

**CAODAISM
THIRD AMNESTY OF GOD IN THE EAST**

PHAP-CHANH-TRUYEN

THE RELIGIOUS CONSTITUTION OF CAODAISM

**Religious Constitutional Laws explained and annotated by
His Holiness *Ho-Phap* Pham Cong Tac, head of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai***

Translated from French to English by Lucy Davey

With

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The English Translation of the *Phap-Chanh-Truyen*, made and published in 1992, was largely based on the French translation, originally published in 1953. It was judged timely to make the English translation available in an electronic version on the Internet, as this allows those with a serious interest in Caodaism to have access to a basic text and thus achieve a deeper understanding of this Religion, particularly of the true organisation of Caodaism.

This electronic version required the valuable contributions of many people. It would have been difficult to complete this without their assistance.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to the *Cao-Dai* Temple of New South Wales, and to many other fellow Caodaists around the world. From them I gained the inspiration for this project.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Emeritus Professor Eric J. Sharpe (Foundation Professor) and Garry W. Trompf (Professor in the History of Ideas), School of Studies in Religion, University of Sydney for their kindness, support and encouragement.

I am most grateful to Lucy Davey not just for the understanding and knowledge of religions she demonstrated in the translation but also for her patience and continuous support.

Special thanks for the understanding and considerable support of *Hien-Huynh*/Brother Tran Quang Canh, and *Hien Tai* Nguyen Thanh Nghiep.

Finally, I bow in silence and humbly dedicate this work to all Divine Beings, especially to the Spiritual Pope Li T'ai Pai and His Holiness *Ho-Phap* Pham-Cong-Tac. I believe that They continually guide me in this project.

May the *Dai-Dao Tam-Ky Pho-Do* be proclaimed widely.

Dao, Cong-Tam

Sydney University 08/November/1996

NOTE CONCERNING THIS ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Due to the present special circumstances in Viet-Nam, an official approval from the Sacerdotal Council (*Hoi-Thanh*), of the Tay-Ninh Holy See cannot be obtained. However, while this is not an official translation, we expect approval to be granted when circumstances permit in the future.

For better understanding and practical application of this work, please see the text of *Phap-Chanh-Truyen* in Vietnamese, as well other *Cao-Dai* texts.

Errors are unavoidable, therefore suggestions or comments are always welcome and greatly appreciated

Foreword

*(by Eric J. Sharpe, Foundation Professor of Religious Studies,
School of Studies in Religion, University of Sydney)*

December 28, 1989 was the day Australia's biggest earthquake in recent years struck Newcastle - at 10:28 am., to be precise. My diary tells me that I did not notice it, being immersed at that time in my first fascinating encounter with Caodaism.

I did not know what to expect when I went to Women's College on the campus of the University of Sydney on that Thursday morning. I was, though, enchanted by the white robes, impressed by the intensity, bewildered by the language and charmed by the friendliness of the *Cao Dai* community. At lunch, an elderly brother wrote this on a torn-off piece of yellow paper (I still have it in my diary); he called it RETURN TO EDEN:

*EDEN is not so far
Rest and Recreation make peace
Instead to make world war
Communion is what we are in need*

I hope that he reads it now, in my pages.

One of the privileges of being, so to speak, a Religious Studies professional is that of having the opportunity to make so many unexpected friends belonging to so many and diverse religions, cultures and nations. A couple of days before the 5th Caodaist Convention in Australia, in 1989 I had celebrated Christmas with Korean Christians. A week before I had been lecturing to a mainly Indian audience on Pandit Nehru. A couple of weeks later I was aboard a visiting Swedish navy ship (not that that has anything to do with religious studies) on the Harbour. In March my wife and I were celebrating a festival with Sydney's Zoroastrians...

And yet - for so many people in our troubled world, not least here in Australia.- what we call multi-culturalism is less an adventure than a threat. Perhaps the explanation is fairly simple: what is unfamiliar is always more or less frightening, and to most Australians, whatever politicians may believe and say about multi-culturalism, the multiple cultures that surround them (especially in the cities) are strange and potentially a little threatening. What we fear, we tend to keep away from. What has never been introduced to us we have no way of understanding.

The answer is not merely bigger and better and fiercer programmes of anti-racism. Anti-racism does not often improve understanding between peoples and religions and cultures: all it does is to condemn and punish racists when it can identify them. It considers itself to have succeeded when no windows are broken, when no offensive graffiti are scrawled on walls, and when no chargeable offences are committed. Certainly this is an improvement upon open conflict. But how much better it is to shift the emphasis from condemnation and punishment to mutual understanding--how much better, but how much more difficult and demanding!

I have long thought that the divine commandment most frequently broken is that which says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." We do it all the time. We spread rumours and gossip, even when we do not know whether what we are saying is true or false. Often we are prepared to believe the worst, even of those we call our friends. Concerning those we hardly know at all - not to mention those who we regard as our enemies - falsehood and fear often rule.

The only way out of this is the way of knowledge and understanding, of mutual respect and love for one another in all our great diversity. It will not do to lay down conditions ("We will respect you if you will play the game by our rules!"). Nor may we assume that the way will always be a smooth and trouble-free one. Merely to avoid open conflict is a poor substitute for the way of dialogue.

It is a very necessary step along the way toward dialogue that I am pleased to commend this publication, with very real satisfaction that the School of Studies in Religion of the University of Sydney has been permitted to share in its production.

*Eric J. Sharpe
Foundation Professor of Religious Studies*

Introduction to the English Translation

*(by Garry W. Trompf, Professor in the History of Ideas,
School of Studies in Religion, University of Sydney)*

Outside the French-speaking world, unfortunately, *Cao Dai's* religious profile has generally been misrepresented. In American and Anglophone literature it has been viewed more as a special political force in recent Vietnamese history. We usually learn about the raising of a Caodaist Army in 1943 to help protect Vietnam against the Japanese invaders, and how certain *Cao Dai* leaders - including Tran Quang Vinh as Minister of Vietnam's armed forces - were prominent during the declining years of French overlordship in Indo-china. After France's withdrawal from the region, it is often mentioned, Caodaists resisted the repressive policies of Ngo Dinh Diem, only to have their army disbanded (1955-6) and their Pope, Pham Cong Tac, sent into exile. These facts are not without interest, as is their intense opposition to Communism even beyond the end of the Vietnam War (mid-1975), but the time has come for *Cao Dai* to be properly understood as a religious faith.

Upon Vietnam's recent reunification the number of Caodaists approached four million strong, and though facing victimization and considerable dispersal their following has increased to almost a fifth of the population we have in Australia, where this present publication has been prepared. Most followers remain in southwestern and central Vietnam, always the strongest constituency for Caodaism, but there are now large communities in the United States, Canada, France, Germany and Australia, as well as in southeast Asian refugee camps. The beliefs and religious institutions of such a populous movement demand a much wider recognition than hitherto granted them.

Caodaism is fascinating for its interweaving of ethical and spiritual threads from a diversity of religions. In its quest for a religious unity it is reminiscent of attempts to synthesize different traditions in the ancient world (most obviously Manicheism), but its apparent eclecticism is also comparable to such modern developments as Theosophy and the Bahai faith. Considering its Vietnamese origins, it is perhaps to be expected that the three great and 'saintly' sages Lao-tze, Confucius and the Buddha, are evoked in worship as the master teachers of virtue. These three reflect the divine Light, which is *Cao Dai*, the Supreme Master of the Universe. To this understanding of the three saints is added both Christ's religion of love and kindness and the expectations in ancient Vietnamese and Chinese tradition to 'honour the dead' and 'venerate the family'. Western-looking inclusions of note are the naming of high-ranking *Cao Dai* dignitaries as Pope and Cardinals (and feminists should note the appointment of a female cardinal!); the notions of *Cao Dai* as a secret tabernacle and as manifesting a feminine aspect that recall Jewish Cabalism; and the description of Caodaism as a 'super-Theosophy' to bring harmony to all spiritual beliefs and philosophies.

The origins of the Caodaist tradition, actually, lie with practices which link East with West. The "first disciple", Ngo Van Chieu, first received knowledge of the name *Cao Dai* when evoking the great spirits (Cau-Tien) with Taoist mediums in 1919 and then seven years later in more Western-style seances (using the ouidja board, table rapping, and the automatic spirit-writing know in French as *corbeille a bec*). It was in during and after the Great War that spiritualism was very

much in vogue in the West; so many senseless deaths in the trenches led thousands of Western Europeans to find solace in gatherings to contact those on 'the Other Side'. These were the decades in which Conan Doyle, creator of England's Sherlock Holmes mysteries, and the French savant Theodore Flournoy wrote their histories of spiritualism, and when the German novelist Thomas Mann brilliantly conjured up the mystery of the modern seance at the tuberculosis sanatorium he called *Der Zauberberg* ('The Magic Mountain'). How remarkable it was that Western and Eastern concerns with access to the departed and the spirit world ran together in Chieu's discoveries. A new religion was born which had roots in the almost universal, primal preoccupation with the spirits, yet which could claim the direct revelation of God (in fact the "Third Amnesty of God in the Orient"), the instituting of a new spiritual hierarchy (from *Cao Dai's* first Acting Pope, Le Van Trung), and the arrival at a true harmony of religions (which had been 'de-natured' by the later followers).

The translation which follows opens a window on the extraordinary qualities of this new force among the world's religions, and we welcome its publication with enthusiasm.

Garry W. Trompf
Professor in the History of Ideas
School of Studies in Religion
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Preface to French Translation

(by Cao-Tiep-Dao, Lord of the Zodiac, Religious Legislator)

The world at present is in darkness; the era of destruction is approaching. The Virtue of God seems shaken, universal hatreds gather poisons, and world war becomes daily more probable. Is it inevitable?

Who in the presence of the helplessness, of the fears and misery of contemporary humanity can continue to deny the need of a New Doctrine, finally capable of bringing Peace and Harmony to all races on earth?

Caodaism, founded in 1926 by the Supreme Being, the Omnipotent God of the Universe, fixes its roots in the most fully proved traditions and in the purest revelations of Buddhism.

As a religious synthesis, which in Spirit and Truth aims to harmonise all human beings with the only Spiritual Laws of the Unique Creator, Caodaism constitutes a sincere and fraternal invitation to good will between the various belief systems, religious, philosophical, mystical, exoteric or esoteric.

Fruits of a single tree, flowers of a single garden, human beings are the beloved children of a Single Father whose name is Love. So each person must love light at whatever horizon it appears. Each one must seek out the truth from whatever spring it comes.

Throughout time, the Envoys of God have borne on behalf of the people all sorts of torments and sufferings, but Divine Power is always in the end beyond human Strength.

Moses, who was considered as a murderer for having struck an Egyptian to prevent an act of violence, was loathed and hated in the highest degree. Yet this was the man who was able to free a great nation from the chains of slavery, making that people happy, bringing them out of Egypt, and finally leading them to the Holy Land! to the promised land.

With the help of a supernatural power, Jesus Christ fulfilled the ancient Mosaic law and reformed widespread customs. He gave to Humanity the good news of Universal Peace and he established, by his teachings, the principles and foundations of worldwide happiness, for the entire human race.

He was crucified by the very ones who had followed him! And this Divine Being, in his suffering, announced: *“This Sun is going to shed its rays, this Light will shine, my Grace will surround the world, and all my enemies will be confounded.”* His prophecy has come true. All the kings of the earth have been unable to destroy His Work, their banners have been torn to shreds, while the banner of the “Oppressed” was carried to its height!

The Religion of God must be the Unique Religion and all the Prophets have taught it, but it is alive and growing, not inert and unchangeable. The teaching of Moses is the bud; Christ's is the flower, and Cao-Dai's is the fruit. The flower does not destroy the bud, nor the fruit the flower. There is no destruction but fulfillment. The sepals of the bud must fall so that the flower can open, and the petals of the flower must fall so that the fruit can form and ripen. Were the sepals and petals useless? Should they be discarded? No, both elements in their time were not merely adequate but also necessary. Without them there would be no fruit! It is the same with the different teaching or prophetic revelations. Their exterior form changes from one age to another, but each Revelation is the fulfillment of the preceding ones. They are not separated from each other, and they do not clash, but they form different stages of the history of the development of the Unique Religion which has been revealed successively as a seed, a bud, a flower, and which now enters into the period of fruitfulness.

Holy words drawn from the Caodai Gospel prove the common origin of all the children of God:

A new Doctrine is needed capable of supporting Humanity in the love of creatures. On this earth where people suffer all sorts of difficulties, I am coming, just as Christ has come among you, to fight Heresy and to give good news to the world. Whatever your race, children of the Earth, you all have the one Father, God who governs your destinies. Why do you keep yourselves separated from each other depending on the way you think? for you are all called to suffer and undergo your Purgatory in this world.

To convince you and remind you that I am in fact the Jehovah of the Hebrews, the God of the Israelite Armies, the Unknown God of the Jews and the True Father of Jesus Christ. Pray to Me under the symbolic name of “CAO-DAI” and your wishes will be granted.

Did I not say that Spiritism was a future Religion? So be united by My Will and preach Peace and Harmony to the world.

The aim of each of the Manifestations of God is to bring a change, a transformation into the whole world, into public and private life, both within and without. For if the affairs of the world did not change, the appearance of these Universal Manifestations would be useless.

God is the Unique infallible authority, and the prophets are infallible because their messages are messages from God, transmitted to the world through them as mediums.

So to find the Truth, we need to renounce our prejudices, the limitations of our own opinions. The chief thing is to have an open, clear spirit. As long as these prejudices and limited opinions are not abolished, humankind will not be able to find their rest.

The book, The **History and Philosophy of Caodaism**, by Gabriel Gobron, our late Instructor in France, has given a wide understanding of the Third Alliance of God in the East, to all those who love Love and Peace, to the true citizens of the world.

Today, to offer an even wider knowledge to neophytes, and to our brothers in the West, we are publishing this new book which contains the translation of the **CONSTITUTIONAL LAWS or HOLY WRITINGS** which form the charter of the New Religion. It must be spread across the world to hasten the march of Humanity towards the Great Way, the way of Universal Fraternity.

We are certain, because of a steadily increasing experience, that human beings can find their happiness and their salvation, if they live the true life of the soul, and not just the life of the body.

We are at present in the Bronze Cycle, during which we are all called to set out on the Path of Suffering, with a similar impulsion from fear. Why are there misunderstandings? Why are there disagreements?

