Missions of Caodaist Petty Dignitaries".

There are four chapters:

Chapter 1. Explanation of the necessary terms.

Chapter 2. The Junior Sacerdotal Council was established by His Holiness Giáo Tông and His Holiness Hộ Pháp, both of whom can do it on behalf of God.

Chapter 3. His Holiness Hộ Pháp's instructions on what to do when the Caodaist leaders are made inactive by an evil power.

Chapter 4. The similarities between Caodaism and Judaism in the past.

I would appreciate all comments by readers, especially those who are knowledgeable about Caodaism for the next versions.

1

The Caodaist Sacerdotal Council

Nowadays, the original Caodaism and its Sacerdotal Council have been legally eradicated by the communists. Thus, the question arises as to from whom Caodaist followers take orders in order to practice Caodaism properly. Most followers opt to follow the Caodaist Constitution and the Caodaist Canonical Code. For that option, Caodaist followers need an insight into:

- What the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council is.
- The Caodaist Constitution, in which the Junior Sacerdotal Council in the bad times is mentioned by His Holiness Giáo Tông and His Holiness Hộ Pháp.
- The New Law, which contains all Caodaist basic regulations.

1. **Hội Thánh** 會聖

(The Caodaist Sacerdotal Council)

According to the Caodaist Dictionary by Hiền Tài Nguyễn Văn Hồng, the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council is:

1. An organization that includes the Caodaist dignitaries (Giáo Hữu, Giáo Sư Phối Sư, and Chánh Phối Sư) under the Cửu Trùng Đài (Nine-Leveled Tower). This body is one of the Three Bodies of Quyền Vạn Linh.
2. An organization that includes the Caodaist dignitaries from the level of Saints and above.

Therefore, in Caodaism there are lots of Sacerdotal Councils, for example:

- The Sacerdotal Council under Judiciary Body (from Truyền Trạng up to Hộ Pháp)
- The Sacerdotal Council under the Philanthropic Body (from Chí Thiện and above).
- The Caodaist Missionary Council (from Giáo Hữu and above).
- The Caodaist Honorary Sacerdotal Council (from Giáo Hữu and above).
- The Caodaist Chinese Sacerdotal Council (from Giáo Hữu and above).

What is the Sacerdotal Council?

When His Holiness Hộ Pháp delivered a speech in Tây Ninh Temple on 14th the second lunar month, Year of the Dragon (1928), he said, *"In the phú² God granted to the Phối Sư Hương Thanh's aunt there was a statement (I use the good people to save all living beings). The Caodaist Sacerdotal Council includes those good people collected by God. God has taught them how to love and to have mercy on other living beings like Himself and used them as earthly tools to save humanity.*

They should work together to form the body of God so that He does not need to incarnate on earth in the Third Universal Salvation as he did in previous times.

By means of the magical seances, God teaches each person that God does exist, so they believe God is the Lord of the universe who fairly judges everyone, who is powerful enough to protect His children alive and dead and who shows them how to clearly distinguish between Heaven and Hell.

God has promised to give us heavenly status, clear the way to Nirvana, close Hell and save all living beings especially the 9.2 million nguyên nhân (original souls).

² A dissertation of rhythmic prose in Vietnamese.

No other Buddhas except God are powerful enough to keep such a promise. Having considered His power and promise, those chosen people know God is really with us, so they wholeheartedly believe Him.

That belief spread throughout the world and becomes so powerful that it creates a more moral society. Thus, everyone knows that they should practice Caodaism until they gain enlightenment. That is why God established Caodaism to show people how to get it. That will attract more people's interest."

2. The Caodaist Constitution 法正傳

The Caodaist Constitution is composed of two sections:

- God's divine messages.
- The explanations by His Holiness Giáo Tông Li Bai and His Holiness Hộ Pháp.

The Caodaist Constitution was prepared in three significant periods:

1. On 15th, 10th lunar month, Year of the Tiger (November 20th, 1926), in the Gò Kén Pagoda, God granted the Constitution of the Cửu Trùng Đài³ (for Male Dignitaries)
2. On 9th, 1st lunar month, Year of the Cat (February 10th, 1927), His Holiness Giáo Tông Li Bai granted the Constitution of the Cửu Trùng Đài (for Female Dignitaries)
3. On 12th, 1st lunar month, Year of the Cat (February 13th, 1927), God granted the Constitution of the Hiệp Thiên Đài.

³ Psychics: His Holiness Hộ Pháp Phạm Công Tắc and His Holiness Thượng Phẩm Cao Quỳnh Cư. According to the Báo Pháp Nguyễn Trung Hậu, in that seance God wrote so fast that the Giáo Hữu Sơn could not copy the message. God told Mr Hậu to help.

The purpose of the Caodaist Constitution

The Caodaist Constitution, a divine text granted by God via seances, determines the Caodaist organization as well as the vestments and power for the dignitaries in order to help Caodaist believers practice and run Caodaism properly. It is defined as follows:

1. The Caodaist Constitution is the true laws granted by God as the foundation for the organization and management of the Religion in the Third Universal Salvation.
2. The Constitution of Caodaism, which is granted by God through seances, will be invariable in the next seven hundred thousand years.
3. The Caodaist Constitution is a written set of laws that determines the organization, the vestments, the status and power of the Caodaist dignitaries in order to protect its genuineness and prevent any power from secularizing it.
4. God mentions that the Giáo Tông is allowed to instruct Caodaist believers both religiously and secularly on behalf of God. The Giáo Tông has authority over the followers' bodies, not their souls. He is permitted to communicate with the Thirty Six Heavens, the Three Thousand Worlds, the Sixty Seven Earths and the Ten Courts of Hell to pray for your salvation.

The origin of the Caodaist Constitution

His Holiness Hộ Pháp mentions that *“The Caodaist Constitution comes from the Divine Book and the Explanation elaborates upon the functions of the dignitaries. The Divine Book, which is the Collection of Divine Messages, has been given to His children on earth. In the future, more important organizations will be established based on this book, not the Caodaist Philanthropic Body alone. Children, just boldly answer when asked that the Hộ Pháp and Giáo Tông got the Caodaist Constitution from the Divine Messages. Even the Caodaist Philanthropic Body and the Phạm Môn (the Pagoda School) come from the Divine Messages by God. That’s not strange at all.”*

That is the origin of the Caodaist Constitution. From this, it can be confirmed again that the Collection of Divine Messages is the Divine Book of Caodaism granted to the Acting Giáo Tông by God.

*“Cầm mỗi Thiên Thư lo cứu chúng,
Đạo người vẹn vẻ mới thành Tiên”.*

Hold the Divine Book and save people.
Fulfill your human responsibilities before becoming an Immortal.

His Holiness said, *“Founding Caodaism, God created its Constitution and the New Law for the good administration of the new religion and the proper practice of all believers. In addition, there are Divine Messages and Instructions. For a great religion like Caodaism, which is planned to do missionary work for 700,000 years and which will have most of the earth's population as its followers, a system of law is a must. Therefore, this Caodaist Constitution needs publishing again and again so that all believers can read and know how to properly practice Caodaism and avoid breaking the Caodaist Law.”*

The Explanation of the Caodaist Constitution

This book elaborates on how to administer the religion and should be considered as important as the Constitution itself. It will be invariable in the next 700,000 years.

Why is the explanation needed?

The Caodaist Constitution is composed of two sections:

- God's messages, which is too concise for ordinary believers to understand.
- His Holiness Hộ Pháp's elaborations on difficult terms. Believers often read this section.

The Caodaist Constitution is too concise but is not allowed to be modified. That is why Li Bai, the Caodaist Supreme Leader, ordered His Holiness Hộ Pháp to elaborate on the details for the Caodaist dignitaries to easily follow. In the Caodaist Act VI (3rd 10th lunar month, Year of the Horse) His Holiness Giáo Tông said, *“The*

divinely ordained Giáo Tông and Hộ Pháp have to thoroughly examine the Constitution and modify their organizations in accordance with it. They together make a promise by signing this agreement.”

Having been reviewed and edited by His Holiness Giáo Tông, the book has tilted *the Explanation of the Caodaist Constitution* and published.

The preface by the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council

Here are some extracts from the preface by the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council: “ *In any realms or in any eras, human society is kept in order by its laws. Similarly, a religion has to operate according to the Divine Law. Without any deterrents, the harmony arranged by God can be destroyed. Therefore, founding Caodaism, God created its Constitution and the New Law for the good administration of the new religion and the proper practice of all believers. In addition, there are Divine Messages and Instructions.*

For a great religion like Caodaism, which is planned to do missionary work for 700,000 years and which will have most of the earth population as its followers, a system of law is a must”.

“Though there are no completely perfect laws, at least the basic principles are determined. For example, the law of justice must be based on the principle: Don't do unto others what you don't want to be done unto yourself. (Confucius). It sounds simple but definitely true!

Law is essential for the order of a society. It is more essential for religion because religion will become chaotic without law.

The Caodaist Constitution created by God is the sovereignty of Caodaism and those who want Caodaism to develop should respect that sovereignty.

Thanks to that sovereignty, the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council is able to teach and save people on behalf of God.

However, religious authority is different from that of a secular society because it comes from love, not from violent oppression.

The law, which is created based on God's will and justice, is naturally completely fair to all Caodaist believers. All Caodaist believers have to act in accordance with the law. A senior dignitary cannot dictate what a junior one does and a junior one cannot try to control a senior one. If everyone respects the law, the Caodaist administration will work effectively”.

3. The Caodaist Canonical Code

On 2nd, the 5th lunar month, Year of the Cat (June 1st, 1927) in the Cửu Trùng Đài, Tây Ninh Temple, His Holiness Hộ Pháp raised the Caodaist Canonical Code and declared its enactment.

The laws on religious practice in the First and Second Salvations are called the Old Code. In the current Third Salvation, those old laws cannot keep up with the human evolutionary level, so a new code should be created. The Caodaist Canonical Code retains the fundamentals of the former Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism while adding the new laws suitable for the highly advanced mankind now.

This is the new code on religious practice in the Third Salvation, which was prepared by the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council on behalf of humanity, amended by His Holiness Giáo Tông, verified by His Holiness Hộ Pháp and approved by God. Hence, it is very important for Caodaism and considered the Divine Law on earth.

It is prepared by the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council on behalf of humanity, so it is surely suitable for nowadays people. When humans advance to a higher level, they can pray to God for further amendments to the code. Consequently, this Canonical Code is permanently suitable for humans to help them evolve with love and justice.