The world, or rather life in this material world is basically no more than a worthless dream, and our body is no more than dust! The Divine Breath alone is eternal, and Eternity exists only in the world of Lofty Souls: the Invisible World. Outside that, all goes back into nothingness, everything is wiped out and is changed. That is the way the Law is made!

*Cao-Tiep-Dao,
Zodiacal
Religious Legislator*

Lord,

Introduction to French Translation

(by His Excellency Tran-Quang-Vinh, Dignitary of the CUU-TRUNG-DAI with the title of *PHOI-SU* / ARCHBISHOP Thuong-Vinh-Thanh)

I have undertaken the translation of the **Religious Constitution of Caodaism** as a duty. As often happens, the duty brings with it its own reward, and I find a great joy because I wrote these pages for our friends in the West.

It is clear to me that this publication is opportune, because this constitution, as you will see, reveals the beautiful hierarchy of values even within predestinations, in conformity with the harmonious necessity of order, for without order there is no beauty, no justice, no progress.

No language could be more suitable than French to assure the lasting clarity of a text which is considered sacred, and thus intended as a source of universal enlightenment. Clarity in order,

order in Love, the Essential both contained and containing, a living image of all, the actual image of the One.

The required hierarchy of values like the no less evident hierarchy of predestinations, which these Constitutions make clear, confirm and demonstrate, is by itself a valuable and self-sufficient message.

Its value lies in its contribution to creating peace and harmony among spirits which seek each other, but too often are in conflict through misunderstanding, and fight with each other almost always because of ignorance. Once they understand each other they will love one another. I am trying to bring a small measure of love by providing a great measure of understanding.

The message is self-sufficient because the fact that a message can contribute to better fraternal understanding is justification in itself, and by itself, so that there is not need of reason or justification for what it is: a gesture of love. This is the explanation of my duty, and the basis for my joy.

I have spoken of love, order and progress. I have done this because these terms are developed through one another, in a fruitful harmony, and the terms are, so to speak, imposed on my pen, since sympathy has been so strongly expressed from different sides by a great number of those who are positivists. I am making this translation in the language of the man who said: **“Let us hold love as a principle, progress as an aim, and order as basic”**.

Can we not say that these three luminous terms translate the triangle which is simultaneously Gaze and Light in its origin, in the present and in its definitiveness?

On the other hand, this Constitution is a witness which confirms what the sages have very rightly and prophetically proclaimed, both in certain negatives aspects and in its most positive proclamations:

“Shame to anyone who fails to do what he teaches others.”

“The right to command others is justified only through example.”

“The leader's role is to make justice rule over the community, for the prosperity of each.”

This prosperity is not concerned only with the material side of life, but in a particular way, with the Constitution which is our concern, with the loftiest spirituality.

In every case a doctrine is not worthwhile for its newness unless its deep wisdom gives, by itself, proofs of truth, proofs of perennial relevance, proofs which link to the unique and primordial source of all the truths, of every Truth, whatever its expression in speech or writing of its contemporary and ever present manifestation.

A new doctrine can be no more than a contemporary adaptation of an old doctrine, and as far as a mystical and religious doctrine is concerned, can only be the translation into words of the one unique doctrine which is beyond time and space, and elevated above human phonetic expression, just as thought is elevated above the words which strive to express it.

Eternal, Omnipresent, Unique and True - we could make endless efforts to define what is incapable of definition: the infinitely **ONE BEING**, which does not allow anything or anyone to contain it, the One which contains in itself everything and all those who are in whatever form, intensity and greatness they may be, simply capable of a good thought, of a word of peace, a gesture of love. In this One are grouped all the beings who are offspring of the same **BEING**. In this One is the entire truth, and what we manage to express of this can be no more than a tentative babbling.

This is not a reason to say nothing, but an invitation to speak, and that is why, as much through a sense of duty as through profound joy, I have recorded the lines of this work, to try to translate through words the lofty voice, incommunicable in its absoluteness, which deigns to inspire me.

With my eyes dazzled, and my heart dilated, uplifted by the secret enthusiasm of fervent periods in solitude, I contemplate the points of the thousand diversities which form as they move apart and approach each other, an ideal and cosmic circumference. All these points, which are ordered just as the heavenly spheres are ordered, or the finest dust, give rise to the straight lines of every good will and of brotherly intentions.

With my eyes dazzled but clear, my heart dilated but beating in time with wisdom, uplifted by enthusiasm but involved in the weighing of what is evident, I see that each of the lines which emerges from a point to go the Point - I see that each of these lines formed a zone which, with great precision, is in opposition to the zone which prolongs it beyond the Point which is at once both symbolic and real. From this apparent opposition is born the balance of the centre One, of this centre One which attracts as much as it projects: infinitely.

Each point conserves its opposition to the point which is opposed to it. This contradiction assures the actual harmonious balance of the whole: Cohesion, gravity, weight, dynamism, all the great laws discovered by man and which are endlessly discoverable, the great natural laws of the great geometry of the worlds, a geometry which orders, propels, harmonises the planets, the galaxies formed from eternity as He commands, propels, harmonises, vitalises, transforms, raises the smallest of the smallest human souls. Small, small but capable of unimaginable greatness, since it is of necessity a particle of the infinite, and so the Infinite itself, which is not divided.

The Master Programmer of the worlds sets up universal rhythms according to laws which are his own, since they are His thought The Master Programmer of the Universes makes the galaxies expand in time with the pulsing of his harmonising love.

The Geometrician of the worlds has hurled his infinite prism, which reveals thousands of unknown colours, as such incapable of translation into the weighable universe where our incarnation evolves.

We should not be astonished by the different coloration of the truth about our neighbour in space or our neighbour in time. The difference in appearance which divides that neighbour from us can only be the assurance of that person's actual personality, which lives in the Ephemeral but is destined to dissolve into the whiteness of the "final and primordial Aim-Centre".

The Truth is that at present for human beings daily life is too much darkened by the opacity of matter to allow a guess, a sense, a sight, a manifestation of The light of lights which is in it.

The positive may appear in too exclusively materialistic a sense, and then it becomes pejorative for the spirit, for it loses in what is visible all the luminous values of the religious, I mean the mystical values which are divine and human.

When the positive dominates and overwhelms the speculative, the mystical is overwhelmed, the ideal is ridiculed, the religious is downgraded and judged out of date, old-fashioned, second rate. However the values are what they are: ordered, organised, ranked, attuned, living, witnesses of the One-value.

Of course there are modulations to be protected in everyday life, of course there are degrees of resonance which are rightly restored to silence, of course there are messages to be proclaimed in difference, and words to be expressed in Unity.

From this point of view our Constitution once translated will be, as I have said, both a message and a gesture.

A Constitution can be compared to one of those huge dams which are built almost everywhere on our planet - on the planet. It is just like a dam which gathers and raises the level of the untrammelled waters of the individual fast-flowing streams to form them into a power which is effective because it is measured, ordered, directed.

In the same way, the psycho-mystical forces which are built up and stored, spread out and increased by a religious community gain in effectiveness in direct proportion to the harmony which exists among the members of the community, a harmony which is allowed to develop precisely because of the rules of the Constitution.

I think, I hope that I will be clearly understood by our brothers in the West. This is the reason not just for the translation which I am presenting today but particularly for this introduction which finds its justification in its call to new, fraternal understanding.

Here there are signs of brotherhood, both three-sided and circular. Here there are ceremonial forms which have been familiar for generations to all peoples, even though we may have little experience of being within such a tradition. I am hopeful that all readers who meet such a fraternal term may experience in themselves a sense of intellectual excitement, of course, but at the same time a feeling which disturbs and initiates to some degree. This sense is intended to create understanding among spirits which are formed for brotherhood, made to understand each other.

Let us free ourselves, as far as is possible, from ready-made ideas, from our internal contradictions which essentially form obstacles to the understanding which is desired among all the great religious movements.

Let us cease judging religious matters only by externals. Let us make the attempt to discover in them, even better, to feel in them what may be the essential element in their inner value. In the West, did not Plato and Seneca often reason about the Essential, just like Saint Augustine and Thomas Aquinas? What educated person does not find them* in Lao-Tsu and Confucius?

Into the secret centre of souls enlightened by the one necessary light converge all differences to be harmonised in a single conscious responsible will.

Into the secret centre of the temple constructions of the highest idealism extend from the lines of understanding which go from North to South, from East to West, and from the Zenith to the Nadir.

Thus the lines are signs and countersigns, and the understanding of communions.

Brother in Europe, if the free time is given to me by the one who organises time, I will attempt one day to gather together the opinions of the Sages and the Saints, of the philosophers and political theorists of the diverse mystical traditions both ancient and contemporary, so as to make clear the images which in every region of the world, are familiar as perfect and exact images, to all those who know through the Spirit. It is not a presumptuous or empty boast to claim that in this way I can contribute to the spiritual reunification of those who are made as much to discover themselves as to recover themselves.

This is a message of friendship through which hearts may come to know each other and value each other. Here there is no need of a word, the sign is enough. From the Zenith to the Nadir, the vertical line is drawn.

Is this the paradox of Equality? that the greatest is the servant of the least, and the least can hope for the first place is the Spirit speaks.

This explains the saying that **“the secret brother is placed between two kings”**.

The synthesis resolves the dilemma, individuals manifest the absolute in their consciousness, while the involutory source of social regressions and the evolutionary technical gushing forth of progress find their harmony in the Hierarchical.

You can all say that you are each an every one the chosen of the invisible. His essence is to be Lord of the clouds, absolute monarch whose Triangle transfers supreme power above the illusions which belong to earth.

Those whose task it is to keep watch ought to keep careful watch in accordance with the touchstone of the Constitutions, today's constitutions which confront freely but secretly the abiding constitutions.

Let us set ourselves up in a pure, sweet brotherhood and we will discover that there are spheres, plans, degrees, according to the different expression of each one, so that it is good to assure ourselves and each other: “What a beautiful place this is! How happy we are to live here!” Sceptics will say that these are ephemeral, ecstatic moments. Those who know will answer that they are true and eternal. This knowledge will be absolute only for those who look and think with the heart.

Those whose task it is to keep watch ought to keep careful watch. Our security is not absolute, but the hierarchical formation of the grades will restore confidence in the justice of spiritual retribution.

A person who considers that the power to be overcome is too great, and that the intention of friends and his own resolutions are too feeble.

People from Asia, from Ancient Egypt, from Europe and the Americas, have been summoned by the Spirit, and we all wait for the words which will come in due time, the words which are always of their time, since the Word is eternal.

With the Constitution in my hand, I take my stand in the arched entrance to the temple, to give a sign to those capable of recognising It, those who like me have decided not to hoard just for themselves the favours that the invisible Lord intends for everyone.

Knowledge is not necessarily Wisdom, and Learning when linked with pride can be swollen by vanity. There are ways of measuring intelligence, but what is more important is the measure of the heart.

Some people will understand me better, others will listen to me without perhaps understanding. However I address this message of recognition to one and all, as a message to unveil the necessary hierarchy of the temple, in every age, in every order, for without this hierarchy nothing lasting can be.

The Message of Peace will necessarily be the message of justice which is Order. May those who know the value of sacred words answer: Profound Peace!

Brothers from the West, I address you particularly today, to give this introductory message to the translation of the Constitution. This Constitution puts a seal on the foundation stone of the living spiritual temple in our visible world.

During my last visit to Europe (May-July, 1951) I travelled through your countries: France, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Luxemburg, and England. The journey was far too rapid for my liking, for I wished to fathom your values. Nevertheless I could recognise in some among you people chosen by the Invisible, capable of uniting their thoughts to our thoughts, in a psycho-cosmic current of lofty spirituality.

The Fountain which can quench our thirst has been discovered with the understanding of the Sign.

Today a fraternal thought-form has been launched from the Zenith of **Tay-Ninh** for psychic and cosmic transmission to the Zenith of Paris. Let these lines be the graphic condensation of this thought, which I wish to be fully hierarchised in its egalitarian harmony. It will be clear that this image does not convey any insoluble contradiction.

I speak to clear-sighted priests of human progress, to priestesses capable of universal fraternity. Let us each have a deep knowledge of ourselves, and all of us together will build the beauty of the impressive form which is meant to contain the outpouring of the energy of the unnameable One.

Tran Quang Vinh

Part One

POWERS OF THE CUU-TRUNG-DAI

CUU-TRUNG-DAI

(The Nine Degrees of the Episcopal Hierarchy/Executive Body)

I. - POWERS OF THE POPE (GIAO TONG)

Divine text : The Pope is the Eldest of My children.

Commentary : The Pope represents God to watch over the preservation of His Religion in this world. Whatever his age, the Eldest acts as a guide for the children of God. The Spiritual Power has decided that this is so.

The Sacerdotal Council (*Hoi Thanh*) is divided into two Bodies: the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* and the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* (Divine alliance entrusted with Legislative Power). But the *Ho-Phap* himself, head of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*, is considered in the temporal sphere as the younger brother of the Pope, although in the spiritual sphere he may be his equal.

Divine Text : He (the Pope) has the right to represent ME to guide My children in the Spiritual Way (Dao) and in the Temporal Way (Doi).

Commentary : The Pope has the same powers as God to teach Virtue to all His Disciples. He is concerned with each one of them, he guides each one and takes care to ensure that each one does not transgress the Divine Law (*Thien Dieu*). He obliges all disciples of God to make themselves conform strictly to the prescriptions of the New Code (*Tan Luat*). Thus any disciple, whatever his rank in the Episcopal Hierarchy, in the case of wrong behaviour, ought not to benefit from the leniency or mercy of the Pope. Protection of a guilty disciple makes him lose his blood in the Empyrean Realm (*Thien Vi*), provokes jealousy among the faithful, and lessens the good reputation of the Holy Doctrine.

The Pope must protect, uphold or console adepts who are crushed by the miseries of life, and dignitaries who as members of the Sacerdotal Council (*Hoi Thanh*) are overwhelmed by the weight of their abstinence. Since the Pope has full powers to replace God he must try to transform the life of suffering into an existence marked by happiness.

This is the Exalted Task of the Pope.

Divine text : He has control over bodies, but no control over souls.

Commentary : The reference to the body is a reference to the material part. The material part of men is their Temporal Way (*Doi*).

The reference to the soul is a reference to the spiritual part and the spiritual part is their Spiritual Way (*Dao*).

Earlier God has said : He has the right to guide in the Spiritual Way (*Dao*) and in the Temporal Way (*Doi*). Thus God has indicated clearly that it is a question of guiding His children in the way

of Virtue, a way which God himself has outlined, and also in the temporal way which Virtue has produced. But there is no question of control over the totality of the spiritual and temporal parts. We must make clear the difference in meaning between the words **Way** and **Part**, and make every effort to understand and not confuse these two words.

Here are the Holy Words of God, when *Ho-Phap* asked him about the powers of the Pope :

Ho-Phap's question : According to the Gospel of Christianity which the Master has decreed, the Pope has full powers over souls and bodies. Because of these extensive powers, Christianity has gained great material influence. Today, the Master reduces the powers of our Pope in relation to the psychic part, so that I am fearful that he may not have enough authority to preach the good news to men and convert them.

God's answer (given with a laugh) : **It was a mistake on My part. I was rigged out in a sensual body, which resulted in an Incarnate being having the same powers as I have over souls. He mounted My throne, took hold of the Supreme Powers and abused them to make men slaves of the sensual body. In addition, the precious powers which, for love of humanity, I had bestowed on you, formed a two-edged weapon, which encouraged you to create anarchy among yourselves.**

I am not coming today to take these powers from you, but rather to destroy their deadly effect. The best way to deal with the evil is to separate these powers into two, so that there will be no dictator.

A person who controls the Temporal and the Divine simultaneously usually does not fail to take hold of legislative and executive powers. Once such powers are within the control of a single person, it is rare for humanity to escape from oppression.

If I granted the Pope (*Giao-Tong*) full powers over bodies and souls (that is, over the Temporal and the Spiritual), what good would the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* be? The *Cuu-Trung-Dai* is the Temporal and the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* is the Spiritual. Without the Spiritual, the Temporal has no right and without the Temporal, the Spiritual has no strength. Strength and right must unite to recreate the world. This is the good way for you so that you will unite, and help one another and ensure that My Divine Doctrine does not degenerate into Profane Teaching.

Divine text : He has the right to communicate spiritually with the Thirty-Six Heavens, the Three Thousand Worlds, the Sixty-Seven Planets, and the Ten Tribunals of Hell to beg for the sanctification of your souls.

Commentary : When God says : "beg for the sanctification" He means to indicate that the Pope only has the right to beg. It is the role of the *Bat-Quai-Dai* (Council of the Gods) to bestow this sanctification or not.

How can the Pope communicate with the Thirty-Six Heavens, the Three Thousand Worlds, the Sixty-Seven Planets, and the Ten Tribunals of Hell?

He must go to the sanctuary of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* (Divine Alliance) to entreat the miraculous powers of Spiritism. There is a passage of the Holy Scriptures (*Phap-Chanh-Truyen*) about the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* on this very point :

“Besides the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* is the place where the Pope communicates with the Thirty-Six Heavens, the Three Thousand Worlds, the Sixty-Seven Planets, and the Ten Tribunals of Hell to beg for the sanctification of the souls of humankind.”

Thus from an esoteric point of view (*Dao*), the Pope has no power. Even his requests addressed to the *Bat-Quai-Dai* (Council of the Gods) must go through the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*.

The *Hiep-Thien-Dai* is then the intermediary between the Pope and the Higher Spirits : *Than* (Genies); *Thanh* (Saints); *Tien* (Immortals); *Phat* (Buddhas).

II. - ATTRIBUTIONS OF THE LEGISLATIVE CARDINALS OR CENSORS (CHUONG-PHAP)

Divine text :_The Legislative Cardinals belong to the three branches : Taoist, Confucianist and Buddhist.

Commentary : There is only one Legislative Cardinal in each branch. The three branches differ from each other both interiorly and exteriorly. The doctrinal principles are not the same. The New Code (*Tan-Luat*) is a syncretisation of them. For this reason God has added :

Divine text : Though the Laws and Principles of these Three Doctrines are different, I consider them as forming a single whole.

Commentary : Because He considers them as a single Doctrine, God reveals himself to humanity and makes humanity establish the New Code (*Tan-Luat*). God adapts himself to humanity's state of spirit and soul. All are to be conformed to this Code so as to be able to carry out religious practice without infringing the Divine Laws, aiming at their individual sanctification and the communication of the good news to their neighbour.

In the past Divine Laws obliged men to raise their personal dignity to the level of the dignity of the **Great Spirits** (*Than, Thanh, Tien, Phat*) to allow them to perfect their virtue and to achieve their individual sanctification.

Today the Great Spirits have reached down to the level of men so as to lead their souls back to the Divine Space and place them on the same level as God.

When we were forced to do this, it was all difficult. Now that we are free, it has all become easy. This is natural. More so because at this stage we have passed beyond the “**Cycle of Progress**” [(The first cycle of Manvantara is the Cycle of Creation (*Tao Hoa*), that is, the Cycle of Innocence (*Thanh Duc*). The second cycle is Cycle of Progress (*Tan Hoa*), or Cycle of Struggle and the Destruction. The third and the last cycle is the Cycle of Conservation (*Bao-Ton*), or the Cycle of Reproduction (*Tai-Tao*) or Renovation (*Qui-Co*)] and we have reached to highest ranks. The old doctrines no longer have sufficient moral authority to uphold Faith. When men lose their

faith in Religion, the tendency to self-destruct continues to exist. If this tendency continues, anarchy is inevitable.

If the Temporal must rely on the Spiritual simply to exist, there is a reciprocal need for the Spiritual to deal carefully with the Temporal so that it can last. Who knows whether the **New Code** which has been established according to the instructions of God who came with precisely that aim, has not been called upon to undergo at some future date modifications which would adapt it to the spiritual state of men who remain constantly open to evolution? The **Temporal** and the **Spiritual** must unite to guide Humanity on the Way of Eternity.

Example : Someone has asked : “Why hasn't God used the former laws which were already established for the Three existing Religions? Why is He creating a New Code, and thus forcing men to abandon the Former for the New?”

We replied :

“The answer is that God has taught us in a message : The Jade Court (Court of the Gods) has fought with the former laws and the Thunder Temple (Heavenly Sanctuary) has destroyed the old principles. The former laws therefore and the old principles no longer have any value. Religious people who mistakenly believe that they have to conform to the former laws and the old principles are clearly contradicted by the Divine Laws of Caodaism, for Caodaism replaces God to administer Religion.

This is the reason why the Supreme Master forbade the five branches of the *Ngoc* Sect (Confucianism) to use the former laws to continue the inculcation of blind enthusiasm into Humanity.

The observation of the former laws is a transgression of the Divine Laws and if we transgress the Divine Laws we cannot achieve individual salvation.”

(Read the remainder to gain a better understanding of the doctrinal point of view of God).

Divine text : Thus Unity becomes Trinity and Trinity is none other than Unity.

Commentary : Thus the New Code is the syncretisation of the Three Religions, and this makes the Unity become Trinity, and the three former codes of the Three Religions are blended into a single form, the New Code.

Divine text : The Legislative Cardinals have the right to examine the religious laws before their promulgation, whether they come from the Pope, or are proposed by the Cardinals (Dau-Su).

Commentary : In the ranks of the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* (the Nine Degrees of the Episcopal Hierarchy), the Pope represents the Divine Spirits to watch over religious practice. The Pope has the right to make laws, a supreme right conferred on him by the Divine Spirits and by God. The Cardinals represent the mass of the faithful. They derive their great authority from this mass. The Pope and the Cardinals must always be in agreement so as to consolidate the work of the “**Creation of the World**”, which consists of unifying God and Men.

Ordinarily the Divine Mission is often beyond the reach of men and men of often hostile to the Divine Mission. Who knows whether one day the Pope may not enact laws which are beyond the capacity of human beings? whether the Cardinals may not propose laws which contradict the Divine Laws? This means a disagreement among them. Without the Legislative Cardinals who represent the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* within the *Cuu-Trung-Dai*, and who play a mediating role to reconcile them, Religion would lose its balance and its order would be marred. This would cause dissention and the creation of separate sects.

Thus the Legislative Cardinals have the right to verify laws before their promulgation. Laws which do not carry the three seals of the Legislative Cardinals and have not been approved by the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* must not be carried out by the faithful of God. (Good!) (This is an expression of approval by the Spiritual Pope Ly).

Divine text : If the two groups, (the Pope and the Cardinals) are not in agreement, they (the Legislative Cardinals) must submit the law to the *Ho-Phap* who will take it to the Sanctuary of the Divine Alliance (*Hiep-Thien-Dai*) where he will call on God for modifications to be made or, according to his wish, a complete reformulation.

Commentary : If a Law which derives from the Pope is contrary to the human activity of the adepts, and if the Cardinals consider it inapplicable, the Cardinals must submit it themselves to the Legislative Cardinals and ask them to modify it.

In the same way, if the Pope receives from the Cardinals a Law which contradicts the Divine Laws, he himself must send it back to the Legislative Cardinals for a new examination.

On both sides equally, there must be no abuse of power to reject a law by right of office and cause mutual dishonour. There is a need for conciliation, and for acceptance that these decisions are the concern of the Legislative Cardinals. If the Legislative Cardinals do not succeed in agreeing, they must submit the case to the *Ho-Phap*, which will go to the Sanctuary of the Divine Alliance to ask God to modify the law. Or perhaps the *Ho-Phap* will create a consensus of the wishes of the two parties, and will propose a new law.

Divine text : Thus they (the Legislative Cardinals) have the right to check the prayer books and other works before they are distributed. If they find works which are harmful to good habits, they must forbid their publication.

Commentary : Checking of religious works before their circulation involves censorship of them before their publication. But though they have the right of censorship, and may forbid the publication of works susceptible of compromising good habits or contrary to the religious Laws, the Legislative Cardinals must submit their decisions to the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* for approval before authorising or forbidding a publication. This involves not only religious works published by the faithful, but also those presented by people who are alien to religion. If the works are harmful to good habits, the Priestly Council must help the Legislative Cardinals to destroy them. This is the reason why God has said :

Divine text : You should oblige all Adepts to contribute to the carrying out of human Laws.

Commentary : Although this point involves human Laws, if they make humankind unhappy, the Legislative Cardinals ought to look for ways to lessen their stringency. The temporal power must

depend on Religion to be strong, and this means that this power will not be strong unless Religion itself is strong. There can be no thought of taking suffering away from Humankind unless Religion is strong. For this reason God has been constrained to add :

Divine text : I advise all my children to unite their efforts to sustain them.

Divine text : Each legislative Cardinal has his particular seal.

Commentary : The particular sign of the Seal of the Legislative Cardinal of the Buddhist Branch is the Bowl of Charity (to receive offerings); the particular sign of the Seal of the Legislative Cardinal of the Taoist Branch is the Feather Duster of Purification (*Phat Chu*); the particular sign of the Seal of the Legislative Cardinal of the Confucianist Branch is the Book of Spring and Autumn (Virtue and Love).

Taken together, these three symbols form the three Archaic Attributes (*Co-Phap*) which the *Ho-Phap* venerates. He wears them on his head-dress when he wears the Lesser vestment/ordinary vestment.

On the head-dress of the Major vestment/Ceremonial vestment of the Pope there are three other Archaic Attributes :

1° the Fan of Exteriorisation (*Long-Tu Phien*. Literally this means the Dragon beard Fan).

2° the Sword of Elevation (*Thu-Hung Kiem*. Literally this means the double Sword : Male and Female).

3° the Feather Duster of Sanctification (*Phat-Chu*).

These are also the Archaic Attributes of the *Thuong Pham* and the *Thuong Sanh*.

Divine text : The three seals must appear together on each law to make each law applicable.

Commentary : Every law or text even if approved by two out of three of the Legislative Cardinals may not be promulgated. This means that the Pope above cannot approve it, and the Cardinals below have no right to put it into practice.

The *Cuu-Trung-Dai* is an **Administrative Body**, but the Legislative Cardinals depend upon the Legislative Power. Thus they are representatives of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* within the *Cuu-Trung-Dai*. This is an innovation of the Religion.

III. - POWERS OF THE CARDINALS (DAU-.SU)

Divine text : The Cardinals have the right to direct the Disciples of God, Spiritually and Temporally.

Commentary : Here God uses the words “**Spiritually**” and “**Temporally**” to define the powers of the Cardinals. The Cardinals thus have full powers over the administrative part of the *Cuu-*

Trung-Dai and the Legislative part of the the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*. They thus have the right to represent the Pope (*Giao-Tong*) and the *Ho-Phap* with the Brotherhood. Representatives of the Pope and the *Ho-Phap*, they depend on both the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* and the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*. For this reason the Cardinals must submit to the authority of these two Bodies in the exercise of their functions. They should do nothing of their own initiative with receiving beforehand the instructions of the Pope and the *Ho-Phap*.

Divine text : They have the right to enact laws, but they must submit them for the approval of the Pope (*Giao-Tong*).

Commentary : The Cardinals have the right to enact laws suitable for the administration of the Religion, with adaptations from the aspirations of the people and in agreement with the Divine Will. Now it still happens that what satisfies the aspirations of the people is contrary to the Divine Will. For this reason the Cardinals must submit their laws for the Pope's approval, since the Pope is the representative of God, with the task of arranging everything so that the Divine Will may not be opposed by Humanity.

Divine Text : These laws must be examined in every detail, to ensure that they are truly useful to Humanity.

Commentary : This phrase indicates clearly that if the Cardinals enact laws, it is strictly necessary that these laws are useful to Humanity. This is the reason why God has commanded us : The *Cuu-Trung-Dai* and the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* must be alert about every detail here : if there is no recognition of any use to humanity, the Cardinals must not enact laws or repeal them.

Divine text : The Pope must convey (these laws) to the Legislative Cardinals for examination before approving them.

Commentary : Even if these laws fulfilled the wishes of the Pope, he could not approve them by right of office. He must entrust them to the Legislative Cardinals for examination beforehand.

Earlier it was stated in the powers of the Legislative Cardinals : The laws which are not approved by all three Legislative Cardinals must not be promulgated.

Thus the Pope and the Cardinals must not agree to infringe the Constitutional Laws. If they passed laws by the Legislative Cardinals without any examination beforehand, they would commit an infringement of the law. In case of infringing the law, whatever the rank of the guilty party, he is subject to the **Confessional High Court** (the Tribunal of the Three Spiritual Doctrines / *Toa Tam Giao*).

When He commands the Cardinals to receive the orders of the Pope before promulgating (the laws), God said:

Divine text : They must obey the orders of the Pope as if these laws came from the Pope himself.

Commentary : The Cardinals only obey the orders of the Pope, although they represent the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* as far as legislation is concerned. From the moment that a law is fully examined

by the Legislative Cardinals and has received the approbation of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*, the tacit order (for its promulgation) by the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* is included in this formality.

Divine text : If a law is contrary to the existing practices of the general group of adepts, they (the Cardinals) can demand its repeal.