The Caodaist Canonical Code was prepared by God's disciples and presented to His Holiness Giáo Tông for approval. It can be amended in the future to keep up with the human evolutionary level. However, any amendments and supplements must be approved by

divine beings as they were in the past. Its adjustable character makes it permanently new, so it is also called the New Code.

The Significance of the Caodaist Canonical Code

The New Canonical Code includes Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism.

Now God has decided, *“The New Code covers Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, whose old codes unite into one new code. Therefore, three are one and one is three. Without any laws, you cannot enter the Bạch Ngọc Kinh (White Gem Capital). The New Canonical Code affects the heavenly statuses of religious practitioners. It shows how the Tinh, Khí, and Thần unite”*.

The New Canonical Code is the rule of conduct

The Caodaist Canonical Code is considered the rule of conduct and known as the Caodaist Law. Consequently, this Code is extremely important to all Caodaist believers. It is the “spiritual fence and the stick”, based on which people move up the divine hierarchy and Caodaist dignitaries guide people on the right path.

Do some people ask why religion needs laws?

“Fearing people’s bad earthly characteristics, God has made laws strict enough to force the whole Caodaist Sacerdotal Council to work harmoniously.

Laws are expressed by the Caodaist Canonical Code.

The legal status is shown by the Caodaist Institution.

Power comes from The Court of Three Religions”.

The contents of the Caodaist Canonical Code

There are three sections: Caodaist Regulations, Secular Rules, and Meditation House Regulations.

There are 8 chapters in the Caodaist Regulations:

Chapter I: Caodaist administration (8 articles)

Chapter II: Caodaist believers (7 articles)

Chapter III: Establishment of Divine Clans (5 articles)

Chapter IV: Five Precepts (1 article)

Chapter V: Four Commandments (1 article)

Chapter VI: Education (3 articles)

Chapter VII: Punishment (6 articles)

Chapter VIII: Law issuance (1 article)

2. Secular Rules (24 articles)

3. Meditation House Regulations (8 articles)

Law and authority

His Holiness Hộ Pháp said, “ *As for the Caodaist Canonical Code, at the beginning of Caodaism, God and His Holiness Giáo Tông instructed the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council to finish it after a three-month preparation. In the Code, needless to say, it is important that the Five Precepts and the Four Commandments is decided by God to preserve the Three Bonds and Five Constants Virtues. Actually, God has placed the Divine Law in His children’s minds.*

Law is Love. The Authority is Justice.

In the world, too many laws have been made and obviously, they never satisfy everyone despite numerous amendments. The law God made is only “Love”. Who do you think can ignore that law? Those who are not influenced by that law cannot live, especially in the human community. They had better either live alone or be exiled from a human society unless they respect it.

As for justice, despite being uneducated, you are still respected if your work is based on the principles of justice.

That is God’s divine law.

God wants us to observe the Caodaist Canonical Code in order to preserve the Three Bonds and the Five Constant Virtues of humanity.

In the East, how much-civilized society is, its people have never rejected those rules (Three Bonds and Five Constant Virtues). If they

rejected them, they would kill themselves or destroy their communities.”

2

The Junior Sacerdotal Council

This chapter shows the copies of the paper relevant to the Junior Sacerdotal Council before 1975 in:

- Explanation of the Caodaist Constitution.
- Official texts by the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council.
- Materials from the training courses for Caodaist Dignitaries.
- The Caodaist Dictionary by Hiền Tài Nguyễn Văn Hồng.
- The document “ the Missions of the Caodaist Petty Dignitaries” (1952)

The official name “the Junior Sacerdotal Council” can be found in:

- The Caodaist Constitution (Cửu Trùng Đài).
- The Caodaist order No 257-HP-HN issued by Hộ Pháp.
- The materials of the dignitary training course in 1970.
- The Caodaist Dictionary by Hiền Tài Nguyễn Văn Hồng.
- The document “ the Missions of the Caodaist Petty Dignitaries” (1952).

1. The Caodaist Constitution (Cửu Trùng Đài)

After His Holiness Giáo Tông and His Holiness Hộ Pháp created the Bàn Trị Sự (Village Administrative Unit) also called the Junior Sacerdotal Council, the Lễ Sinh (Rite Student) is raised to the level of dignitaries, has the authority of transfer and will lead the

believers in a district. That is what is written in the Caodaist Constitution as follows:

“The organization including the dignitaries under the Caodaist Judiciary Body and the Caodaist Executive Body is the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council.”

In administration:

- The Caodaist Sacerdotal Council includes the dignitaries from the Giáo Hữu (under Cửu Trùng Đài) and above.
- The dignitaries under other Caodaist organizations should be equivalent to the Giáo Hữu and above.
- The dignitaries from the Phối Sự and above have to work in the Tây Ninh Central Temple.
- The dignitaries from the Lễ Sanh to Giáo Sự work in other areas.

The organization in the Tây Ninh Central Temple is called the **Senior Sacerdotal Council** while in other areas the **Junior Sacerdotal Council**. The junior councils include three petty dignitaries: Chánh Trị Sự, Phó Trị Sự, and Thông Sự. According to Caodaist Law, those dignitaries have to practice full vegetarianism and give up any secular positions to wholeheartedly take care of the missionary work.

2. In Order No 257-HP-HN by Hộ Pháp

“ As you see, at the top level are the Giáo Tông, Hộ Pháp, and Đầu Sự and at the lowest level are the Chánh Trị Sự, Phó Trị Sự and Thông Sự or the **Junior Đầu Sự, Junior Giáo Tông and Junior Hộ Pháp**. Although the Caodaist system is deliberately destroyed, it will transform itself into several other systems. That proves Caodaism can never be completely eradicated. If in the worst-case scenario, all

divinely ordained dignitaries were imprisoned, Caodaist believers could elect others to replace them”.

3. The materials of the dignitary training course in 1970.⁴

As for the authority of the Caodaist petty dignitaries under the Bàn Trị Sự (Village Administrative Unit), they are considered the **Junior Sacerdotal Council**, whose authority is equal to that of the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council. They have religious authority over the Caodaist believers in their hamlets or villages on behalf of God. According to the Caodaist Constitution, the Chánh Trị Sự is the eldest brother (on behalf of His Holiness Giáo Tông) in a village. He is called the **Junior Đầu Sự** because he has the same administrative and legal authority as the Đầu Sự does. The Phó Trị Sự, who has only administrative authority in a hamlet, is called the **Junior Giáo Tông**. He is responsible for helping, guiding and teaching the Caodaist believers in his hamlet.

Hence, the Village Administrative Units including the Caodaist petty dignitaries was established by His Holiness Giáo Tông and Hộ Pháp to replace the Sacerdotal Council in remote areas. They are very important to all believers, so your students should thoroughly examine them. You will offend God if you undervalue it. (The materials for the Caodaist dignitary training course, 1970, p8).

4. In the Caodaist Dictionary by Hiền Tài Nguyễn Văn Hồng.

⁴ The materials for the Caodaist dignitary training course (1970), reviewed by the Hiền Pháp Trương Hữu Đức, Chief of the Censorship Board on July 7th 1970. Copyrighted by the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council. Printed by Lê Thành Long Hoa, 1970.

Based on the Caodaist Constitution, Hiền Tài Nguyễn Văn Hồng explains:

The smallest Caodaist Administrative Unit is the village, which includes the Caodaist followers in a village or a hamlet.

The Caodaist leader in a village is the Chánh Trị Sự, who has both administrative and legal authority. Thus, he is called the **Junior Đầu Sự** by the Caodaist Constitution because his authority is the same as the Đầu Sự's, but only in a village.

A village is divided into several hamlets, each of which is led by a Phó Trị Sự (1 male and 1 female) and a Thông Sự (1 male and 1 female). The former takes care of the administration and the latter the Caodaist law.

Hence, the Phó Trị Sự is called the **Junior Giáo Tông** because his authority is the same as the Giáo Tông's, but only in a hamlet.

The Thông Sự is called the **Junior Hộ Pháp** because his authority is the same as the Hộ Pháp's, but only in a hamlet.

The Chánh Trị Sự, Phó Trị Sự, and Thông Sự or the Junior Đầu Sự, Junior Giáo Tông and Junior Hộ Pháp form the Junior Sacerdotal Council.

The one in Tây Ninh Central Temple is called the Senior Sacerdotal Council. Consequently, there is only one Caodaist Central Sacerdotal Council, but there are numerous Junior Sacerdotal Councils in Vietnam and other parts of the world.

The local ones are the foundation for the central one. Such a system will never be destroyed by any temporal powers. It deserves to be the genuine religion of God.

5. In “ the Missions of the Caodaist Petty Dignitaries” (1952).

“ In the Bàn Trị Sự (Village Administrative Unit), the Chánh Trị Sự, who has both religious and secular authority, is called the **Junior Đầu Sự**. The Phó Trị Sự, who has only secular authority, is called the **Junior Giáo Tông**. The Thông Sự, who has only religious authority,

is called the **Junior Hộ Pháp**. They all form the **Junior Sacerdotal Council**".

In this document, the role of the Junior Sacerdotal Councils in chaotic situations is determined: "If something bad happens to the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council, for example being oppressed by a devil power or an unfair law, numerous Bàn Trị Sự or Senior Sacerdotal Councils will stand up for it. That way, no powers can destroy Caodaism".

2. The Bàn Trị Sự

Bàn Trị Sự 班治事 (Caodaist Village Administrative Unit) is a team responsible for the administration of a Junior Sacerdotal Council in a village. It includes the Caodaist petty dignitaries and the Caodaist followers in a village. This is the lowest administrative level under the Cửu Trùng Đài (Caodaist Executive Body).

Its leader is a Chánh Trị Sự or Đầu Hương Đạo (Caodaist Village Leader). His assistants are several Phó Trị Sự and Thông Sự. A Phó Trị Sự (1 male and 1 female) and a Thông Sự (1 male and 1 female) take care of the Caodaist followers in a hamlet.

The Chánh Trị Sự is called the Junior Đầu Sự, the Phó Trị Sự the Junior Giáo Tông and the Thông Sự the Junior Hộ Pháp. They all form the Junior Sacerdotal Council, which supports the Senior Sacerdotal Council in Tây Ninh Temple.

According to the Caodaist Act in Year of the Tiger, competent and moral people should be elected to the Bàn Trị Sự in spite of their ages. Those who want to become Caodaist petty dignitaries should give up their secular positions in order to wholeheartedly serve the believers.