Commentary : It is not only a matter of the current New Code. Later on when the New Code will have become the Old Code, the Cardinals will still have the right, if a law is contrary to human activity, to demand its repeal.

Divine text : I advise My children to love them and help them.

Commentary : God advises the Sacerdotal Council/ *Hoi Thanh* to take an interest in the weighty task of the Cardinals, to love them and to help them to carry out their mission.

Divine text : I recommend that My children should approach them each time they have an important matter to consider.

Commentary : God recommends his disciples that is to say, all the adepts, to approach the Cardinals each time that they have a matter to decide, because they are the complete incarnation of Religion in this world.

Divine text : The three Branches are different, but the powers (of the Cardinals) are the same.

Commentary : The three Branches are : Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. These three Branches differ from each other, but comparatively speaking their powers are the same, because they depend on the New Code. This is **Unity in Trinity and Trinity in Unity**.

Among the three Cardinals, there is no major or minor figure (Good! / Appreciative comment by the Spiritual Pope *Ly*), their powers are equal. A law, whether it emanates from the Pope or whether it emerges from the assembly of adepts, if it is adopted by the Legislative Cardinals and the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*, must be promulgated, even if it receives the assent of only one of the Cardinals. Only in a situation where the three Cardinals are agreed in not obeying, should the law be returned to the Pope, who will convey it to the Legislative Cardinals for a new examination. (Good!/ Appreciative comment by the Spiritual Pope *Ly*). their powers are equal. For this reason God said:

Divine text : If a law set down by the Pope is the subject of a unanimous rejection signed by the three Cardinals, it must be returned to the Pope, who will hand it back to the Legislative Cardinals for a new examination.

Commentary : This is God's decision : if the three Cardinals convey in writing that they cannot obey, God is absolutely sure that the law is contrary to the interests of Humanity. But it is important that the Cardinals provide the obvious proof of the contradiction between the law and the interests of Humanity to justify their refusal to obey and their demand for repeal. If only one of the three Cardinals considers that he can obey, there can be no proclamation that the law is contrary to the interests of Humanity and if this is so, then the law must be promulgated.

In the light of such a power, such a restriction seems rather severe, but the Divine Will demands that the three Cardinals act as one. (Good! / Appreciative comment by the Spiritual Pope Ly)

Divine Text : They are endowed with the three seals, one for each; for the validity of any document it must have the imprint of the seals. (You understand clearly!)

Commentary : These three seals belong to Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. All executive orders must have the imprint of the three seals of the Cardinals.

Before the Cardinals undertake their functions, they must swear to the Holy See that they will maintain an attitude of impartiality when they carry out their functions, just like the dignitaries of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* who have given their oath.

United powers. After taking the oath, the Cardinals are empowered to exercise both the office of Administrator and the office of Legislator.

Though these wider powers, the Cardinals use all necessary means to prevent Heresy from compromising Orthodoxy. In a dangerous situation, if the three Principal Archbishops are powerless to face up to this, the Cardinals are authorised to make use of these unified powers to direct the Sacerdotal / *Hoi Thanh*. All the dignitaries of the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* and the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* must accede to their authority, even the Pope and the *Ho-Phap* (Good!)

IV. - ATTRIBUTIONS OF THE PRINCIPAL ARCHBISHOPS (*CHANH-PHOI-SU*)

Divine text : The Archbishops of each branch number 12, so that the total is thirty-six. Among these thirty-six, there are three Principal Archbishops.

Commentary : The Three Principal Archbishops must be chosen within the three Branches : Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. These three dignitaries are not only the heads of the thirty-three Archbishops, but they are also the representatives of Cardinals, with the same powers as the Cardinals.

They are the representatives of the Sacerdotal Council of the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* and of all the adepts.

They hold full powers to act and are responsible only to the Cardinals all of whose orders they carry out. They have no right to modify the orders on their own initiative. In all cases and situations they must await the orders of the Cardinals, but the Cardinals must not overstep the powers of these three dignitaries. If the Cardinals encroached on the powers of the **Principal Archbishops** they would be abusing the powers, and this would constitute an infraction of the Constitutional Laws. (Good!)

Here there is an opportunity to recall the reasons for which once God had given the order to establish the New Code, the Pope confided to the Principal Archbishops the examination and carrying forward of the project which was to be submitted to Him (ie. Pope) . Afterwards the Legislative Cardinals verified the text before presenting it to the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* for approval. Finally the *Ho-Phap* took it to the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* and read it to promulgate it.

Moreover just as the Code was presented by the three Principal Archbishops, the Ho-Phap and the Thuong-Pham used mediums to allow the Spiritual Pope to appear openly and to present modifications to it (the thirteenth day of the twelfth month of the year *Binh-Dan*). He (the Spiritual Pope) ordered the three Cardinals and the three Legislative Cardinals to take up their respective seats. Then he brought in the Principal Archbishops to officiate. Afterwards he addressed the Principal Archbishop Thuong-Tuong-Thanh in these words : “My good friend, look at how I work so that you can imitate me.” He showed the Principal Archbishops the way of joining their six hands without leaving any space between them, to present the Code to the Cardinals. The Cardinals must also join their six hands to present the Code to the Legislative Cardinals, and the Legislative Cardinals similarly with their six hands should present it to the Pope.

At this moment the Pope told them to come up to the Sanctuary while raising the Code above the head of the *Ho-Phap* and of the *Thuong-Pham*. He lowered the pointed Basket to let the Code go by. (Good!)

After the reception of the Code, the Legislative Cardinals passed it over the heads of the statuettes which represent Khuong-Thai-Cong and Jesus Christ. Later, the *Ho-Phap* complained to God who answered with a laugh :

“On the spiritual plane, the place of Li-T'ai-Pai is below Sakyamuni, Confucius and Lao-Tsu. Otherwise the Code would have passed over their heads, for they are Divine Laws, my child!” (*Laughter ... The value of the New Code is of such importance but the entire Sacerdotal Council underestimated its value, and forced me to set aside my functions as Pope to apply the Divine Laws and to punish. Alas! How many people were carried off to Phong-Do (Hell) for that. [Words of the Spiritual Pope]*).

The New Code was set before the Holy Table of the Spiritual Pope for a day and a night for examination. The following day, He made his presence known through the pointed Basket (*Ngoc Co*) and complained in these terms :

“The mysterious Divine Laws of Religion include many gaps.”

He laughed and continued : **“But since you cannot grasp the mysteries, you could not make up for the deficiencies... Alas! Without mysteries there would not be any Code, and without a Code there would not be any Religion.”**

He laughs and continues : **“I asked the Great Master to add to the Code essential mystical clauses. You must also ask with Me. At the end of this month, we will begin the prayers. You will urge all the Temples (*Thanh That*) and all the Adepts to pray fervently and to unite their prayers to Mine to get the Holy Laws. The more Religion is valued, the more you will be honoured. Be aware of your importance, have great respect for each other. In this way you will be able to renew the world. I watch over you and if one day I had to take energetic measures, my purpose would always be - believe me! - to raise you spiritually. I ask you never to be discouraged.”**

After these words He ordered the Legislative Cardinals to take the Code and present it to the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*, while *Ho-Phap* and *Thuong-Pham* were to sit on their Thrones. *Ho-Phap* himself places his Mystic Seal on the Code as a sign of protection from above, while *Thuong*

Pham covers all of it with his Fan “*Long-Tu-Phien*” (Fan of Exteriorisation - a Symbol of Spirituality).

To finish the Spiritual Pope orders the Legislative Cardinals :

“I give you a month to revise the Code.”

These latter dignitaries took a month to examine the Manuscript and they gave it back to the Pope Li-T'ai-Pai who ordered the Cardinals to take the Code to the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* and present it again to the Ho-Phap in His Name for a new evocation of the Eternal. Thanks to the requests of the Spiritual Pope linked with those of the Priestly Council / Sacerdotal Council (Hoi Thanh), Our Divine Master came and revealed to *Ho-Phap*, in actual writing, some passages which have their mystical value in relation to the salvation of souls. (*What happiness for Humanity! The Sacerdotal Council has already gained several mystical gifts, such as "Baptism of the Soul" / Giai Oan, "Opening the Gate of Immortality" / Khai Sanh Mon, "Emission of the Life Fluid" / Ban Kim Quan, and some other secrets but their revelation is forbidden to Ho-Phap, because of people's incredulity. [Words of the Spiritual Pope]*).

According to what is mentioned above, the only observation that we have made is that the Pope has recommended to the Principal Archbishop Thuong-Tuong-Thanh to follow his example. This proves that He has placed all his confidence in his Principal Archbishops, and that by asking that these great dignitaries link their six hands, He has invited them to remain united forever. The Cardinals and the Legislative Cardinals must do the same thing to symbolise the primordial Unity (*This is mechanism of the Union of the Body, the Perispirit and the Soul [Tinh, Khi, Than hiep nhut]. Confucianism represents the Body, Taoism the Perispirit, and Buddhism the Soul. Remember that if the three Religious Branches are not united, the New Religion will not be able to be formed! [Words of the Spiritual Pope]*).

Finally why does the Pope entrust the revision of the New Religious Code to the Principal Archbishops? Will this keep on being done?

Earlier it has been said that the Principal Archbishops represent the Faithful to the Sacerdotal Council. Now since they are the direct leaders of the Faithful they are themselves of the Faithful.

In the *Bat-Quai-Dai* (Council of the Gods who direct the eight States of souls of the Manvantara), the Heavenly Spirits, from the Thrones to God, occupy the Class of the Perfect or Pure; the Saints and the Virtuous are ranked in the Class of the Purified; in other words, animals, vegetables and minerals fall into the class of the Impure. Thus the divine Beings of the *Bat-Quai-Dai* have the duty to lead the worlds, to be in communication with souls which are developing in the Stage of Materiality; they must reach the incarnate so that they can evolve to the rank of the Saints. Those who are in the rank of the Saints reach the Knowledge of Self. If they must be reincarnated to reach Supreme Wisdom, they still keep their virtues and continue to be perfected so as to become perfect, pure and eternal like the Creator.

In the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* (Temple of the Divine Alliance), the *Ho-Phap* represents the Supreme Master and the Great Spirits to supervise the way Religious Justice is administered, and the evolution of Humanity, and the Perfection of souls! He must not misuse his power to impose it on people, but only to ensure that their evolution is not prevented by difficulties. To protect and supervise, there must be Laws and Rules. With these Laws and Rules, He can support and guide

all souls in the Way of Good like the perfect Beings which direct and guide the Universe by the Divine Laws.

Symbolising the Class of the Pure, the *Ho-Phap* entrusts to the *Thuong-Pham* (the Head of the Spiritual) the mission of forming the Religion so that humanity will be gathered together and of guiding evolved souls to the perfect perfection. This means he must defend and protect the Dignitaries and the Faithful in peace in their upward Spiritual Path following the example of the Great Spirits who must assure harmony in the Universe, and thus help Creation and Life in the multiplication of all beings.

The **Leader of the Spiritual** (*Thuong Pham*) receives all evolved souls who have reached the rank of the priests after conversion by the *Thuong-Sanh* (**the Leader of the Temporal**). He symbolises the perfection of the Saints and he is the Leader of the Class of the Saints.

The Leader of the Temporal presides over the secular life of all fellow members of the religion. This means the entire popular religious mass. All converted souls owe him their salvation, whatever their origin (**Divine or Incarnate**). Since he has received the order to renew the world to lead Humanity out of “the abyss of Suffering”, the duty of the Leader of the Temporal is to be continually close to the Adepts and the non-initiated to bring them consolation and the teaching of the Holy-Doctrine. He symbolises the Temporal and he is the Leader of all Adepts, from the Faithful to the Student-Priests.

In the *Cuu-Trung-Dai*, the Cardinals symbolise the rank of the “*Dia-Tien*” (Thrones) The Legislative Cardinals, the rank of the “*Nhon-Tien*” (Cherubim), and the Pope, the rank of the “*Thien-Tien*” (Seraphim). Together with the Three Divine Representatives of the Three Ancient Religions “*Tam Tran Oai Nghiem*”, they represent the Class of the Perfect in this world.

According to this hierarchy, the Pope entrusts power to the Cardinals who share it with the Principal Archbishops, to organise a religious constitution with the aim of saving Humanity. This is the same as the way in which the *Ho-Phap* delegates his powers to the Leaders of the Spiritual and Temporal (*Thuong-Pham and Thuong-Sanh*), so that they can supervise the good progress of souls.

The Principal Archbishops and the Archbishops symbolise the rank of the “*Thien-Thanh*” (Dominations); the Bishops, the rank of the “*Nhon-Thanh*” (Virtues); the Priests, the rank of the “*Dia-Thanh*” (Powers) ; the Student-Priests, the rank of the “*Thien-Than*” (Principalities); the Lesser Dignitaries, the rank of the “*Nhon-Than*” (Archangels) and the Disciples, the rank of the “*Dia-Than*” (Guardian Angels).

Thus all these religious distinctions harmonise with the Celestial Hierarchy, and the New Religion is born in accordance with the Wish of the Council of the Gods “*Bat-Quai-Dai*”.

At present the pagans and the ignorant have control of great power in the world. It is opposed to Spirituality, and they abuse their material power to destroy the Good, to allow Evil, to enmesh Humanity in error, and to become absorbed in sensual pleasures. They recognise neither Heaven nor Earth, and think only of their personal interests. They exploit people, and have no belief in the Karmic Law; they prefer Materialism to Spiritualism, and aspire to meaningless honours, with no care for their Evolution, living like vegetables, like minerals, like animals, with no awareness of why they live! These are degraded souls who degrade others, and belong to the Impure World!

How can they understand the beginning and the end in terms which link to God? Intuitive minds would understand that the Manifestations, whether of the beginning or of the end, whether visible or invisible, are all Holy Identities whether of the Abstract Mind or of the Divine Soul.

All these explanations and these words aim to reveal to the Seekers that everything that is not God is mortal, and that nothing exists except for the Eternal. Only the people who conform to the Rules and Laws will be men raised in Spirituality; the Rules and Laws will lead them through their own experience, to certainty at the end of their searches. If they embrace these qualities, the real seekers, who are detached from all human things, will reach elevation; and then they are strengthened by efforts made in God's cause, they will certainly be confirmed in the Divine Paths.

For this reason Our Divine Master has said to the Faithful of this Humanity, to formulate Laws for themselves. The Principal Archbishops represent them, so it is natural that these people are entrusted to set up Laws **which must act as a base.**

The administrative power belongs to the Cardinals, but the executive power belongs to the Principal Archbishops. Without this clear division of powers the Cardinals could be tempted to go too far, that is, to overstep their already considerable power. They must acknowledge, as is proper, the essential fundamental power of the Pope.

The Cardinals therefore control the administrative and legislative powers, and what is more the Cardinals along with the Legislative Cardinals can set aside their candidature at the time of the election of a new Pope. It can be understood from this that the powers of the Cardinals must be limited specifically to allow their colleagues the Legislative Cardinals a legitimate hope at the time of this election.

Since they are the representatives of the Faithful, the Principal Archbishops have the duty to obey the laws. They can however ask the Cardinals for certain improvements in the laws, but they do not have the power to propose new ones.

It is allowable to foresee the possibility in the future that Our Master may allow disciples to re-edit another Code, when the Archbishops would reorganise it then as they do now. What is more, Our Master has made it clear in the following Text :

Divine text : The Three Principal Archbishops can replace the Cardinals, but cannot ask for the repeal of the Laws.

Commentary : If the Principal Archbishops disobey divine orders and modify the New Religious Code as they please, they are proceeding in opposition to the Divine Will by changing the Holy Doctrine to a human doctrine. Now Humanity is incarnate, while Divinity is pure. For this reason all the acts and deeds of Humanity represented by the Principal Archbishops, must be guided, and if there is opportunity, approved by the Class of the Pure (*Hoi Thanh*). Without this, Humanity would always follow the voice of rebellion and would never be able to be saved. To ensure the Salvation of Souls our Master forbids the Principal Archbishops to establish or modify the Laws.

Learned people get up on a limping donkey, while God rides astride the winds and moves swifter than an arrow!

V.- POWERS OF THE ARCHBISHOPS (*PHOI-SU*)

Definition : The Archbishops receive the executive power of the Principal Archbishops. The latter have the same functions and the same rank as the former. Their actions always depend on the orders of the Principal Archbishops and must conform strictly to the rulings, when they receive any change. Every transgression of the Divine Law would involve their appearance before *Toa Tam Giao* (the Tribunal of the Three Spiritual Doctrines).

VI. - POWERS OF THE BISHOPS (*GIAO-SU*)

. Divine text : There are seventy-two Bishops divided into three Groups of twenty four.

Commentary : This number cannot be increased or decreased.

Divine text : They are responsible for the spiritual and temporal education of the Adepts.

Commentary : Although they can be appointed by the Cardinals and Archbishops to direct the *Thanh That* (Temples /Churches) of the large towns, they are only involved in the education of the faithful when directing them in the Way of God and in social life. This is a strict rule, for all the dignitaries of the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* are intended, according to religious principles, to educate the adepts.

God has said that he is Our Master; all the names of dignitaries indicate clearly to us their roles as educators: *Giao-Huu* (Priests), *Giao-Su* (Bishops), *Phoi-Su* (Archbishops), *Dau-Su* (Cardinals), *Giao-Tong* (Pope). From the terms for their roles, we find the words “*Giao*” (Education) or “*Su*” (Master).

From earliest times till our own, all Religions have sought the same goal: to guide Humanity in matters which concern the life of the Soul which is immortal and not in those which involve the Body which is to disappear. There is a teaching of Confucius which proves this:

*“Thien Mang chi vi Tanh,
“Xuat Tanh chi vi Dao,
“Tung Dao chi vi Giao.”*

(“The duty of all human beings is to know themselves and then to know the Creator, to move continually along the Way of Perfection and to attain Wisdom. This is the aim of Education.”)

The Priestly Council (Sacerdotal Council/ *Hoi Thanh*), according to the Divine Will, has the same aim: to help Humanity to progress in the path of Love or of Charity, that is the unique duty of the Priestly Council (Sacerdotal Council/ *Hoi Thanh*).

Divine Text : They are to care for the Adepts the way Elder Brothers do for Younger ones.

Commentary : Bishops devote themselves to the Faithful of their parishes the way elder brothers care for younger ones. They spend time with them, help them, make themselves loved by them, sharing their trials and joys, so that they consider them as their own young brothers.

Divine Text : They keep all the Records of the Adepts.

Commentary : The Registers of births, deaths, marriages, conversions or excommunications of Adepts are kept up to date by the Bishops. In Religion, they play the role of officers of the civil state. This is a definition of their powers, and no other dignitaries can put themselves in the place of the Bishops.

Divine Text : They must be concerned about the marriage and death of each Adept.

Commentary : Since they hold the registers of the civil State, they can easily be involved with the marriage and death of each Adept. Our Master is anxious to entrust the organisation of these two ceremonies only to the Bishops, since they are important events in the life of a man. They must be arranged in such a way that the ceremonies are suitable for the customs and practices of each race, but at the same time they must bring no harm to the reputation of Religion, and there must always be the approval of the Priestly Council (Sacerdotal Council/ *Hoi Thanh*).

Our Divine Master has said : “each Adept”, but it must be understood that it is a matter of each race, for the customs and practices of races are different.

Divine Text : In large towns Bishops have the right to preside over religious ceremonies the way that Cardinals and Archbishops do.

Commentary : In speaking of large towns, Our Divine Master means the Parishes placed under the apostolic direction of the Bishops. They preside over the great ceremonies of God and the Saints the way the Cardinals and Archbishops do, but they act in accordance with the instructions given by the latter, or by the Sacerdotal Council/ *Hoi Thanh*.

Divine Text : They can present requests to the Spiritual Direction with the aim of suppressing or modifying of laws capable of making the Adepts targets of prejudice.

Commentary : Former or more recent laws which cause harm to the Adepts may be annulled or modified at the request of the Bishops.

VII. - POWERS OF THE PRIESTS (*GIAO-.HUU*)

Divine Text : The Priests have the Mission of propagating the New Religion.

Commentary : To propagate the New Doctrine of God, the Priests must have a sound education and a perfect understanding of this Doctrine. For this reason they must pass the Apostolic Examination so that they can fulfil their mission.

Propagating a religion is a difficult task. Without a profound knowledge of the aim and the principles of Religion, they could lead the popular masses into error and act in contravention of the Divine Will. Moreover the Priests are true friends of Humanity. They must be chosen from among those who have a superior level of morality and who are virtuous, so that they may lead believers infallibly toward the gates which lead to Instruction and Union with God.

Isn't it true that peoples are too often guided by ignorant individuals who lead them where they want? That peoples know little of God besides the name? The Priests alone, the true servants of God, could be relied on to ensure that the chosen are again guided by the Light of Wisdom, for Heaven and Earth will pass away, but the Holy Words will not pass away.

The role of the Priests of the New Religion is thus very important. To remain worthy of their mission, these priests must know all the religious doctrines so that they may lead back to the Paternal Home all souls predestined and still suffering.

Divine Text : The Priests can ask for modification of the laws.

Commentary : They have the right to request from the Higher Dignitaries, modification of the Laws. For a day will come when they will be called upon to propagate the *Cao-Dai* Doctrine in a country or among some people whose customs and practices will not be adapted to the New Religious Code; they could certainly not convert them, if they did not have this exceptional right, proof of the tolerance and breadth of mind needed for the conversion of souls.

Divine Text : There are three thousand Priests, a thousand for each Branch. This number must not be increased or decreased.

Commentary : The meaning of this text is quite clear. It is useless to explain it, only it must be clear that the class of Priests is restricted to the members from all the peoples of the world, and not exclusively to the people of Viet Nam. In the same way the Throne of the Pope must be accessible to all, whatever people they may derive from.

Divine Text : They preside over ritual ceremonies in the province Oratories.

Commentary : Regions/Provinces are also involved here. Now the regions/provinces are subordinate to the countries or nations just as the Priests are subordinate to the Bishops. When the Priests exercise their office in the *Thanh That* (Temples / Churches), they must carry out the ceremonials according to the Bishops' directives, and they cannot make any changes. From this viewpoint they should always act according to the orders of the Bishops so that they will never infringe **Divine Regulations** (*Phap Chanh Truyen*).

Divine Text : Requests from the Priests must always be examined with good will by the Pope.

Commentary : The Priests are close to the people; the Pope is distant and very remote. How can the Pope hear the voice of the people without the intermediation of the Priests? The Supreme Being wants the pope to be in constant contact with the Faithful, so this advice comes to the Pope to examine requests from the Priests with good will. However to maintain Priestly Discipline, the latter must present their requests to the Pope by way of the hierarchy.

Divine Text : If there are doubtful points, the Priests may be given the office and functions of Inspectors.

Commentary : The Adepts form the temporal mass, the people. In order to be aware of the degree of evolution of the people, closeness to the Adepts is required. By mingling with these latter the Priests will be able to know their harmony or their discord.

In the world as in the entirety of nature the dominant note is struggle for existence; the result is that the most suitable are selected for survival. The law of the survival of the fittest is the source of all difficulties. It causes the struggle, the hatred, the animosity between human beings. In nature : tyranny, egoism, aggression, domination, usurpation of the others' rights are found along

with other unworthy attributes which are the vices of the animal world. As a result, for as long as material needs play the leading role in men's lives, spiritual success and prosperity will be impossible.

So when a disagreement arises either among the Adepts or between the co-religionists and the lay people, the Priests have the responsibility to smooth over this disagreement, and to create peace and good will on all sides, so that, through divine education, humanity may be freed of the darkness of ignorance; if humanity is strengthened in its ideal Virtues and its spiritual attributes, then there will be the first dawning of the knowledge of God.

VIII. - POWERS OF THE STUDENT-PRIESTS (*LE-.SANH*)

Divine Text : the Student-Priests are chosen from among the well behaved Under/Sub-Dignitaries to celebrate the ritual ceremonies.

Commentary : The Student-Priests are drawn from the most virtuous of the Under/Sub-Dignitaries. They must always appear worthy by their religious qualities and their instruction, for these are future Priests. They must be formed by the Priesthood and act and live in accord with this.

In the case of absence of the Priests, they replace them to celebrate the ritual ceremonies, being particularly careful to carry out the instructions and example of the latter have given them in the daily accomplishment of their duty.

The cultic role of the student-priests is comparable to that of the Deacons in Catholicism.

Divine Text : They may preside over the ceremonies for the installation of an Altar in the homes of Adepts.

Commentary : The Student-Priests must always visit the Adepts, and preside over the “ceremony for the installation of the Altar” at their homes, and they take the place of the Priests for the teaching of the rites.

A time will come when the *Cao-Dai* Doctrine is propagated abroad, and large numbers of people will not be able to celebrate the cult precisely in the same way as in Viet Nam. Then the role of the **Student-Priests** will be limited, according to circumstances, to visits to the homes of the Adepts to educate them, console them and guide them, in order to ensure the progress of souls in the Way of God and in social life. This will be in place of the Priests.

Divine Text : Student-Priests are my Benjamins, do not cause them distress!

Commentary : This Divine goodness is very touching! Knowing that the role of the Student-Priests demands great resignation and many virtues, Our Divine Master loves them dearly and forbids the Higher Office-Holders to abuse their power by causing them distress.

Divine Text : To be Dignitaries it is necessary to occupy the rank of Student-Priest. An exception is made in the case of dignitaries who are appointed by the Heavenly Way.

Commentary : This passage is clear, and any explanation is superfluous. However it is necessary to stipulate that the Student-Priests are chosen by the Adepts otherwise they must come from the Seminaries.

These conditions are not required when Our Divine Master Himself chooses the Dignitaries through the Mediums of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*. (This ceremony is the equivalent of direct investiture.)

IX. - ATTRIBUTIONS OF THE “*CHANH-TRI-SU*” (Religious Leaders in the Villages)

Definition : The *Chanh-Tri-Su* are the Lower-Office-Holders formed by the spiritual Pope; they work under the orders of the Student-Priests. They carry out the functions of the heads of parish divisions, functions entrusted by the Pope, and they represent the Adepts of each village just as they represent the Pope to the Adepts.

These are the teachings of the Pope on the importance of the role of the *Chanh-Tri-Su* : (to *Ho-Phap*)

“The Chanh-Tri-Su represent me in their small parishes and play the role of elder brothers among the Adepts. My will is that I be present everywhere, from the horizons of the Heavens to the limits of the Seas. I think that you want this too, don't you?”

“In the world, ignorant people outnumber the wise; if we do not create an organisation effective in every detail for Our Divine Task, we will never be able to give the Good News to the masses. What difficulties must be endured when We look closely at this Valley of tears and suffering! The first suffering of Humanity, the Real cause of the Broils, is the lack of Justice.

“With this Divine Torch God sheds light on the Universe and directs it!

“To bring about the reign of Peace, even in a small village, I beg you to delegate legislative power to the *Chanh-Tri-Su*, so that We may be represented everywhere, in towns as well as in the country.”

The *Ho-Phap* has carried out this recommendation, for He has grasped the noble thought of the Pope.

According to the papal instructions, the power of the *Chanh-Tri-Su* is defined as follows : The *Chanh-Tri-Su* should look after the adepts placed under their authority. They should help them in case of need. They consider them as their younger brothers, and they settle their disagreements with their best interests in mind. They assist with their secular life, and they have the right to use their legislative power where they are involved, in conformity with the orders of the Priests and the Student-Priests.

Where Adepts have committed sins and have not reformed after several reprimands from the *Chanh-Tri-Su*, the latter may instruct the Priests about their situation. If the advice from the Priests does not bring about repentance on the part of the recidivists, the *Chanh-Tri-Su* have the

right to ask the Sacerdotal / *Hoi Thanh* to excommunicate them by directing their report to the leaders of the Temples (*Thanh That* / Churches). These reports are made in duplicate, one for the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*, and one for the *Cuu-Trung-Dai*.

If the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* remained silent after several approaches, the *Chanh-Tri-Su* could approach the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* to get the next order to be given.

They are forbidden to exercise their functions outside their own parish. They are supported in their duties by the *Pho-Tri-Su* (other Lower-Office-Holders who are subordinate to them). The latter are themselves directors of the various centres of the parish.

Each month in turn they provide thirty people who are dedicated to the religious cause. These volunteer adepts are assigned by the *Chanh-Tri-Su* to make daily contact with all their co-religionists of the parish. If there is a case of sickness, some accident or an event which causes suffering among their co-religionists, then mutual assistance is immediately organised by the *Chanh-Tri-Su* to provide for all needs.

The noble actions of the *Chanh-Tri-Su* provide an epitome of the humanitarian aim of the New Religion at the social level; the beauty of the Holy Doctrine exists above all in the sincere acts of mutual assistance. No man of good heart ever refuses them.