Only the Phó Trị Sự and the Thông Sự, who has not been disciplined by the Sacerdotal Council, can be a candidate for the position of the Chánh Trị Sự if one is needed.

Any followers, who are competent and moral enough, can be a candidate for the positions of the Phó Trị Sự and Thông Sự as long as they are elected. Those who were punished by the Sacerdotal Council or who just rejoined from a Caodaist schism cannot.

The authority of the Bàn Trị Sự (Village Administrative Unit)

The following explanations come from the Caodaist Constitution by Tây Ninh Temple, published 1972 (page 61-68) and the Caodaist Dictionary by Hiền Tài Nguyễn Văn Hồng.

The Chánh Trị Sự, Phó Trị Sự and Thông Sự in a village are called the Caodaist village petty dignitaries.

The Caodaist Sacerdotal Council in Tây Ninh is called the Senior while the Village Administrative Unit is called the Junior. The former is in charge of all Caodaist believers and the latter in a village only.

There is only one Central Sacerdotal Council in Tây Ninh, but there is an unlimited number of Junior Sacerdotal Councils both in Vietnam and in other parts of the world. The Junior Sacerdotal Councils are the foundation for the Senior One.

Chánh Trị Sự 正 治 事

This is the Caodaist rank created by His Holiness Giáo Tông to lead the believers in a village. He is also called the Đầu Hương Đạo (Village Leader) and responsible for the Caodaist administrative and legal matters in a village. A village can be divided into several hamlets.

The Chánh Trị Sự, who administers his parish, has to take orders from the Lễ Sanh, who is his direct boss.

This is His Holiness Giáo Tông's explanation through seances for the Chánh Trị Sự and His Holiness Hộ Pháp's order to give him the authority.

His Holiness Lý Giáo Tông said, *"The Chánh Trị Sự can do the religious work on behalf of myself. He is the eldest brother of other Caodaists in his parish. I want to somehow be present everywhere, even in the most remote areas. I guess you also want the same thing,*

don't you? In the world, there are more stupid people than the intellectual ones, so it is hard for us to spread Caodaism to everyone unless we are competent enough. The closer you are to humans, the more troubles you have. We have to make a good plan in advance to handle those troubles to limit the chaotic situations in our religion. Therefore, I insist that you give the Chánh Trị Sự the authority enough to administer his remote parish on behalf of ourselves."

According to His Holiness Giáo Tông, the Chánh Trị Sự should take care of all Caodaist believers' activities in his parish. He should help the poor like his brothers and can handle the minor disagreements. However, he has to take orders from his direct bosses, who are the Giáo Hữu and the Lễ Sanh in his district.

He should give good advice to the believers who have broken the Caodaist Law, at least a couple of times. If it is still ineffective, he should report it to the local Temple. The Giáo Hữu then invites the lawbreaker and gives more advice. Finally, for a stubborn backslider, the Chánh Trị Sự can report it to the District Leader to request some forms of punishment from the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council.

Two copies of this document should be made. One of them is sent to the Hiệp Thiên Đài (Judiciary Body) and the other to the Cửu Trùng Đài (Executive Body).

If the Chánh Trị Sự sends several reports to the Executive Body without any appropriate replies, he is allowed to directly report it to the Judiciary Body for a better decision.

A Chánh Trị Sự is not allowed to work in the area that is assigned to his co-religionist of the same rank. His area must be divided into several sectors for the Phó Trị Sự to take care of.

The Phó Trị Sự are, in turn, required to assign 30 volunteers to the Chánh Trị Sự monthly to do the religious work, that is, a volunteer per day. The Chánh Trị Sự then sends that volunteer to visit the sick and the needy in his parish. The volunteer stays to help those who have an accident or disease. That is the noble responsibility a Chánh Trị Sự must fulfill and the right thing a Caodaist should do.

His Holiness Giáo Tông said, *"That is how brothers in a family treat each other. You should help, share joys and sorrows, be together in a time of plenty as in the time of dearth, protect profits for each other and avoid struggling for personal interests. You should give food to the hunger, support the failures, and console those who are insulted. That way, you are getting bigger authority."*

“Before undertaking his religious job, the Chánh Trị Sự is forced to go to the Caodaist local temple and swear a solemn oath, “ I will impartially do the religious work on behalf of God. I will never be heavenly biased in favor of my parents, my brothers, my wife or my children. That is why the Chánh Trị Sự is called the Junior Đầu Sự.”

Phó Trị Sự 副 治 事

This is the Caodaist rank created by His Holiness Giáo Tông to assist the Chánh Trị Sự and to administratively lead the Caodaist believers in a hamlet.

“He has the same authority as that of the Chánh Trị Sự in his parish. He has the political authority, not the legal one. He is allowed to correct, help, guide and teach the Caodaist believers in his hamlet, not to judge them. Each month, he and other Phó Trị Sự have, in turn, assign 30 volunteers to the Chánh Trị Sự. Every day a volunteer taking orders from the Chánh Trị Sự visits and helps the poor and sick in the parish. The Phó Trị Sự is responsible for how well that volunteer works and reports it to the Chánh Trị Sự for any appropriate corrections. The Phó Trị Sự has to prepare a daily report so that the Chánh Trị Sự knows what is going on in the parish, especially something religiously bad. If something bad happens, the Phó Trị Sự should tell the Thông Sự immediately and try to handle the situation together. Any legal disagreements or violations should be reported to the Thông Sự for appropriate judgments, not be silently hidden. The Phó Trị Sự, who is called the Junior Giáo Tông, does not have any legal authority.”

Thông sự 通 事

The Thông Sự is the Caodaist rank created by His Holiness Hộ Pháp to take charge of the legal matter in a hamlet. He has the same

power as that of the Phó Trị Sự and has legal authority, not a political one.

The Thông Sự belongs to the Caodaist Judiciary Body and takes orders from the Chánh Trị Sự. He monitors the religious activities of the Phó Trị Sự. He is punished for any unjust events in the parish, which are unknown to the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council.

If the Thông Sự breaks the Caodaist Law, disobeys the orders of the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council or modifies the Caodaist Canonical Code without the orders of the Chánh Trị Sự or the knowledge of the Sacerdotal Council, he will be punished.

Though he takes orders from the Chánh Trị Sự, he can correct the Chánh Trị Sự. If the Chánh Trị Sự obviously violates the Caodaist Law, the Thông Sự is allowed to dissuade him. If the Chánh Trị Sự keeps doing it stubbornly, he can report it to the Caodaist Executive Body and finally to the Caodaist Judiciary Body. He should support the defenseless Caodaists and non-Caodaists, the sudden victims, the needy, the sick without any relatives, the exiles and the pensioners. He is allowed to have the Phó Trị Sự help them all.

Any Caodaist dignitaries are responsible to help the Thông Sự if he has any problems while doing religious work. The Hiệp Thiên Đài (Judiciary Body) will request that the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council punish those who have stubbornly refused to help the Thông Sự if he has had several claims with concrete evidence on it. Before undertaking his religious job, the Thông Sự is forced to go to the Caodaist local temple and swear a solemn oath as the Chánh Trị Sự. The Thông Sự is the Junior Hộ Pháp.

God said, “ If you still witness an unjust event, Caodaism will not achieve its goal yet.”

Notes: Defenseless commoners are usually tyrannized in an unjust society, so the Thông Sự’s authority is very important.

Titles

For their special functions in a village, the Caodaist Constitution calls the Chánh Trị Sự the Junior Đầu Sự because he has both administrative and legal authority in a village. The Đầu Sự has both administrative and legal authority in the Caodaist Executive Body.

The Phó Trị Sự the Junior Giáo Tông because he has only the administrative authority in a hamlet. The Giáo Tông has the administrative authority over all Caodaists.

The Thông Sự the Junior Hộ Pháp because he has only the legal authority in a hamlet. The Hộ Pháp has the legal authority over all Caodaists.

In a village, there is only one Chánh Trị Sự, who is the Caodaist leader in the village, but there are several Phó Trị Sự and Thông Sự depending on how many hamlets there are.

Election law

According to the messages by the Nguyệt Tâm Chơn Nhơn⁵, the Chánh Trị Sự, who has held office for 5 years (certified in writing), whose good conduct is certified in writing, who has gone vegan and who has convinced 300 people to convert to Caodaism (except those by the former Chánh Trị Sự), is eligible for the next rank, which is the Lễ Sanh⁶. This promotion should be decided by the Quyền Vạn Linh⁷. Having been approved, the new Lễ Sanh has to join a training course in Tây Ninh Temple and experience a period of probation before becoming the Đầu Tộc Đạo.⁸

What is the most significant about the Junior Sacerdotal Council?

According to His Holiness Hộ Pháp, in the difficult situation, when the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council is disabled, the Junior Sacerdotal Council in villages still continues to spread Caodaism to the world.

⁵ An Immortal in heaven. He is said to have an incarnation in France as Victor Hugo.

⁶ Rite Student (lit)

⁷ The Caodaist General Assembly.

⁸ The Caodaist leader in a district.

3

Instructions by His Holiness Hộ Pháp

In this chapter, I present what the devil's power has done to eradicate the name of the original Caodaism. This event led to the current chaotic situation of Caodaism. There are no worthy Caodaist leaders for followers to take orders from. Here is the answer by His Holiness Hộ Pháp.

Having a plan in advance for the chaotic situations, he gave followers the instructions on what to do if the evil power destroyed the brain of Caodaism, which is the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council. Based on God's messages in the Caodaist Constitution, he issued a decree.

1. DECREE No 257-HP-HN

“ As you see, at the top level are the Giáo Tông, Hộ Pháp, and Đầu Sư and at the lowest level are the Chánh Trị Sự, Phó Trị Sự and Thông Sự or the Junior Đầu Sư, Junior Giáo Tông and Junior Hộ Pháp. Although the Caodaist system is deliberately destroyed, it will transform itself into several other systems. That proves Caodaism can never be completely eradicated. If in the worst-case scenario, all divinely ordained dignitaries were imprisoned, Caodaist believers could elect others to replace them”.

In view of that law, if the top leaders are deposed by the devil power, the Caodaist local leaders are responsible for Caodaism's remaining in operation. That is, Caodaist followers must establish numerous Junior Sacerdotal Councils to continue Caodaist activities after the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council was disbanded as in the current situation. Please read section 2 to know how the Communists eradicated the original Caodaism and think about His Holiness Hộ

Pháp's instructions over the role of the Junior Sacerdotal Council now.