The Spiritual Pope added on this point :

“Acting like this you are treating each other as children of the same family. Help each other, share your sorrows and joys, look after your shared interests, always be united both in normal life and in suffering. Such is your honourable duty.”

The *Chanh-Tri-Su* are required to take an oath before the Altar of the parish about the accomplishment of their functions. They must be impartial in everything and towards everybody, even towards their own relatives.

The *Chanh-Tri-Su* are Cardinals in miniature.

X. - POWERS OF THE *PHO-TRI-SU* .(Subordinates of the *Chanh-Tri-Su*)

Definition : The *Pho-Tri-Su* are subordinate lower dignitaries formed by the Spiritual Pope.

They fulfil the same functions as the *Chanh-Tri-Su* in the religious centres appointed by the latter. They have administrative but not legislative power. They are entrusted with guiding, teaching and helping the Adepts. They are to bring them consolation but not to judge them.

Each month, in turn, with the other *Pho-Tri-Su*, they must provide the *Chanh-Tri-Su* with thirty co-religionists who are dedicated to serving the community. These are the people who give support to the efforts of the *Chanh-Tri-Su*, and give them an account of all that goes on in their centre. Every day they provide them with a report about this.

They also inform the *Thong-Su* (other subordinate lower dignitaries) of any facts which may have cause harm to the reputation of the Religion, so that the *Thong-Su* may by juridical means provide some suitable remedy.

All actions which contravene religious rules, and all complaints brought with supporting proof, must be dealt with juridically by the *Thong-Su*, and the *Pho-Tri-Su* may not intervene on any point.

It is absolutely forbidden for the *Pho-Tri-Su* to encroach upon the legislative power. The *Pho-Tri-Su* are Popes in miniature.

XI. - POWERS OF THE *THONG-SU* (Subordinates of the legislative Branch)

Definition : These are likewise subordinate lower dignitaries formed by the *Ho-Phap* based on the advice of the Spiritual Pope.

The *Thong-Su* have the same rank as the *Pho-Tri-Su*, but they hold legislative power. They are the subordinates of the *Ho-Phap* placed under the orders of the *Chanh-Tri-Su*. They are to investigate whatever injustices, infractions of rules, disobedience, and violations of the New Religious Code are committed in the apostolic centre directed by the *Pho-Tri-Su*.

Although they are dependant on the *Chanh-Tri-Su*, they have the duty of righting any mistakes committed by the latter. If the *Chanh-Tri-Su* have been warned several times of their wrongdoing and take no notice, the *Thong-Su* are to make a report to the *Cuu-Trung-Dai*. If the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* disregard the issue, they may address the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* to ask for justice.

The duty of the *Thong-Su* is to be concerned with the unhappy, to defend the weak (whether religious or not), to bring help to the homeless, the poor, the sick, the crippled, the aged or those with exemptions. (Those exempt from taxes are cripples who cannot work for a living). For love of God and of others, they can ask the *Pho-Tri-Su* for protection and assistance, both moral and monetary.

In the exercise of their functions, where it is a case of urgent difficulty, the *Thong-Su* may ask for help and support from all dignitaries that they meet, whatever their rank.

Any of the Faithful who may have been several times clearly proven recalcitrant, or unwilling to give service, or disobedient towards religious rules, are to be severely punished by the Sacerdotal Council/ *Hoi Thanh*) when asked by the Legislative Body.

Before exercising their functions, the *Thong-Su* must swear an oath before the Altar of the Parish, in the same way as the *Chanh-Tri-Su*.

The *Thong-Su* are *Ho-Phap* in miniature.

Divine Text : If there still exists the smallest injustice before your eyes, the New Religion will not achieve its aim.

Explanation : In life, the lower class is often oppressed. Fairness and justice no longer exist. So the role of the *Thong-Su* is very important.

Part Two

RELIGIOUS VESTMENTS: CEREMONIAL DRESS of the DIGNITARIES of the COLLEGE of MEN of the *CUU-TRUNG-DAI*

CEREMONIAL DRESS OF THE POPE (*Giao-Tong*)

Description : The Pope's ceremonial dress includes a full form, and a simple form.

The full form is made of white silk embroidered with yellow lotuses from top to bottom and decorated on both sides with the three Insignia : *Long-Tu-Phien* (the Fan of Exteriorisation), *Thu-Hung-Kiem* (The Sword of Elevation), *Phat-Chu* (the Duster of Holiness, Feather Duster of Purification). These are the distinctive symbols of *Thuong-Pham* and *Thuong-Sanh*, the Spiritual and Temporal Superiors of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*.

He wears a high golden headdress with five layers, octagonal in shape, representing the Eight states of soul of the Manvantara (*Bat-Quai*) and symbolising the five former religious branches. This headdress is closed in the middle of the layers and has a Swastika at the top; in the middle of the Swastika is the “Divine Eye” surrounded by a Golden Circle. On the front of the headdress there are three distinctive insignia embroidered as mentioned above.

In his right hand the Pope holds the papal staff, about 90cm long, the upper end of which is decorated with a gold Swastika. In the middle of the Swastika is the “Divine Eye” surrounded with a Golden Circle.

The simple form of vestments is also made of white silk, embroidered in gold with Eight Characters (Pa Kua / the Eight Trigrams), representing the Eight Elements of the Genesis “*Bat-Quai*” : the character “*Kham*” (Water) on the abdomen, “*Can*” (Mountain) on the right arm, “*Chan*” (Thunder) on the left arm, “*Doai*” (Lake) on the right shoulder, “*Ton*” (Wind) on the left shoulder, “*Ly*” (Fire) over the heart, “*Khon*” (Earth) on the back.

On the head is a headdress, the mitre “*Hiep-Chuong*” (mitre for the Pope of the Bonzes) made of white silk, .333m high, the top of which is divided into two points, linked both front and back by a fold (symbol of the union of the Yin and the Yang). This soft headdress is surrounded by a white silk cord the ends of which are of different lengths. The longer end must be .3 metres, the width must be .03 metres. On the front of the headdress is embroidered the character “*Can*” (Heaven).

On the feet are shoes of the type called “*Vo-Uu*” (shoes not made of leather) made of white silk, symbolising the “Freedom-From-Care”. On the toes are embroidered the two baptismal names

(two characters) of the dignitaries of the two colleges of men and of women. For example, on the shoes of our Pope, are embroidered the two characters “*Thanh Huong*” (Purity and Sweetness).



HIS HOLINESS THUONG-TRUNG-NHUT (Le Van Trung)
First Caodaist *Giao-Tong* (interim)
(disincarnated in November 1934)
in the simple form for the *Giao-Tong*/Pope

CEREMONIAL DRESS OF THE LEGISLATIVE CARDINAL .(*Chuong-Phap*)

Description

I. - The ceremonial dress of the Legislative Cardinal of the Buddhist Branch includes a full form, and a simple form.

The full dress is made of yellow silk embroidered with the Eight characters of the “*Bat-Quai*” just like those on the simple form of dress worn by the Pope. The Cardinal wears over this the large red Buddhist cloak, called “*Ba-Nap-Quang*” (Cloak with a hundred squares symbolising the Hundred Aspects of Patience). On his head he wears the mitre of the Superior of the Bonzes (*Hiep Chuong Hoa Thuong*). In his right hand he holds the “*Binh-Bat-Du*” (the Golden Bowl for Sakyamuni); on his feet are yellow shoes of the type called “*Vo-Uu*” (shoes not made of leather). On the toes is the character “*Thich*” (Buddhism).

The simple form of vestments is also made of yellow silk, like the full form, but there is no cloak and no mitre. There is no headdress, but his head is covered with a yellow turban with nine layers one on top of the other. The lowest layer has the form of the character “*Nhut*” (unity).

II. - The ceremonial dress of the Legislative Cardinal of the Taoist Branch consists of a full form and a simple form.

The full dress form is made of white silk. On the front of the chest, and likewise on the back, is embroidered the “Divine Eye” surrounded by a Golden Circle (*Vong Minh Khi*). On his head he wears the same mitre “*Hiep-Chuong*” as found in the simple form of dress for the Pope. In his right hand he holds the “*Phat-Chu*” (Feather Duster of Purification, the Duster of Holiness). On his feet are white shoes of the type called “*Vo-Uu*” (shoes not made of leather). On the toes is the character “*Dao*” (Taoism).

The simple form of dress is white like the full form. The headdress is the same turban as worn by the Buddhist Legislative Cardinal, but white.

III. - The ceremonial dress of the Legislative Cardinal of the Confucianist Branch also consists of a full form and a simple form.

The full dress form is entirely red. On the front of the chest and on the back is embroidered the "Divine Eye" surrounded by a golden circle. His head is covered with the headdress of Confucius (*Van-Dang*). This is likewise red, and on the front is embroidered the "Divine Eye" surrounded by a gold circle with the Northern Star (*Bac-Dau-Tinh-Quan*) above. In his hand is the Book "*Xuan-Thu*" (Spring and Autumn). On his feet are shoes of the same colour, of the type called "*Vo-Uu*" (shoes not made of leather). On the toes is the character "Nho" (Confucianism).

The simple form of dress is red like the full form. The headdress is a turban of the same colour, with nine layers one on top of the other, like the turbans of the Buddhist and Taoist Legislative Cardinal.

CEREMONIAL DRESS OF THE CARDINALS (*Dau-Su*)

. Description :

I.- The ceremonial dress of the Cardinal from the Buddhist Branch (*Thai*) consists of a full form and a simple form.

The full form of dress is made of yellow silk. On the front of the chest and on the back six characters are embroidered : *Dai-Dao Tam-Ky Pho-Do* (Third Amnesty of God in the East). These characters are arranged in a circle, and in the middle is embroidered the character "Thai" (Buddhism). They are surrounded with three mystic circles. There are nine sashes in this form of dress.

This is covered by a red Buddhist cloak, "*Ba-Nap-Quang*", as for the Legislative Cardinal of the Buddhist Branch. He wears a high yellow octagonal headdress embroidered all the way round with the eight characters of the "*Bat-Quai*". On his feet are black shoes of the type called "*Vo-Uu*" (shoes not made of leather). On the toes is the character "*Thai*" (Buddhism).

The simple form of dress is made of yellow silk like the full form, without any cloak. There is no headdress, but on the head there is a yellow turban with nine layers one on top of the other, like the turban of the Legislative Cardinal of the Buddhist Branch.

II.- The ceremonial dress of the Cardinal from the Taoist Branch also consists of a full form and a simple form. The full form of dress, like that of the Cardinal of the Buddhist Branch, is blue. In the centre of the six embroidered characters "*Dai-Dao Tam-Ky Pho-Do*", is the character "*Thuong*" (Taoism). There are nine sashes in this form of dress.

On his head is a "*Bat-Quai-Mao*" like the one worn by the Cardinal of the Buddhist Branch, but it is an intense blue. On his feet are black shoes of the type called "*Vo-Uu*" (shoes not made of leather). On the toes is the character "*Thuong*" (Taoism).

The simple form of dress is made of blue silk like the full form, without any cloak. There is no headdress, but on his head there is a blue turban with nine layers one on top of the other, like the turban of the Legislative Cardinal of the Buddhist Branch.

III.- The ceremonial dress of the Cardinal from the Confucianist Branch (**Ngoc**) also consists of a full form and a simple form.

The full form of dress, like that of the other cardinals is red silk. In the centre of the six embroidered characters “*Dai-Dao Tam-Ky Pho-Do*”, is the character “*Ngoc*” (Confucianism). There are nine sashes too in this form of dress.

On his head is a “*Bat-Quai-Mao*” like the one worn by the Cardinal of the Taoist Branch, but it is red. On his feet are black shoes of the type called “*Vo-Uu*” (shoes not made of leather). On the toes is the character “*Ngoc*” (Confucianism).

The simple form of dress is like the full form. There is no headdress, but on his head there is a purple turban with nine layers one on top of the other, like the turban of the Cardinal of the Buddhist Branch.



HIS GREATNESS THUONG-TRUNG-NHUT (Le-Van-Trung) when he was Dignitary with the title *Dau-Su*/Cardinal of the Taoist Branch dressed as *Dau-Su* for major ceremonies



HIS GREATNESS THUONG-TRUNG-NHUT (Le-Van-Trung) in the simple form of dress for *Dau-Su* for ordinary ceremonies

CEREMONIAL DRESS OF THE PRINCIPAL ARCHBISHOPS AND ARCHBISHOPS

(Chanh Phoi-Su and Phoi-Su)

Description : Their ceremonial dress consists of a full form and a simple form as with the Cardinals, but on the chest and the back of their full form of dress is embroidered the “Divine Eye” surrounded by a mystic Circle.

The dress for the Principal Archbishops has nine sashes, while the Archbishops' only has three.

The Principal Archbishop of the Buddhist Branch wears a “*Dai-Ba-Nap-Quang*”, a large square purple cloak, while the Archbishop wears a “*Tieu-Ba-Nap-Quang*”, a small cloak of the same colour.

On their head is a “*Bat-Quai-Mao*” like the Cardinals', but the colour varies depending on the Branch. On their feet they wear black shoes of the type called “*Vo-Uu*” (shoes not made of leather) with no characters on the toes.

The simple form of dress is like the full form, but the headdress is a turban like the one worn by the Cardinals, in a different colour depending on the powers of each Prelate.



MONSEIGNEUR THAI-KHY-THANH (Lam-Tai-Khy, Chinese)
Dignitary with the title *Phoi-Su*
(Archbishop of the Buddhist Branch)
in full ceremonial dress



MONSEIGNEUR THUONG-VINH-THANH (Tran-Quang-Vinh)
Dignitary with the title *Phoi-Su* (Archbishop of the Taoist Branch)
in full ceremonial dress



MONSEIGNEUR THUONG-VINH-THANH (Tran-Quang-Vinh)
in the simple form of dress for *Phoi-Su* (Archbishop)
for ordinary ceremonies

CEREMONIAL DRESS OF THE BISHOPS (*Giao-Su*)

Description : The ceremonial dress for the Bishops also consists of a full form and a simple form. The full form of dress is made of silk coloured according to the Branch. On the chest and the back of the dress is embroidered the “Divine eye” surrounded by a mystic Circle. The gown has three sashes. On the head is a “*Thien-Nguon-Mao -Bat-Quai*” (a rounded headdress octagonal in shape). Its colour varies according to each Branch. Around it are embroidered the eight characters which represent the Eight Trigrams / Pa Kua (*Bat-Quai*), and its peak is decorated with a Pearl, the Symbol of the Purity of the Divine Doctrine.

Bishops do not wear shoes.

The simple form of dress is like the full form. On the head is a turban, the colour of which varies according to each Branch, with seven layers one on top of the other, arranged in the form of the character “*Nhon*” (Humanity).

There is an exception: the Bishops of the Buddhist Branch wear a “*Tieu-Ba-Nap-Quang*” (a small square purple cloak), and on their heads they wear the Mitre of the Chief of the Bonzes “*Hiep-Chuong-Mao*”, embroidered with the “Divine Eye” on each side.



MONSEIGNEUR THAI-DEN-THANH (Huynh-Van-Den)
Dignitary with the title *Giao-Su* (Bishop) of the Buddhist Branch
in full ceremonial dress



MONSEIGNEUR THUONG-TUOC-THANH (Bui-Tan-Tuoc)
Dignitary with the title *GIAO-SU* (in 1946)
of the Taoist Branch in full ceremonial dress

CEREMONIAL DRESS FOR THE PRIESTS (*Giao-Huu*)

Description : Their ceremonial dress is made of silk, and the colour varies according to each Branch. There is no embroidery, and there are three sashes.

On their heads they wear a “**Nguong-Thien-Mao**” (a round headdress with a flat top). Its colour varies, and it is 0.15 of a metre high, with the “Divine Eye” on the front, surrounded by three mystic Circles.

Priests do not wear a turban or shoes.

They have only one form of dress.



REVEREND BROTHER THUONG-TY-THANH (Le-Van-Ty)
Dignitary with the title *GIAO-HUU* (Priest) in ceremonial dress
NOTE : The *Giao-Huu* (Priest) has only one form of dress for both major and ordinary ceremonies

CEREMONIAL DRESS OF THE STUDENT-PRIESTS (*Le-Sanh*)

Description : Student-Priests have only one form of dress made of silk, like the Priests'.

Their main garment varies in colour according to each Branch. They wear on their heads a “*Khoi-Khoa-Mao*” (the headdress of Confucian bachelors), with the “Divine Eye” on the front, surrounded by a single Mystic Circle / Golden Circle.

Student-Priests do not wear shoes.



BROTHER NGOC-LUONG-THANH (Nguyen-Huu-Luong)
in the dress of a Student-Priest/ *Le-Sanh*

CEREMONIAL DRESS FOR THE “*CHANH-TRI-SU*”

Description : The *Chanh-Tri-Su* wear a white robe like the one worn by the Student-Priests, made of white calico. The waist is drawn in by a narrow belt of the same material five centimetres wide. The neck of the robe is finished with a band of ribbon woven in yellow-gold thread. On the left arm there is a group of ribbons in three colours (yellow, blue, red). These are

six centimetres wide and ten centimetres long. On their heads they wear a black turban with seven layers one on top of the other, arranged in the form of the character “*Nhon*” (Humanity).

On the front of the turban there are three distinctive signs embroidered : “The Book of Spring and Autumn, the Feather Duster of Purification, and the Bowl of Sakyamuni” as on the small headdress of *Ho-Phap*.



FORM OF DRESS FOR A Sub-Dignitary
A *Chanh-Tri-Su* (Mr Duong-van-Tam) Village Leader
NOTE : All Minor Dignitaries have only one form
of ceremonial dress

CEREMONIAL DRESS OF THE “*PHO-TRI-SU*”

Description : The *Pho-Tri-Su* like the *Chanh-Tri-Su* wear a white robe finished at the neck by a band of ribbon made of silver-white material, with a single sash but no belt. On the left arm there is a group of ribbons in three colours (yellow, blue, red), three centimetres wide and five centimetres long.

On their head they wear a black turban with seven layers one on top of the other, like the one worn by the *Chanh-Tri-Su*, with no insignia.



FORM OF DRESS FOR A SUB-DIGNITARY
A *Pho-Tri-Su* (Mr Tran-van-Giang)
Deputy-Head of a Village (Administrative Section)

CEREMONIAL DRESS OF THE *THONG-SU*

Description : The *Thong-Su* wear a form of dress in white calico, with no borders. The collar is embroidered on both sides with the three distinctive insignia, like those found on the turban of the *Chanh-Tri-Su*. There is a narrow belt five centimetres wide made of white material.

On their head they wear a black turban like the one worn by *Chanh-Tri-Su*. with the same insignia in the middle of the front.



FORM OF DRESS FOR A SUB-DIGNITARY
A *Thong-Su* (Mr Duong-van-Thanh)
Deputy Village Head (Legislative Section)



FORM OF DRESS FOR A CAODAIST ADEPT / *Dao-Huu*
(Mr Le-Quang- Toan)

Part Three

DIGNITARIES OF THE COLLEGE OF WOMEN

The Dignitaries of the College of Women are formed by the Spiritual Pope Li-Tai-Pe (*Ly-Thai-Bach*).

The *Ho-Phap* recalls here what the Supreme Being said to the Principal Archbishop Huong-Thanh :

“I wanted to suppress the College of Women, but you are all My children, so I make no distinction between you”.

For this reason at the point when the Rules and Religious Laws were created, women were admitted to investiture with priestly functions.

Is there some mystery between Our Divine Master and the Council of the Gods (*Ngoc-Hu-Cung*) / (The Heavently Palace where the Council of God holds its sessions) ,which means that He leaves to the Pope the duty of forming the Dignitaries of the College of Women?

Why does He not form them Himself?

Do women have difficulty carrying out their roles in the religious sphere?

All we wish is that our Sisters may be able to fulfil their duty in a suitable manner.

The Holy Words of the Spiritual Pope about the Dignitaries of the College of women now follow.

An actual extract from the Messages from the Spiritual Pope Li-Tai-Pe (*Ly-Thai-Bach*)

Divine Text : Dear Dignitaries, listen to my instructions about the ceremonial dress of the College of Women. From now on show great respect for these beautiful robes and be alert about the celebration of the Rites according to the Hierarchy!

Commentary : The Pope recommended all the Dignitaries of the College of Men to pay attention to the beautiful robes of the Dignitaries of the College of Women and to be alert about the celebration of the Rites according to the Hierarchy. This means that He demands perfect discipline in the ranks of the dignitaries and an exemplary distinction between men and women both on the temporal and spiritual level.

The *Ho-Phap* asked Him about the power of the feminine offices. He answered :

“The dignitaries whether masculine or feminine who are on the same level have the same powers. The Priests of the College of Men must be placed under the orders of the Bishops of the College of Women, just as the Bishops of the College of Men must obey the Archbishops of the College of Women. Equality is for all, but powers differ according to the dignitaries of the Sacerdotal Council”.

Divine Text : The Dignitaries of the College of Women work under the command of The Cardinal (only One). In her turn She depends on the authority of the Pope and of the Legislative Cardinals.

Commentary : From what has just been said we can clearly see that the Divine Constitution does not permit women to the positions of Legislative Cardinals or of Pope.

The *Ho-Phap* objected to the Divine Master about this divine measure. The latter answered in this way :

“Heaven and Earth possess Two constitutive Elements: the Yin and the Yang (Am-Duong). If the Yang dominates, everything lives; if the Yin rules, everything dies. Thanks to the preponderance of the Yang, the whole Universe survives, and living beings develop. If a day came when the Yang disappeared and the Yin reigned, on that day, the Universe would fall into decay and would be destroyed! The Sun is the image of the Yang, and the Moon the image of the Yin. You represent the Yang, men, and women, the Yin. If I allow the College of Women to hold the power of the Pope in its hands, I will be sanctioning the triumph of the Yin over the Yang, so that the Holy Doctrine will be brought to nothing!”

The Ho-Phap insisted further : The College of Women cannot claim the rank of Pope, but there is nothing wrong if the women become Legislative Cardinals.

In response to this Our Divine Master gave a further answer :

“The role of the Legislative Cardinals is even more important, for they represent the Divine Law or *Ho Phap* to the *Cuu-Trung-Dai*. They are almost Popes! I do not allow the dignitaries of the College of Women to be promoted to the office of Pope. Why will I allow them to sit on the throne of *Ho-Phap*? The Law of God is thus set down! I beg you quite simply to give them assistance and guide them in the way of Heavenly Virtue!”

POWERS OF “THE FEMALE CARDINAL / NU DAU-SU”

(Feminine Superior of the College of Women)

Definition : The “Female Cardinal” wields the same power as the Cardinals, but her authority extends only as far as the College of Women, without any involvement with the powers of the dignitaries of the College of Men. In their turn the latter must refrain from intruding on the power of the College of Women.

In any issues involving the dignitaries of the College of Women, the Pope and the *Ho-Phap* contact only the **“Female Cardinal”**.

When asked by the *Ho-Phap* about the arrangement and form of the Throne of the Female Cardinal, Our Divine Master gave these instructions :

“The Holy Throne faces West, the direction of the *Cung Doai* (setting Sun), so that in front of the “Divine Eye” is the “*Cung Dao*” (Place of religion). On my left, the “*Cung Can*” (Heaven), on my right, the “*Cung Khon*” (Earth). Looked at mystically, the Seven Great Dignitaries (The Pope, and the three Legislative Cardinals and the three Cardinals) ought to have their thrones on My Left, facing the “*Cung Can*”. But just as they symbolise the Five Religious Branches (Confucianism, Geni-ism, Christianity and Islam, Taoism, Buddhism), I must put their Thrones in the Middle. So the throne of the “*Nu-Dau-Su*” (the Female Cardinal) must be place on My Right.”

- What is this throne like? asked *Ho-Phap*.

“- Just like the throne of the Avaloktesvara ‘*Quan-The-Am*’ in the Garden of the Sweetness (*Vuon Truoc Tu*) of the South Seas (*Nam-Hai*). That is, it is a marble throne with two open lotus flowers as a footstool.”

Divine Text : The female Cardinal (*Nu-Dau-Su*) must be chosen through an election by the voices according to the Rules and the Religious Laws. She supports the decisions of the Sacerdotal Council/ *Hoi Thanh* when there has been transgression of the rules of the New Code whether from the Spiritual or the Temporal point of view.

Commentary : The female Cardinal is to observe the New Religious Code in every detail whether administrative or legislative, and is to submit herself to the judgement of the Sacerdotal Council/ *Hoi Thanh*, just as the dignitaries of the Male College do. In the same way, her election must follow the same rules.

In the exercise of her functions, she has the same power as the Cardinals, with no change. Executive power also belongs to the Principal Female Archbishops; she is not to infringe their power, for this would involve transgressing the Divine Law.

Divine Text : The female Cardinal has a ceremonial form of dress similar to that worn by the male Cardinals.

The white silk robe has nine sashes and is embroidered with lotus flowers. The head-covering is a hood, just like the one worn by female bonzes, and is also made of white silk. The hood is overlaid with a golden headdress (*Phuong-Thien-Mao*) the top of which has the “Divine Eye” engraved on it surrounded by a mystic Circle. This headdress also includes a white gauze stole which hangs down as far as the heels.

On her feet the female Cardinal wears shoes called “*Vo-Uu*” (shoes not made of leather). They are white and on the toes they have the character “*Huong*” (Sweetness), the baptismal name of the dignitaries of the Women's College.

Description : The ceremonial dress for the female Cardinal is made of white silk, embroidered with lotus flowers just the one worn by the Cardinals.

The robe has nine sashes.

The Headdress is a hood also made of white silk, like the one worn by the female bonzes, embroidered with lotus flowers. This hood is surrounded by a golden diadem which circles the head; above this diadem there is a cap also made of gold. This cap has the “Divine Eye” engraved on the top of it, and it is surrounded by a Mystic Circle. The stole of the cap, made of white gauze, is to be 3.33metres long, for each time that the female Cardinal goes up to her throne, two student-priestesses must hold up the stole to prevent it from dragging along the ground.

Her feet are shod with shoes called *Vo-Uu* (shoes not made of leather). They are white, and on the toes is the character “*Huong*”, the baptismal name of the dignitaries of the Women's College. To wear this religious headdress, the hair is to be drawn up to the top of the head.

The following is the meaning of the baptismal name of the dignitaries of the Women's College.

“*Huong*” means “Sweetness”.

This poem was composed by Our Divine Master :

*Huong Tam Nhut Phien Can Can Khon
Hue Duc Tu Chon Do Dan Hon
Nhut Niem Quan-Am Thuy Bao Mang
Thien Nien Dang Phai Thu Sanh Ton*

Translation :

“Sweetness of the Heart close to the Great Spirits
Is Wisdom and Virtue which glorify the Soul.
Pray always to *Quan-Am*, Boddhisatva of women,
Immortality will be ensured for you in Heavenly Life.”

For the baptismal name of the dignitaries of the Men's College, Our Divine Master composed another poem :

*Thanh Dao Tam Khai That Uc Nien
Tho Nhu Dia Huyen Thanh Hoa Thien
Vo Hu Qui Phuc Nhon Sanh Khi
Tao Van Co Dang Chieu Phat Duyen*

Translation:

“*Thanh*” means “Purity”.

Purity of Third Alliance which lasts for Seven Hundred Thousand Years,
This is the Eternity of Heaven and Earth in an apophthegm
Which leads back to the Origins of the Children of the Firmament,
Creating a halo since antiquity around the True Paths of the Sages”.

In the reign of the Pope Li-Tai-Pe (*Ly-Thai-Bach*), the Men's College takes the baptismal name “*Thanh*”, and the Women's College the name “*Huong*”.

With the accession of another Pope, the Men's College will take the name “*Dao*”, and the Women's College the name “*Tam*”. This will continue until there are no further names. Then Our Divine Master will again be manifested to give other names. Because of these different baptismal names, the distinction can be made.

For example if someone asks : “At the accession of a new Pope, is the baptismal name of the former dignitaries changed?”

We will answer : No for the succeeding Pope will also have the baptismal name of his predecessor. Only the dignitaries who are appointed while the new Pope is in office will change their baptismal name. Anyone who were appointed by the first Pope will keep their own names.

If a second Pope succeeds Pope Li-Tai-Pe, the newly converted disciples will take the baptismal names of “*Dao*” or “*Tam*”. Among these disciples even if someone is promoted through his predestination to the rank of Principal Archbishop by Our Divine Master (direct Investiture), that person will take either the baptismal name “*Dao*” (or “*Tam*” in the Women's College), like the new dignitaries; but those who are converted under the papacy of the First Pope will always



VERY VENERABLE SISTER LAM-HUONG-THANH
 (in dissolution from the flesh since 1927)
 First Lady Dignitary entitled *Dau-Su* (Cardinal)
 Principal of the Women's College
 in full ceremonial dress

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with no change at all.