After the Communist Party seized the South of Vietnam on April 30th, 1975, Caodaism was changed as what was said in the Decree by His Holiness Hộ Pháp. Both the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council in Tây Ninh Temple and the other Junior Sacerdotal Councils in other areas are replaced by a religious system that operates in accordance with the policy of the Communist Government. This system is called "Cao Đài Quốc Doanh"⁹ by Caodaist believers.

The Communist Government has the conspiracy to eradicate the original Caodaism and then uses the new system of Caodaism to support an atheistical regime.

Therefore, what should Caodaist believers do now? The answer can be found in the Decree No 257 by His Holiness Hộ Pháp.



His Holiness Hộ Pháp

⁹ State-owned Caodaism (lit)

HỌ-PHÁP-TRƯỜNG
Văn-phòng
-:~:-

Số: 257/HP-III

ĐẠI - ĐẠO TAM - KỶ PHO - ĐO
(Tam-thập nhị niên)
TOA THANH TÂY NINH

HỌ-PHÁP-CHƯƠNG-QUẢN NHỊ HỮU HÌNH ĐẠI
HIỆP-THIỆN và CỬU-TRUNG

THÀNH-LINH

Gởi cho HIÊN-PHÁP H.T.Đ. thay một HỌ-PHÁP
và ba vị CHÁNH-PHOI-SU Cửu-Trung-Đại.

Chư Hiên-Huynh và Hiên-Hữu,

Theo Chơn-Truyền luật-pháp của Đạo thi Thánh-thê Đức,
CHỈ-TON từ tín-đồ dĩ chí tới Giáo-Tông và HỌ-Pháp thì nó chỉ
làm một với nhau. Các bạn đa ngộ thấy, trên thi có Giáo-Tông,
HỌ-Pháp và Đâu-Su, còn dưới thi Chánh-trị-sự, Phó-trị-sự và
Thông-sự là Giáo-Tông, HỌ-Pháp và Đâu-Su em, thi đầu cho cội
Đạo bị cắt từ trên tới gốc đi nữa, thi nó vẫn nhảy chọi, biến
thành năm bảy cây khác. Đó đã chỉ rõ rằng Hội-Thánh của Cao-
Đại chẳng hề dứt tuyệt.

Ấy vậy, chiếu theo khuôn luật trên, hễ quyền trên ai đã
bị quý quyền truất-phê, thi dưới phải tiếp-tục cầm quyền Thiêng-
liêng của Đạo.

Có lẽ chánh-quyền Ngô-Định-Diệm sẽ bắt những Chức-Sắc
yêu-trọng của Hội-Thánh Cửu-Trung-Đại và Phước-Thiện, thi tức-
cập giờ này phải công-cử người thay thế để sẵn đứng đương đầu
cùng thời-cuộc. Nói cho cùng nước, Chức-Sắc Thiêng-phong mà bị
bắt hết đi nữa thi dưới này các Ban-Tri-Sự và Tín-đồ cùng công-
cử người thay thế cho họ.

Chức-Sắc Thiêng-phong đang cầm quyền của hai Hội-Thánh
phải dự-định sẵn người thay thế cho mình trước khi bị bắt.

Phải triệt-để tuân y và thi-hành THÀNH-LINH này./-

M Kim-Biên, ngày mùng 9 tháng 2 Đ.Đậu
(10 - 3 - 1957)
HỌ - P H Á P
(ký tên đồng ần)

Sao y ban chính
TOA THANH, ngày 18 tháng 3 Giáp-Thìn
(29 - 4 - 1964)
Chương-Quản BỘ-PHÁP-CHÁNH
HIÊN-PHÁP


TRUNG-HỮU-ĐỨC

Hộ Pháp's Office

No 257/ HP-HN

The Third General Salvation

The 32nd Year

Tây Ninh Temple

Hộ Pháp - the Leader of Both Secular Bodies

DECREE

To the Hiến Pháp Hiệp Thiên Đài, who represents the Hộ Pháp and the three Chánh Phối Sư Cửu Trùng Đài

Dear brothers and friends,

According to Caodaist Canonical Code, God's Holy Body or the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council (from believers to the Giáo Tông and Hộ Pháp) is a united community. As you see, at the top level are the Giáo Tông, Hộ Pháp, and Đầu Sư and at the lowest level are the Chánh Trị Sự, Phó Trị Sự and Thông Sự or the Junior Đầu Sư, Junior Giáo Tông and Junior Hộ Pháp. Although the Caodaist system is deliberately destroyed, it will transform itself into several other systems. That proves Caodaism can never be completely eradicated. Therefore, if the top leaders are deposed by a devil power, the dignitaries at the lowest level have to remain in operation.

The Ngô Đình Diệm administration will probably arrest the important dignitaries under the Executive Body and the Philanthropic Body, so the replacements should be ready right now to face the new situation. If in the worst-case scenario, all divinely ordained dignitaries were imprisoned, Caodaist believers could elect others to replace them.

The divinely ordained dignitaries in both councils have to find replacements for themselves before being arrested.

This decree must be put in force.

Kim Biên, 9th of the 2nd lunar month, Year of the Rooster

March 10th, 1957

HỘ PHÁP

(Signed and sealed)

Certified true copy

Tây Ninh Temple 19th 3rd lunar month, Year of the Dragon

April 29th, 1964

Manager of Bộ Pháp Chánh

HIẾN PHÁP

Trương Hữu Đức

(Signed and sealed)

2. How to eradicate the name of a religion

Before 1975, Caodaism included a root, which was the Cao Đài Tây Ninh, and many schisms that separated from the root. After 1975, the Communists want to eradicate the name of Caodaism by means of the following methods:

- *The religion is controlled by the Communist government with the slogan « **Nước vinh Đạo sáng** (glorious nation, successful religion) »,*
- *The religion is officially divided by law into many schisms and independent groups. There is not an original religion anymore.*

During this era, Caodaism has experienced three remarkable following periods:

The period of « glorious nation »: all Caodaist seances were banned and a pro-communist Caodaist group was established so that the religious power is put under the secular power.

The period of « development »: The name of the original religion was intentionally eradicated by separating Caodaism into many independent schisms by law. For operation, a schism has to file for the legal status.

The period of « successful religion »: Caodaism has no root (that is Tòa Thánh Tây Ninh) but only branches (schisms). The image of Caodaism now is the combination of the schisms and other independent groups controlled by the Communist Government.

A. The period of the glorious nation¹⁰!

This period is composed of two stages:

Stage 1. Killing or imprisoning some Caodaist leaders.

Stage 2. The Department of Religion ¹¹ had a clear policy on « freedom of religion » through these official dispatches :

¹⁰ Reference : Verdict of caodaism, Mặt trận tổ quốc Tây Ninh, 1978, Thông tri số 1, Văn Tịch Pháp Nhơn Chi Đạo, Báo Đạo Hồ Tấn Khoa, 1984, Đạo lệnh số 01 ngày 4, tháng 2, Kỷ Mùi (1-3-1979)

- 1- Decision 297 dated 11-11-1977,
- 2/- Verdict of Caodaism by MTTQ Tây Ninh dated 20/09/1978
- 3/- Decision 124/43 dated 04/06/1980
- 4/- Instructions 21/HD DV dated 29/01/1994
- 5/- Announcement No 34 dated 19/11/1992
- 6/-Announcement No 10 dated 30/12/199
- 7/- Plan 01 by Tỉnh Ủy Tỉnh Tây Ninh dated 27/05/1996
- 8/- Decision 42 Tỉnh Ủy dated 29/05/1996
- 9/-Announcement 02/1999/TT/TGCP dated 16/06/1999
- 10/- Announcement No 319/TB.BDV by Ban Dân Vận Trung Ương signed by Mr. Trịnh Xuân Giỏi dated 30-09-1996.
- 11/- Instructions No 31 HD/DVTW by Ban Dân Vận Trung Ương signed by Mr. Trịnh Xuân Giỏi dated 16-02-1998.
- 12/- Announcement No145-TB/TW by Bộ Chính Trị signed by Mr. Phạm Thế Duyệt dated 15-06-1998.
- Announcement No 01/HT/TT,
- Religious Act 01, dated 01/03/1979.

Stage 1. Eliminating Caodaist leaders

The Caodaist dignitaries who opposed The Communist Authorities were killed or imprisoned. For example, the Phối Sư Thượng Vinh Thanh (Trần Quang Vinh) was arrested and killed right after 1975.

In 1978 in the Verdict of Caodaism in order to discredit Caodaism, the Communist authorities accused the Hộ Pháp Phạm Công Tắc, the Acting Giáo Tông Lê Trung Nhựt and other senior dignitaries of being reactionaries and hirelings for the French Colonial Government and Japanese and American Imperialism. Caodaism was also accused of demagoguery and reactionary. Since 1979 Caodaist dignitaries and believers haven't been watched, threatened, suppressed, arrested and imprisoned if they were against the Communist Party.

How to control Caodaism

¹¹ Founded in 1955 in the North under The Department of Internal Affairs It is now (2014) led by Lieutenant General Phạm Dũng. Its chief of permanent department is Nguyễn Thanh Xuân, an expert on Caodaism, who wrote the 479-page book: *Đạo Cao Đài giữa hai khía cạnh lịch sử và tôn giáo*, published by Tôn Giáo, 2013.

Having eliminated the dignitaries who refused the Communists' control, the communist authorities directed all religions (1977-1997). They tried to eliminate the name of the original religion through five steps:

- Step 1. The Tòa Thánh was disabled by the decision No 297 dated 11-11-1977,
- Step 2. They made the Verdict of Caodaism public to begin to eradicate the original name.
- Step 3. The Provincial People's Committee in Tây Ninh issued specific measures to eliminate the root of Caodaism.
- Step 4. They tried to blame the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council for disbanding themselves.
- Step 5. They issued the Caodaist Act 01 to establish a pro-communist Caodaist Council.

Step 1. Decision 297 (dated 11-11-1977) : controlling

Article 3, section 6 of Decision 297 stipulated, *“Any ordinations or appointments of full-time religious practitioners (including elected persons) must be allowed by authorities in advance. According to their assigned areas, the People's Committee of the province, district or village grants the permissions. Those who do religious work in many provinces must be allowed by the Prime Minister.”*

Step 2. The falsely made Verdict of Caodaism: Condemning Caodaism

On September 20th 1978, based on falsely made facts, the Mặt Trận Tổ Quốc Tây Ninh (Fatherland Front in Tây Ninh) introduced the so-called *“Bản án hoạt động phản cách mạng của một số tên phản động trong giới cầm đầu Giáo Phái Cao Đài Tây Ninh”* (Verdict of reactionary activities of the reactionaries who led the schism of Cao Đài Tây Ninh) to condemn Caodaism. The main points of the verdict are ¹² :

- Cao Đài Tây Ninh was claimed to be a schism and accused of carrying out political activities under the cloak of religion.

¹² This falsely made verdict was written by the lawless evils with bad words, so it is not shown here to avoid disturbing readers. The Sĩ Tài Nguyễn Thành Nguyên, Huỳnh Văn Hương, Nguyễn Minh Ngời and Đỗ Hoàng Giám wrote about it and sent to the evil power on 3-5-1982 (at Tủ sách Đại Đạo, www.daotam.info)

- The Caodaist pioneers were seriously condemned and slandered.

- Caodaist seances were claimed to be black magic.

Next, the communist authorities oppressed the religion by two measures: Elimination of the Caodaist leaders and forced denunciation of Caodaism to begin to penetrate the Nội Ô Tòa Thánh (Caodaist Holy See), establish a pro-Communist Caodaist group and confiscate Caodaist properties.

Eliminating the Caodaist leaders by executing and imprisoning

Some Caodaist intellectuals (19 persons) were accused of reactionary activities and taken to court. Three of them were sentenced to death, three others were sentenced to life in prison and the others were sentenced from 7 to 20 years in prison¹³

On October 29th and 30th 1978, the Chưởng Quản Nông Viện and some dignitaries were arrested. Then, the dignitaries who used to be in the Caodaist Forces had to go to the re-education camp for 45 days. Some dignitaries under the Phước Thiện (charity body) who were arrested without any reasons were: the Chơn Nhơn Trần Văn Lợi, Phó Chưởng Quản Phước Thiện, the Chơn Nhơn Phạm Văn Oai, the Thượng Thống Lễ Viện Phước Thiện and the Đạo Nhơn Hòa, Phụ Thống Lại Viện Phước Thiện.

Forced denunciation of Caodaism and studying the verdict

After many arrests, the communist authorities began denouncing the Caodaist pioneers, especially the Hộ Pháp Phạm Công Tắc. Then believers were forced to study the Verdict.

Forms of denunciation

On November 01st and 2nd 1978, the falsely made documents, pictures, and handwriting of Caodaist senior dignitaries (including those of His Holiness Hộ Pháp) were displayed in Long Hoa market

¹³ 03 executed: Phạm Ngọc Trảng, Nguyễn Thanh Diễm and Đặng Ngọc Liên; 03 sentenced to life: Nguyễn Minh Quang, Lý Thanh Trọng and Châu Thị Mỹ Kim; 13 others (from 07 to 20 years): Cao Trường Xuân, Trần Văn Bao, Phạm Thành Phước tức Ray, etc.

and the Cung Trí Giác and claimed to be the evidence of the reactionary activities. This form of denunciation was continuously held in other local Caodaist temples.

“Studying” the verdict

After that, all of the Caodaist petty dignitaries in 20 districts in Tây Ninh were ordered to study the verdict on November 3rd, 1978 and forced to accuse His Holiness Phạm Công Tắc and other senior Caodaist leaders. However, this plan failed because out of the 200 petty dignitaries only 4 dignitaries, who were undercover communist officers, made the accusation.

After the petty dignitaries, all Caodaist dignitaries from Giáo Hữu and above had to study the verdict in the Temple for 5 days. In that dramatic situation, the Hồ Bảo Đạo stood up and stated *“I am an old intellectual, so I didn't let anyone fool myself. I myself have done what I think the right thing to do. What punishment the government wants to impose on His Holiness Hộ Pháp should be imposed on me the same way. I never deny what I have done for 20 years”*.

On November 20th, 1978, the Communist Government ordered 1029 dignitaries including Lê Sanh, Luật Sự, Sĩ Tải, Giáo Thiện, Giáo Nhi and Bép Nhạc to study the verdict for 10 days, beginning from November 22nd, 1978.

Step 3. The decision of the People's Committee in Tỉnh Tây Ninh: prohibition of seances

On December 23rd, 1978. The three main points in this decision are:

- The administrative system of Caodaism was disbanded and banned from then on.
- **Elimination and prohibition of seances.**
- All facilities under Caodaism were managed by the Communist Government.

Step 4. Announcement No 01/HT/TT: the Sacerdotal Council was forced to disband itself

The Communist authorities forced the Hội Thánh (Sacerdotal Council) to issue the Announcement on 16th lunar 1st month Year of the Goat (dl. February 12th, 1979) that the Hội Thánh disbanded

itself. However, the communist authorities pretended to have nothing to do with that decision to fool the Vietnamese and the people in the world. At least, the Communists won.

**Step 5. « Caodaist Act No 01 », dated March 01st, 1979:
Establishment of the pro-communist Caodaist group**

The Caodaist Act No 01 issued on 04th 2nd lunar month Year of the Goat (March 01st, 1979) includes:

a/ Disbanding the whole Caodaist system, including:

- The Hiệp Thiên Đài and related offices.
- The Phước Thiện (Charity Body).
- The Cửu Trùng Đài and other administrative offices.
- The Phở Tế (Assistant service).
- The Hội Thánh Hàm Phong (the Caodaist Honorary Sacerdotal Council).
- All political organizations and societies under the Cao Đài Tòa Thánh Tây Ninh,
- All facilities, food, finance under Caodaism were confiscated.

b/ Establishing one Caodaist new office called “Hội Đồng Chương Quản”, which has a close relationship with The Vietnamese Fatherland Front And the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, observes the laws and carries out all of the policies of the government and the Communist Party. (Article 2)

c/ Determining the criteria for Caodaist dignitaries: “to serve Caodaism, the Vietnamese and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.”(Article 3).

d/ Prohibit all seances. (Article 5)

Seances are banned, so there will be no more divinely ordained dignitaries like the Hộ Pháp or the Giáo Tông, who are ordained by God through seances¹⁴.

How to create the pro-communist Caodaist groups

Having eliminated the respected Caodaist leaders, the communist authorities tightly controlled Caodaism by means of a series of announcements, Instructions, decisions, decrees and acts, which focused on the important points: how to choose religious officers, to ordain dignitaries and hinder the development of Caodaism.

For example:

Instruction No 2¹⁵ : *How to choose officials from Caodaist believers.*

Announcement No 34¹⁶: *We do not encourage religions but use them.*

Announcement No 02¹⁷ : *District dignitaries (Giáo Hữu or Lễ Sanh) have to be approved by the Chairman of the Provincial People's Committee, Giáo Tông and Hộ Pháp by the Prime Minister, Phó Sư, Chưởng Pháp and equivalents by the Chairman of the Provincial People's Committee, Hội Vạn Linh by the Prime Minister.*

To carry out that policy, the government took the following steps:

- Establishing The Department of Religion under the Department of Internal Affairs to control all religious activities.
- Issuing: the Ordinance on Religion, Decision by the Party Central Committee On Religious Activities, Announcement by the Department of Internal Affairs, etc.

¹⁴A favorite way of the communists is « elimination of the leaders ». For example, after 1975 the founder of Vovinam-Viet vo Dao was imprisoned and after he passed away (2010) the martial arts school was managed by a communist official

¹⁵ Signed by the Chairman of the Central Commission for Mass Mobilization, Phan Minh Tánh on 29-1-1991

¹⁶ By the Party Central Committee signed by Lê Đức Anh on 14-11-1992

¹⁷ By the Department of Religion signed by Lê Quang Vinh on 16-6-1999

- Training religious officials (religious policemen) to inspect the facilities and human resources of religions, held religious conventions and carry out the instructions of the Prime Minister according to the slogan: « *Glorious nation, successful religion* ». Outside Vietnam, the Communists also established pro-communist Caodaist groups by ordaining and sending 13 Lữ Sanh abroad to instruct Caodaist believers.

B. Developing Caodaism

In 1995, the Communist Government had the plan « *to develop Caodaism* » which is, to legalize all Caodaist organizations in order to eliminate the original religion. This plan consisted of two periods:

Period 1. Announcement No10 TB/TGCP to choose an experimental place.

Period 2. Awarding: Charter, Religious Council, and legal status.

Announcement No 10 TB/TGCP¹⁸ : Claiming that Cao Đài Tây Ninh is a schism

It is clearly said on page 5: « *We do not intend to develop religions, to revive the former religious organizations nor to unite the schisms. It is important to convince the dignitaries so that believers volunteer to do what we want* ».

According to the Announcement No 34/BBT of the Central Secretariat (Tây Ninh 27-5-1996). Caodaism is degraded to a schism.

*In page 7: **affirm that religion Cao Đài Tây Ninh is a schism**
Seances are prohibited.*

The organization consists of only two levels.

Using exact terminology to avoid misunderstandings.

Awarding

Despite their size, all Caodaist organizations were awarded pleasing terms such as « *Caodaist Council, Charter, legal status* » as

¹⁸ The notified result of the seminar on the missions to Caodaism, Hà Nội 30-12-1995

if they were major religions in the world. How are they presently recognized?

Religious Council ¹⁹

For major religions, this term is used to call the group of top leaders. Therefore, a Caodaist schism of a hundred believers is thought to be a major religion because it also has a Caodaist Council. As a result, all Caodaist schisms use this term for their management. For example “Hội Thánh Cao Đài Tây Ninh” means The Schism of Cao Đài Tây Ninh.

Charter²⁰

A charter is a legal document for a religion, which includes all activities of that religion such as the name, the structure, the departments and so on. A Caodaist schism or fraction has to accept this charter (approved in advance by the Communist Government) in order to earn the legal status for its religious activities.

How to prepare the charter

To « *help* » a Caodaist Council prepares its Charter, the government chose the Hội Thánh Tiên Thiên as an experimental group. Its Charter was the model for other Caodaist groups to follow. After that, all Caodaist charters are the same as the one instructed by the government in order to be approved by the government²¹.

The similarities of the charters

Reading all of the Caodaist charters, everyone can get that they contain the factors that hinder the development of Caodaism except the part of worshipping and rituals:

- Seances are banned, so divine power is prevented and the foundation of Caodaism is damaged. The Hội Vạn Linh (General Convention) has the same power as and replaces God in the world.

- Dignitaries are not ordained by a divine power but by the decision of the Hội Vạn Linh. However, the Hội Vạn Linh is

¹⁹ Giáo: religious. Hội: group. Dịch là : The Church, L'église, religious council.

²⁰ Hiến: legal. Chương: document

²¹ Please see the original Charter in Appendix 2

manipulated by the religious police and pro-communist persons will join the management.

- The Hội Đồng Chưởng Quản (Management Committee) is composed of two levels: the central one is Hội Đồng Chưởng Quản and the local one is Ban Cai Quản (District Management). This kind of organization is able to prevent Caodaism from developing further, meeting or practicing Caodaism in the way against what the government wants.

Legal Status²²

An organization or a religion has legal status if it is approved by the national law.

The religion that wants to be granted the legal status must meet some requirements such as the proper rights to protect, a well-organized structure and legal representatives. To achieve this legal status, religion has to prepare a Charter and submit it to the government for approval²³.

The Vietnamese Communist Government defines: *“The legal status of religious organizations is different from that of religions. Due to the right to religious freedom, the religions that operate in Vietnam and follow the Vietnamese law have legal status by default”*.

Based on that viewpoint, Caodaist schisms are considered religious organizations, so they must « be granted legal status to operate legally such as remaining a hierarchy, managing finance and properties, holding meetings, offering training classes, ordaining and transferring dignitaries, publishing scriptures, building temples, have relationship with other national and international religious and social organizations and responsible for their own activities before the law²⁴.

»

C. Summary of the technique of elimination of the name

Knowing that it is impossible to destroy belief, the Communists try hard to control Caodaism in three ways:

²² Pháp: legal; Nhân: people

²³ According to International Law, a citizen of a democratic country can have basic rights of freedom such as: of assembly, travel, speech, business, and others like buying and selling, signing, creating and destroying agreements, owning, receiving or giving properties, etc.

²⁴ Explanation by the Department of religion.

- Controlling human resources.
- Eradication of the origin.
- Persecuting believers and fractions.

Controlling human resources

Decision No 297, dated November 11th, 1977 Article 3 part 6: *The ordinations and appointments of the people who practice religion full time (including election) must be allowed by the government in advance.* In reality, how do authorities control human resources? For example the Hội Thánh Tây Ninh.

Filing

The files of the dignitaries who request for ordination or promotion must be considered by assigned authorities. The applicants must have a certificate in defense and security issued by the local government²⁵, that is the government, on behalf of His Holiness Lý Giáo tông and God approves it. This situation allowed pro-communist dignitaries to become leaders. In addition, Caodaist dignitaries can now be bought or bribed with benefits, pressures or threats.

Assigning to branches

Formerly this was decided by His Holiness Lý Đức Giáo Tông by means of seances. Now it is done by casting lots controlled by humanly ordained dignitaries. The yellow, azure and red balls will decide the branch of Thái (Buddhism), Thượng (Taoism) or Ngọc (Confucianism) respectively.

Humanly ordained dignitaries

The Caodaist leaders in the Standing Committee must register and be approved by the Department of Religion. In Tòa Thánh Tây Ninh, after the first (2007) and second (2012) time of ordination and promotion, over 3.000 new humanly ordained dignitaries entered the management system of Caodaism. This degraded the Hội Thánh²⁶. The Hội Thánh is now not saintly anymore because it has only the

²⁵ According to Announcement No 41/87HT-TT dated 12-3-2012

²⁶ Sacerdotal Council.

body without a soul. The dignitaries who do not accept this have to practice Caodaism at home.

Religious work

The dignitaries who want to do religious work inside or outside Vietnam have first to have their curriculum vitae considered by the local police and be instructed by governmental officers. All Caodaist activities must be allowed and controlled by the local government.

Disbanding

On December 23rd, 1978, the Tây Ninh newspaper printed the decision of the Tây Ninh People's Council :

Article 3. Any Caodaist Administrations are disbanded and prohibited. Seances are discarded and banned. The government confiscates all Caodaist properties which are not for religious purposes to serve the society. At the same time, the government determines how many facilities Caodaism can manage and how many people are allowed to stay in the temples for religious purposes.

In 1979, the government forced the dignitaries to sign and issue the Announcement No 001 dated February 12th, 1979 and the Caodaist Act 001 March 1st, 1979 to:

- prohibit seances.
- disband the Hội Thánh Cao Đài Tòa Thánh Tây Ninh.
- disband 5 administrative organizations.
- confiscate all Caodaist properties.

Since then, the Hiệp Thiên Đài and the Cửu Trùng Đài become one Hội Thánh²⁷. And the Hội Thánh Em (Bàn Trị Sự) determined in the Caodaist Canonical Code become Tổ Nghi Lễ²⁸ responsible for local rituals.

Violently eliminating the original name

The Charter in Year of the Ox 1997 of the Hội Thánh Tây Ninh (Tây Ninh Sacerdotal Council) was not a religious document or prepared by the Caodaist dignitaries, but the one instructed by the Communist Government in order to eliminate the origin of Caodaism. The Decision No 42-QĐ/TU on May 29th, 1996 by the Tây Ninh Party Committee established a steering committee. At the same time the

²⁷ Sacerdotal Council.

²⁸ Group of Rituals.

Tây Ninh Committee introduced Plan No 01-KH/TU dated May 27th, 1996 determining the practical steps to take:

- **Claiming that Cao Đài Tây Ninh is an independent schism like other Caodaist schisms.** That is eliminating the relation between the original Caodaism and other Caodaist schisms.

- Banning seances.
- Establishing a two-Leveled Administration of Caodaism.
- Eliminating the origin of Caodaism by creating the Hội Đồng Chưởng Quản (management committee) to replace the Hội Thánh Tây Ninh (Tây Ninh Sacerdotal Council).

In 1997 the government granted the legal status to the Hội Đồng Chưởng Quản to officially found a new schism called « *Cao Đài Tây Ninh* » controlled by the Communist Party. Xa Lộ Pháp Luật newspaper²⁹ wrote, "Now, Cao Đài Tây Ninh was recognized as one of the nine Caodaist schisms that are legally operating in Vietnam ».

Eliminating the origin of Caodaism by words

What the Communists do is to eliminate Tây Ninh Caodaism and change it from an original religion to a fraction that is like other Caodaist fractions by changing the names³⁰ so that there is no more root (Đại Đạo Tam Kỳ Phổ Độ) or branches (hệ phái). They think all the branches without root will wither.

Changing the name

All Caodaist organizations have the name beginning with the term Cao Đài. For example, the Ban Chỉnh Đạo is now called the Cao Đài Ban Chỉnh Đạo, and the Hội Đồng Chưởng Quản is now called Cao Đài Tây Ninh.

Discrediting the Hội Thánh (Caodaist Sacerdotal Council)

In Caodaism, Hội Thánh 會聖³¹ is an organization including the dignitaries at the level of Saints and above like the Hội Thánh Đại Đạo Tam Kỳ Phổ Độ, the Hội Thánh Cứu Trùng Đài or the Hội Thánh Hiệp Thiên Đài. All dignitaries are divinely ordained.³² However, the

²⁹ Issue 36 dated 17/8/2013 page 16 column 4 line 26

³⁰ Changed names can confuse the researchers who are not accustomed to communists' plots

³¹ Hội Thánh (Assembly of Saints) is equivalent to other major religions in the world.

³² There are many Hội Thánh in Caodaism: Hội Thánh Cứu Trùng Đài, Hội Thánh Hiệp Thiên Đài, Hội Thánh Phước Thiện, Hội Thánh Ngoại Giáo and Hội Thánh Hàm Phong.

Communist authorities now deliberately discredit the original Hội Thánh by calling other schisms “*Hội Thánh*”, which implies that the high-ranking dignitaries of the original religion are equivalent to those in other schisms.

Indirectly discrediting other religions

Giáo Hội³³ 教會 (Sacerdotal Council) is the group of top leaders of religion. Now a Caodaist fraction of a hundred followers can have a Giáo Hội like other major religions (Buddhism, Catholic, etc.) in the world.

In 1997, communist authorities order the local press to call the Hội Thánh Cao Đài Tây Ninh a schism. Since 1997, Caodaism is replaced by the schism of Cao Đài Tây Ninh established by the Communist Government. All followers live and work according to Communist Law. The Charter 2007 was issued to add to the Charter 1997 by Hội Đồng Chưởng Quản verified by the communist government.

Witness

In 2014, Dr Heiner Bielefeldt, Special Reporter of the UN came to investigate the freedom of religion in Vietnam. He came to Chánh Trị Sự Nguyễn Kim Lân’s home (currently a temporary Temple) to learn the truth about the 37 Caodaist believers in Châu Thành, Vĩnh Long, who disobey the “State-owned Caodaism”³⁴. Dr. Heiner Bielefeldt witnessed:

- March Communist policemen seized the Caodaist Temple in Vĩnh Long on 23rd, 2000.
- The Caodaist dignitaries, who disobeyed the Hội Đồng Chưởng Quản³⁵, retreated to their homes and practiced Caodaism there.
- Some young men had to stop practicing Caodaism due to threats in their schools or jobs.

³³ Giáo: religious. Hội: council.

³⁴ The current pro-Communist Sacerdotal Council.

³⁵ Caodaist Management Council or the state-owned Caodaism.



Ngài Heiner Bielefeldt – Báo Cáo Viên Đặc Biệt của Liên Hiệp Quốc về Tự Do Tôn Giáo hoặc Tin Ngưỡng, cùng phái đoàn chụp ảnh lưu niệm trước tư gia Hiền huynh Chánh Trị Sự Nguyễn Kim Lân - tỉnh Vĩnh Long, vào ngày 1-7-Giáp Ngọ (dl 27-7-2014)



Hiền huynh Chánh Trị Sự Hứa Phi was assaulted seriously by the communist authority

According to the Chánh Trị Sự Nguyễn Bạch Phụng, on 26th 3rd lunar month, Year of the Pig (April 30th, 2019), while the Chánh Trị Sự Nguyễn Kim Lân was celebrating the Death Anniversary of the Thượng Sanh Cao Hoài Sang at home, the communist police monitored and filmed the attending co-religionists in order to threaten them. The police always tail Chánh Trị Sự Nguyễn Kim Lân and Chánh Trị Sự Nguyễn Bạch Phụng because those two dignitaries, who belong to the Hội Đồng Liên Tôn Việt Nam, have fought for religious freedom.



A communist policeman in Vĩnh Long is taking photos in Chánh Trị Sự Nguyễn Kim Lân's home during a ritual, threatening other Caodaists on November 21st, 2018.

In 2015, the Communist Government destroyed the Caodaist Temple in Tuy An, Phú Yên. They said to enlarge the 1A high way, but, in fact, they destroyed the Temple of the believers disobedient to the state-owned Caodaism. To date, the Caodaist believers in Tuy An have filed complains about the communist government in vain.



The caodaist Temple in Tuy An, Phú Yên was destroyed on april 4st, 2005

The Thông Sự Đoàn Công Danh and other conservative Caodaist believers have had lots of troubles while practicing Caodaism.



Father Đinh Hữu Thoại met the Thông Sự Đoàn Công Danh. A communist policeman is watching on March 31st, 2017 (right picture). Communist authorities always threaten and keep an eye on Thông Sự Đoàn Công Danh in Tuy An, Phú Yên.

The communist authorities seized the Long Bình Temple, Tiền Giang and assaulted some Caodaist believers on July 3rd, 2013.



Brother Nguyễn Văn Em and the Phó Trị Sự Lê Thị Kẹt were assaulted seriously by the communist authorities on July 3rd, 2013.

On September 16th, 2012, the pro-communist Caodaist Management Council, helped by the Communist authorities, seized the Phù Mỹ Temple in Bình Định and injured some Caodaist believers.



PTS Nguyễn Công Trữ bị đánh tét mặt và cổ



Brother Nguyễn Nhơn was assaulted and seriously injured on September 16th, 2012.



Mr. Nguyễn Thành Tám, the leader of the state-owned Caodaism, is delivering a speech in the Caodaist General Convention in 2012 and several communist officials are sitting behind him.



Summary

Caodaism before 1975

after 1975

Original religion	Tòa Thánh Tây Ninh	No original religion. Only schisms
Ordination	seances	Elections approved by the government
Facilities	Managed and build by the Sacerdotal Council (1)	Managed by the government. Constructions allowed by the government
Schism	Freely established	Prohibition
Meeting	Freedom of meeting	Must be allowed by the government (2)
The media	Freely published for example L'Action indochinoise (1930), Revue caodaiste (1930) Đuốc Chơn Lý (1933) ...	In 2014, only one magazine published by the government

Notes (1) Under the French Colonial Government, constructions had to be allowed by the government. However, the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council built Temples before requesting for permission. The French Government then intentionally ignored it because permission meant recognition. (2) Without permission, a Caodaist meeting is prevented by local policemen or villains.

4

Thinking of Judaism

In 2007, Israel had a population of 13.2 millions, 41% of which live in Israel. In 2005 there were 14.3 million Jews in the world, which accounts for 0.2% of the world's population. Approximately 43% of Jews live in Israel, 43% in the US and Canada, others in Europe and the rest in South America, Asia, Africa, and Australia.

Judaism, originating in the Middle East in the Bronze Age, is one of the most ancient monotheistic religions in the world. It belongs to the group of Abrahamic religions and is based on the Torah. Judaic history and morality more or less influenced other religions, including Christianity, Islam and Baha'i Faith. The Torah is part of the larger text known as the Tanakh or the Hebrew Bible, and supplemental oral tradition represented by later texts such as the Midrash and the Talmud.

In Judaism, the authority on theological and legal matters is not vested in any one person or organization, but in the sacred texts and the rabbis and scholars who interpret them.

According to Jewish legend, this religion originated from God's covenant with Abraham (2,000 BC), who was the patriarch of the State of Israel. Through many eras, Judaism was related to many religious ethics, especially the belief in one omnipotent, benevolent and omniscient God, who created and reigns over the universe. According to Jewish traditions, God made the covenant with the Children of Israel and descendants, telling them His commandments through Moses on Mount Sinai.

Israel, whose 3,000-year history is so tragic and heroic, has lots of admirable points for us to imitate. Judaism in the past and present Caodaism are similar in several ways.

- The most important similarity is the religious community was wiped out and followers had to flee to a foreign country and live in around a synagogue (Jews) or Temple (Caodaists).
- Secondly, there is not a central leading system, so Jews follow the Torah and Caodaists the Caodaist Constitution.

Leaders

Based on the holy scriptures like the Torah and the experience of the prophets like Moses, Miriam and Aaron, who led the Israelis to the promised land, the Israelis made some leadership principles.

- The leader must have a strong sense of responsibility like prophet Exodus Moses, who led the Israelis to the promised land.
- According to Israelis' scriptures, leadership is the mixture of responsibilities and aspects. There is no one leader for the Israelis.
- The leader must be a true visionary, for example, prophet Moses said he was responsible for leading everyone to the land of milk and honey.
- The leader must trust the people he leads.
- The leader must learn from others all the time.

Thinking about the Synagogue and the Cao Đài Temple
Thanks to the Synagogues, the Israelis can preserve Judaism and return to their former country. Caodaist Temples now have the same role. A synagogue is:

- The center for cultural, religious, traditional preservation.

- The place where followers have meetings, practice religion, pray to God, teach Hebrew, enjoy enlightenment, etc.
- The place for Jewish festivals of all kinds.

Conclusion

Conclusion 1

Here are my answers to some common questions about the Caodaist Junior Sacerdotal Council.

1. There are no Junior Sacerdotal Councils. I hope, the documents copied in this book from the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council are a good answer.

2. The concept of the Junior Sacerdotal Council is not in accordance with the Caodaist Constitution.

It is not mentioned in the Caodaist Constitution by God, but it is in the Explanation of the Caodaist Constitution. Having taken orders from His Holiness Giáo Tông, His Holiness Hộ Pháp added the Junior Sacerdotal Council. The Giáo Tông and the Hộ Pháp can add new points to the Explanation of the Caodaist Constitution on behalf of God. Those who do not trust the Hộ Pháp or the Giáo Tông or who want to hinder the development of Caodaism usually refuse to accept this concept.

3. This concept is impractical.

The Junior Sacerdotal Councils are the foundation for the Senior Sacerdotal Council. In the current critical situation, the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council was disbanded, so the Junior Sacerdotal Councils should cooperate to protect Caodaism. It will be

a strong spiritual barrier to stop any evil powers. Therefore, His Holiness Hộ Pháp issued a decree on the role of the Junior Sacerdotal Council. In addition, Judaism is another example for Caodaist believers to follow.

Conclusion 2

In the current chaotic situation, I would like to repeat what God and other Caodaist senior leaders have mentioned.

First, *“Be strong and moral and come to me”*. (Seance on June 22nd, 1928).

Second, *“We should work together. From now on, we will never let anyone steal our authority because it is God’s authority. The Sacerdotal Council still has its power though there are few believers left”*. (Hộ Pháp).

Third, *“Despite the differences in titles, organizations or human resources, which are the result of assigned functions, everyone should focus on spreading Caodaism. That is the main mission of all Caodaists, not seeking the power for your own group or degrading others”*.

Lạ Chúc Nguyễn Huy

Appendix 1

Caodaist Constitution

The Caodaist Constitution can be read at WWW.daotam.info

Materials for Caodaist Training Course can be found at WWW.daotam.info

In French

Pháp Chánh Truyền, La constitution religieuse du caodaise

Traducteurs : Monseigneur Trương Vĩnh Thanh, Son Eminence Cao Tiếp Đạo

Vue et autorisée par Sa Sainteté Hộ Pháp Phạm Công Tắc

Editions Dervy, Paris, 126 pages, 1953

In English

Pháp Chánh Truyền

法正傳

THE RELIGIOUS CONSTITUTION OF CAO ĐÀI RELIGION

Religious Constitutional Laws explained and annotated

by His Holiness Hộ-Pháp Phạm Công Tắc

Translated from French to English by Lucy Davey

Foreword by Professor Eric J. Sharpe

Introduction to English translation by Professor Garry W Trompf

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Pháp Chánh Truyền, In Chinese

Translator: Hiền Tài Mã Nguyên Lương

Pháp Chánh Truyền (Vietnamese)

Published Year of the Mouse, 1972



Lời tựa

chế ngự thì sự điều hòa tốt đẹp của cơ Tạo Hóa sắp đặt có thể mất đi mà chớ; nên khi mở Đại Đạo Tam Kỳ Phổ Độ, Đức Chí Tôn đã lập ngay một Pháp Chánh Truyền và Tân Luật để điều hành Nghĩ vì cơ Huyền vi Mầu nhiệm của Đạo có Thiên Điều cũng như cơ Đời có Luật Pháp chơn truyền để chế ngự những dục vọng bất chánh mà ở cõi nào và đời nào cũng có, nếu không có gì guồng máy Hành Chánh Đạo, hầu bảo thủ chơn truyền và công bình Thiên Đạo, kèm theo luật pháp còn có Thánh Ngôn và Giáo Điều dạy bảo. Muốn lập một nền Đạo lớn lao như Đại Đạo Tam Kỳ Phổ Độ có khả năng truyền giáo đến thất ức niên mà không lập Pháp thì làm sao điều độ được một số Giáo Đồ quá đông gồm gần toàn thể nhân loại. Bởi thế nên quyền Pháp Chánh Truyền này cần được tục bản mỗi kỳ này hết tới kỳ khác; để lấy đó làm căn bản cho tất cả Giáo Đồ noi theo mà hành đạo hoặc giữ gìn cho trọn tư cách người Đạo đến cùng không vi phạm Luật Đạo và không sai đường lạc lối. Mặc dù không Luật Pháp nào được gọi là hoàn bị cả. Nhưng Luật Pháp nào cũng đều phải ấn định ít nhứt những đại cương và nguyên tắc. Chẳng hạn như Luật Công Bình giữa người với người thì phải có nguyên tắc bất di bất dịch là: Kỷ sở bất dục vật thị ư nhơn. (Cái gì mà mình không muốn, thì đừng làm cho người) Ví dụ: Nếu mình muốn được tự do thì đừng làm mất tự do của người khác.

Tuy nghe rất đơn giản nhưng không còn cách giải thích nào đúng hơn nữa. Luật Pháp rất cần ích cho sự điều hòa trật tự trong xã hội. Nó lại còn cần ích hơn nữa cho Đạo vì nếu thiếu Luật Pháp thì khó tránh sự hỗn loạn. Mà nếu trong Đạo có sự hỗn loạn, thì còn gì là đạo lý! Đức Chí Tôn lập Pháp Chánh cho Đạo tức là lập chủ quyền cho Đạo đó vậy. Nếu ai có tinh thần xây dựng nền Đạo thì tất nhiên phải tôn trọng chủ quyền đó. Cũng nhờ chủ quyền đó mà Hội Thánh là hình thể Đức Chí Tôn tại thế mới có đủ quyền hành để thể Thiên hành hóa. Tuy nhiên, quyền Đạo có khác hơn quyền Đời là vì nó do sự thương yêu mà có chớ không phải dùng áp lực để chế ngự người ta. Luật Pháp đã do Thiên Lý và Công Lý mà lập ra, thì tự nhiên phải tuyệt đối công bình không còn sự chênh lệch nào đối với toàn thể bốn Đạo. Vì trong Đạo từ trên xuống dưới, từ nhỏ tới lớn đều có qui luật định phân, lớn không giành quyền nhỏ, nhỏ không lấn quyền

lớn. Nếu cứ chiếu luật thi hành thì toàn Đạo được điều hòa êm ái và guồng máy Hành Chánh Đạo cứ tiến hành theo luật định Thiên nhiên không còn gì trở ngại. Hội Thánh lấy làm hoan hỉ cho tái bản quyển PHÁP Chánh Truyền hầu phổ biến trong toàn Đạo để cho tất cả được thụ hưởng Pháp lý công bình Thiên Đạo, và mong rằng từ đây không ai còn vi phạm luật không hiểu Luật Đạo mà vi phạm nữa.
Hội Thánh cẩn từ

Mục Lục

Lời tựa

Cửu Trùng Đài

Quyền hành Giáo Tông

Quyền hành Chưởng Pháp

Quyền hành Đầu Sư

Quyền hành Chánh Phối Sư

Quyền hành Phối Sư

Quyền hành Giáo Sư

Quyền hành Giáo Hữu

Quyền hành Lễ Sanh

Quyền hành Chánh Trị Sự

Quyền hành Phó Trị Sự

Quyền hành Thông Sự

Đạo phục chức sắc Cửu Trùng Đài nam phái

Đạo phục Giáo Tông

Đạo phục Chưởng Pháp

Đạo phục Đầu Sư

Đạo phục Chánh Phối Sư và Phối Sư

Đạo phục của Giáo Sư

Đạo phục của Giáo Hữu

Đạo phục của Lễ Sanh

Đạo phục của Chánh Trị Sự

Đạo phục của Phó Trị Sự

Đạo phục của Thông Sự

Cửu Trùng Đài nữ phái

Quyền hành của nữ Đầu Sư

Quyền hành Chánh Phối Sư và Phối Sư

Đạo phục của Giáo Sư

Đạo phục của Giáo Hữu

Đạo phục của Lễ Sanh

Đạo phục của Chánh Trị Sự

Đạo phục của Phó Trị Sự

Đạo phục của Thông Sự

Luật công cử của chức sắc Cửu Trùng Đài

Hiệp Thiên Đài

Đạo phục của chức sắc Hiệp Thiên Đài

Đạo phục của Hộ Pháp

Đạo phục của Thượng Phẩm

Đạo phục của Thượng Sanh
Đạo phục của Thập Nhị Thời Quân
Đạo phục của Bảo Văn Pháp Quân
Đạo phục của Bảo Sanh Quân
Bài diễn văn của Đức Hộ Pháp.

Appendix 2

The establishment of the Caodaist Canonical Code

In Caodaist History II (p 72), the Đầu Sư Hương Hiếu told about the establishment of the Caodaist Canonical Code.

1. On 2nd 11th lunar month, Year of the Tiger (December 6th, 1926):
"Permanently stay in the Temple to prepare the Code.

Listen:

- First, prepare the Law for Meditation Houses.

- Then, prepare the Caodaist Code.

- At least, prepare the Secular Law.

Understood, children!"

2. On 14th 11th lunar month, Year of the Tiger (December 18th, 1926), His Holiness Giáo Tông instructed when to submit the manuscript and how to amend it. (Đạo Sử 2, p. 105 by Đầu Sư Hương Hiếu):

"Thượng Trung Nhật, listen!

Write to other dignitaries, telling them to temporarily stop doing missionary work while preparing the Caodaist Code. After finishing it, it is easier to explain and spread Caodaism.

Hence, be here all on Christmas Day and submit the manuscript of the Code then.

On the following day, all dignitaries should wear their formal dress, kowtowing in the temple. They have chairs arranged in a circle for them to sit on. Next, you and Ngọc Lịch Nguyệt sit together with them as you did in the Senate for argument.

You will preside the meeting and let other dignitaries argue against or for the Code. Understood?

Be polite and take turns: first the Buddhist, then the Taoist and the Confucius branches.

Write to Tương and Trang, telling them to submit the manuscript at the same time with Thơ. Understood?"

(Tương, Trang, Thơ are the then Đầu Sư: Thượng Tương Thanh, Ngọc Trang Thanh, Thái Thơ Thanh).

3. On 20th 11th lunar month, Year of the Tiger (December 4th, 1926), in a seance, God said:

"That is why I had to leave the Bạch Ngọc Kinh and the Huỳnh Kim Khuyết, going to the world to save you, my children. I should have reduced your suffering, not impose more restrictions on you.

That is why I feel so sad!

Truly, the code I had you cooperate to prepare now highly influences your future divine status, so I have to resign myself to accepting it. Without law, you are not allowed to enter the Bạch Ngọc Kinh.

So dutifully finish your work and Li Bai will amend the manuscript in another seance". (Collection of Divine Messages)

4. On 12th 12th lunar month, Year of the Tiger (January 15th, 1927), His Holiness Lý Giáo Tông gave instructions on how to debate the law. (Cao daist History, p 170 by Đầu Sư Hương Hiếu)

"Thượng Trung Nhựt, you should focus on debating the Cao daist Code, not play around anymore!

God will come to watch the debate and I will come before that. Thus, hold a seance so that I can tell you what to do when you are all present. Begin the meeting immediately after I have come.

Wear your formal vestments during the debate. It is impolite to wear casual vestments because Genii, Saints, Immortals, and Buddhas also attend the meeting. That's an order!

5. On 13th 12th lunar month, Year of the Tiger (January 16th, 1927), His Holiness Giáo Tông instructed how to present the manuscript of the Cao daist Code to him.

"Chưởng Pháp and Đầu Sư, sit down. Three Phối Sư come forward. Thái Thơ Thanh has to hold all manuscripts and present them to the three Đầu Sư. The three Đầu Sư stand up, bow and receive them with their 6 hands on the Code. Then they present them to the Chưởng Pháp, who have to bow, receive, raising them to their foreheads and present them to the altar.

Listen! I give this Code to the two Chưởng Pháp to review it again. They should finish after a month then return it to the Hộ Pháp. I will then correct it in a seance.

Spare a quiet room to pretend the Hiệp Thiên Đài.

The Thập nhị Thời Quân, Thượng Sanh and Thượng Phẩm must be there.

Hold another seance for more instructions. The two Chưởng Pháp, put the Code in front of my statue tonight". (Collection of Divine Messages)

The Cao daist Canonical Code (English)

The Third Universal Amnesty of God

CAODAISM

The New Canonical Codes

Tân Luật

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Appendix 3

Caodaist Constitution (for female)

After the new year day, Year of the Cat, on God's birthday (9th 1st lunar month) 1927. Li Bai, the First Heavenly Governor, made the Caodaist Constitution for the female in a seance. It is necessary to know why God let Li Bai do it.

"Listen! These are Caodaist female vestments.

Caodaist Constitution: Female believers are led by the female **Đầu Sư**, who take orders from the **Giáo Tông** and the **Chưởng Pháp**.

Explanation: the Female Sacerdotal Council, which is led by the female **Đầu Sư**, must take orders from the **Giáo Tông** and the **Chưởng Pháp**. A female **Đầu Sư** has the same authority as that of a male **Đầu Sư**, but only over female believers. Similarly, a male **Đầu Sư** has authority only male believers. The **Giáo Tông** and the **Hộ Pháp** assign all-female matters to the female **Đầu Sư**.

Caodaist Constitution: A female **Đầu Sư** is elected in accordance with the law issued by the Sacerdotal Council and follows the orders of the Sacerdotal Council in both religious and secular life.

Explanation: A female **Đầu Sư** must respect the Caodaist Canonical Code in both religious and secular life. She, as well as the male **Đầu Sư**, must work under the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council. Her promotions must be in accordance with the Caodaist Electoral Law and her authority is equal to that of a male **Đầu Sư**. She is not allowed to overpower the **Chánh Phối Sư** in administration because that violates the Constitution.

Appendix 4

Training course

The materials for the Caodaist Training Course (Year of the Dog) 1970. These materials are approved by the Hiến Pháp Trương Hữu Đức, Chief of the Caodaist Censorship Board on 5th 6th lunar month, Year of the Dog (July 7th, 1970). Copyrighted by the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council. Published 1970 by Lê Thành, Long Hoa.

The Caodaist Petty Dignitaries are good examples for other believers to follow, so they should be absolutely honest, humane and selfless. They should always be ready to help others to practice Caodaism in accordance with God's will:

"Chẳng quản đồng tông mới một nhà,

Cùng nhau một Đạo tức cùng cha."

Though you're not brothers,

You're Caodaists under one Divine Father.

They should treat each other like brothers in a family, forgive sinners, share joys and sorrows, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give jobs to the poor and sympathize with each other. They should act like the eldest brothers in the village.

The authority of the Bàn Trị Sự³⁶(p.8): the Bàn Trị Sự is the Junior Sacerdotal Council, which is responsible for human education on behalf of God and which has the same authority as that of the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council, but over the believers in a village or hamlet. According to the Caodaist Constitution:

- The Chánh Trị Sự is the Eldest Brother in the village on behalf of the Giáo Tông. He is nicknamed the Junior Đầu Sự because he has both administrative and legal authorities like the Đầu Sự.
- The Phó Trị Sự has the administrative authority only, not the legal one. He is at the same level as the Thông Sự in a hamlet. He is nicknamed the Junior Giáo Tông, who is responsible for correcting, guiding and educating the believers in a hamlet.
- The Thông Sự, who is established by the Hộ Pháp following the advice of the Giáo Tông, works under the Chánh Trị Sự. He is at the same level as the Phó Trị Sự in a hamlet but has the legal authority only. He is nicknamed the Junior Hộ Pháp.

³⁶ The Caodaist Administrative Unit in a village.

Hence, the Caodaist petty dignitaries of the Bàn Trị Sự are established by the Giáo Tông and the Hộ Pháp to replace the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council in the rural areas. They have very important responsibilities to believers, so your students should completely understand that point to undertake your tasks. It is considered a sin to ignore it.

Danh sách quý vị công quả

Hoa Kỳ:

Đạo Hữu Huỳnh Văn Lắm và gia đình \$50 US
 Đạo Hữu Lê Thị Quyên và gia đình \$200 US
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