POWERS OF THE PRINCIPAL FEMALE ARCHBISHOPS AND THE FEMALE ARCHBISHOPS

Power : These women have the same functions as their colleagues in the Men's College, except that they are only concerned with the women.

Description : The ceremonial dress for the Female Archbishops is the same, but there is no “*Phuong-Thien*” head-covering. Their robes have three sashes; on the front of the chest is embroidered the “Divine Eye” surrounded by a Mystic Circle.

Commentary : The Principal Female Archbishops wear a ceremonial dress just like the one worn by the Female Cardinal. Their robes are made of white silk, and have nine sashes and are embroidered with lotus flowers. On the front of the chest is embroidered the “Divine Eye” surrounded by a mystic Circle. Their heads are covered with “*Ni-Kim-Co*” (the hoods worn by female bonzes), but there is no head-covering like the “*Phuong-Thien*”.

On their feet are shoes of the type called “*Vo-Uu*” (shoes not made of leather), embroidered with their baptismal name on the toes.

The ceremonial dress of the Female Archbishops is the same; one point of difference is that the robe has only three sashes.



VENERABLE SISTER NGUYEN-HUONG-HIEU
Lady Dignitary entitled *CHANH-PHOI-SU* (Principal
Archbishop)
Director of the administrative Service of the Women's College
in full ceremonial dress

POWERS OF THE BISHOPS OF THE COLLEGE OF WOMEN (*Nu Giao-Su*)

Functions : These important dignitaries have the same functions as do the Bishops of the Men's College, but the former are concerned only with the women.

Description : The Bishops of the Women's College wear robes made of white silk, with three sashes, and with the “*Kim-Co*” as their head-dress.

They do not wear shoes.

Commentary : The dress of the Bishops of the Women's College is the same as the dress worn by the Archbishops.

Their robes are made of simple white silk, without embroidery and with three sashes. Their head-covering is a “*Kim-Co*” (the type of hood worn by female bonzes) made of white silk, with an extra gauze stole which reaches the heels.

They do not wear shoes.



REVEREND SISTER NGUYEN-HUONG-NHAN
Lady Dignitary entitled *Giao-Su* (Bishop)
in full ceremonial dress

POWERS OF THE PRIESTESSES (*Nu Giao-Huu*)

Functions : The Priestesses have the same functions as the Priests, but they are concerned only with the women.

Description : They wear a ceremonial dress like the one worn by the Bishops of their College, with no headdress. A simple white lotus flowers with the “Divine Eye” pinned in their hair.

Commentary : The Priestesses have the same form of dress as the Bishops of their College. They have no headdress and do not wear shoes during the ceremonies.

They do not have a hood as a headdress, but a white lotus with the “Divine Eye” in the centre is pinned into their hair which is worn in a chignon.



REVEREND SISTER NGUYEN-HUONG-NUONG

Lady Dignitary entitled *Giao-Huu* (Priestess)

in full ceremonial dress

NOTE : *Giao-Huu* (Priestesses) have only one form of dress for both major and lesser ceremonies

POWERS OF THE STUDENT-PRIESTESSES (*Nu Le-Sanh*)

Functions : Their functions are same as those of the Student-Priests, and they are concerned only with the women.

Description : They wear a form of ceremonial dress like the one worn by the Priestesses and they cover their heads with a long veil knotted at the nape so that the two ends of unequal length hang down.

On their heads is pinned a single white lotus flower.

Commentary : The Student-Priestesses wear a form of ceremonial dress just like the one worn by the Priestesses and they cover their heads with a long white gauze veil which is tied at the nape with a knot which has two ends of uneven length, the longer of which reaches the middle of the thighs.

They do not wear any headdress, and their chignon has a simple white lotus flower pinned to it. There is no “Divine Eye” in the centre.



SISTER NGUYEN-HUONG-DINH
Student-Priestess entitled *Le-Sanh*
in ceremonial dress

POWERS OF THE *CHANH-TRI-SU*

Attributions : The *Chanh-Tri-Su* of the Women's College have the same functions as the *Chanh-Tri-Su* of the Men's College. They are concerned only with the women.

They wear a form of ceremonial dress like the one worn by the Student-Priestesses, but made of white calico. Their robes have a narrow belt .03m. wide and the neck is embroidered with woven yellow-gold thread.

On the left arm is sewn a three-coloured ribbon (yellow, blue and red), 3 centimetres wide and 10 centimetres long. They do not have any head-covering.



SISTER HUYNH-THI-PHAN
Lady Sub-dignitary entitled *Chanh-Tri-Su* (Village Leader)
in ceremonial dress

POWERS OF THE *PHO-TRI-SU*

Their functions are the same of those of the *Pho-Tri-Su* of the Men's College. They are concerned only with the women.

They wear a ceremonial dress which is like the one worn by the *Chanh-Tri-Su* of their College, except that the neck is decorated by woven silver-white thread. They do not have any belt or headdress.

On the left arm is sewn a three-coloured ribbon (yellow, blue and red), 3 centimetres wide and 5 centimetres long.



SISTER VO-THI-DUONG
Lady Sub-dignitary entitled *Pho-Tri-Su*
(Representative of the administrative Body in the village)
in ceremonial dress

POWERS OF THE *THONG-SU*

These women have the same powers as the *Thong-Su* of the Men's College, but they are concerned only with the women.

They wear a form of ceremonial dress in white calico. The neck is embroidered on both sides with the three distinctive insignia: the Golden Bowl of Sakyamuni (*Binh-Bat-Du*), the Feather Duster of Purification (*Phat-Chu*), the Book of Spring and Autumn (*Xuan-Thu*), just like the insignia embroidered on the simple headdress of *Ho-Phap*.

They wear a narrow belt around their waists. It is made of white calico and is three centimetres wide.



SISTER LE-THI-TOI
Caodaist adept
in adept dress



SISTER PHAM-THI-KHA
Lady Sub-dignitary entitled *Thong-Su*
(Representative of the legislative Body in the village)
in ceremonial dress

Part Four

LAW FOR THE ELECTION OF THE DIGNITARIES OF THE *CUU-TRUNG-DAI*

(Of the two Colleges : the Male and the Female)

Definition : The dignitaries of the two Colleges of the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* are invested in the Temple of the Divine Alliance (*Hiep-Thien-Dai*), either through their own merit, or through designation by means of a medium (direct investiture), or through an organised election before the dignitaries of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*, in order to avoid all fraud or partiality. What is more, with the assistance of these dignitaries it is permissible to consult the Spiritual Pope or Our Divine Master to know whether those elected are worthy of their rank.

Thus, before official notification, all dignitaries must be presented for the approval of the Pope or of our Divine Master.

Divine Text : The Cardinals are elected to the rank of Legislative Cardinals through the vote of their colleagues (the other two Cardinals).

Commentary : The three Cardinals who stand for election as Legislative Cardinals must come before the Holy See to take part in the vote of their colleagues, before the Assembly of the dignitaries of the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* and of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*.

The Laws and religious Rules do not specify the way to elect Archbishops to the rank of Principal Archbishops. These latter are chosen by the Pope.

Divine Text : The Archbishops are elected to the rank of Cardinal by the vote of their thirty-six colleagues.

Commentary : For example, if there are two Cardinals missing, the Archbishops elected to this rank must gain votes equal to half of thirty-six, that is, eighteen votes, or more.

This election is carried out at the Holy See, before the Sacerdotal Council/ *Hoi Thanh* of the *Cuu-Trung-Dai*, in the presence of the higher dignitaries of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*.

Divine Text : The Bishops are elected to the rank of Archbishop by the votes of their seventy-two colleagues.

Commentary : To be elected to the rank of Archbishop, the Bishops must gain a majority of votes as required by the ordinary rules.

The election is carried out at the Holy See before the Sacerdotal Council /*Hoi Thanh* of the *Cuu-Trung-Dai*, in the presence of the higher dignitaries of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*.

Divine Text : The Priests are elected to the rank of Bishop by the vote of their three thousand colleagues.

Commentary : To become Bishops, Priests must be elected by the vote of their three thousand colleagues.

The number of votes is worked out according to the ordinary rules. The election is carried out at the Holy See before the Sacerdotal Council /*Hoi Thanh* of the *Cuu-Trung-Dai*, in the presence of the Legislative Body of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*.

Divine Text : The Student-Priests are elected to the rank of Priest by the vote of all their colleagues.

Commentary : To be a candidate for the rank of Priest, the Student-Priests (or Deacons) must be elected by the vote of all their colleagues. (The number of Student-Priests is not defined).

The number of votes is worked out according to the ordinary rules. In case of equal votes, the most meritorious are chosen. The election is made at the Holy Seat, before the Priestly Body of the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* in the presence of the Legislative Body of the *Hiep-Thien Dai*.

Divine Text : Disciples who aspire to the rank of Student-Priest are elected by the vote of all the Faithful, except in the situation when dignitaries are chose by Divine Voice (direct investiture).

Commentary : Disciples chosen for the rank of Student-Priest must be chosen by the vote of all the others.

The number of votes is worked out according to the ordinary rules.

The election is carried out in the Oratories (Temples / *Thanh-That*) of the various centres. After the vote, the ones elected must go the Holy See to take part in the general gathering. If they are accepted by the agreement, they immediately begin their service; in case of any disagreement, they are eliminated! (Good!, Approval from the Spiritual Pope)

An exception is made in the case of Student-Priests who are chosen by Our Divine Master (direct investiture).

When the *Ho-Phap* asked the Pope Li-Tai-Pe about voting for the *Chanh-Tri-Su*, *Pho-Tri-Su* and *Thong-Su*, he received the following answer :

“The *Chanh-Tri-Su* are elected by the vote of the *Pho-Tri-Su* and *Thong-Su*, according to the ordinary rules, at the Oratory of the place, before the Head of the Parish, in the presence of the other *Chanh-Tri-Su*.

“The certificate for the *Chanh-Tri-Su* is signed by the Pope and the *Ho-Phap*.

“The *Pho-Tri-Su* are elected by the vote of the Adepts, according to the ordinary rules, at the Oratory of the place, before the Head of the Parish, in the presence of the *Chanh-Tri-Su*.

“The certificate for the *Pho-Tri-Su* is signed by the Pope.

“The *Thong-Su* are elected by the vote of the Adepts, according to the ordinary rules, at the Oratory of the place, before the Head of the Parish, in the presence of the *Chanh-Tri-Su*.

“The certificate for the *Thong-Su* is signed by the *Ho-Phap*.”

THE PAPAL THRONE AND ELECTION

Divine Text : The Papal Throne is in the power of the Legislative Cardinals and the Cardinals through the universal vote of the Adepts.

The Law can only confirm the situation where the One Chosen may be designated by the Heavenly Voice Itself. In the case of direct investiture there is no use in having a vote.

Commentary : The Pope's successor is to come from the ranks of the Legislative Cardinals or the Cardinals. Except in the situation where there is direct investiture, the Pope is to be chosen by universal vote, that is to say, after an election in which the entire body of Adepts is involved. The candidate must also obtain the unanimous consent of the dignitaries of the Sacerdotal Council / *Hoi Thanh*, [and] of the dignitaries of the Legislative Body. This election is always attended by the members of the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* and the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*.

The number of votes as with all elections is controlled at the Holy See by the Higher Council of the Dignitaries of the Administrative and Legislative Bodies. This Council is to include :

1. From the *Cuu-Trung-Dai*, dignitaries from the rank of Cardinal and up;
2. From the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*, those beginning with *Thuong-Pham* and *Thuong-Sanh* (Head of the Spiritual and Head of the Temporal).

These major dignitaries together form the Higher Council, an exception being made for those who stand as candidates.

The result of the election is conveyed to the Adepts. If there is an undecided outcome, it goes to a second scrutinising of the ballots or even a new election.

Then when the votes are ratified by the Higher Council, the Sacerdotal Council / *Hoi Thanh* will organize the Great Festival of the Enthronement of the Elected One.

All the dignitaries are to undergo this election law which is never set aside except in the case where the Supreme Being appears himself to choose his Elected One. This is the situation with direct investiture.

Part Five

POWERS OF THE *HIEP-THIEN-DAI* (Temple of the Divine Alliance / Legislative Body)

Before establishing the Laws and Rules of the Temple of the **Divine Alliance**, Our Divine Master recommended as follows : **“Let all the disciples obey my will.”** This shows how important the role of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* is. Why this importance? We will explain it herewith.

The mystery of Creation presents us with two enigmas: the attempt to know the Visible and the attempt to penetrate the secret of the Invisible. It is possible to know the Visible, but to penetrate the secret of the Invisible is not easy. The Visible is separated from the Invisible by a mysterious veil which, since the creation of the universe, has not been completely lifted even by initiates who have been raised to the stage of wisdom.

Humanity alone holds in its hands a key to this: it lies in the observation of the harmony of the manifestations of these two enigmas, or more simply these two aspects, to become aware of the union of the Visible and the Invisible.

In the existence of creatures, according to the mechanism of the Creator, Essence and Matter must be mingled into a “**Oeness**”. Heaven and Earth have their principles, Yin and Yang, beings have their physical reality and their intelligence, human beings have their bodies and souls. The vitality of created beings in the Universe is always brought forth by the union of matter and spirit.

The souls of minerals and vegetables, of animals and men, of Genies and of Saints, of Archangels and Buddhas are different because of the individual degree of evolutions; thus the exterior physical form of one does not look like another. Minerals are different from vegetables, vegetables from animals, animals from humans, humans from Genies, Genies from Saints, Saints from Angels and Archangels, Angels and Archangels from Buddhas, Buddhas from God. To summarise, the difference between the Temporal and Spiritual is clearly defined. Matter depends of the essence which gives it its exterior form. The undeniable proof of this is that human beings differ from each other in their physical appearance. Evil people are unattractive on the outside, while those who are virtuous attract us by their gentleness; in this way people in the past came to know others through their cast of feature.

The body, then, must be in harmony with the soul, like Matter with Being. Matter is visible and Being is invisible; to form the union, the two must be in harmony, for the Visible implies the Invisible and vice versa.

Thus the Temple of the Nine Degrees of Evolution (*Cuu-Trung-Dai*) makes up the Body for which the Temple of the Divine Alliance (*Hiep-Thien-Dai*) is the soul. It has already been said that the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* is the temporal part of the New Religion, while the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* is the spiritual part, that is, the Spirit. Now Matter can be defined, but Being cannot. In the Way of perfecting of Wisdom, while many evolved divine beings wish to be reincarnated into poor families, other lower divine beings can reach a high level, thanks to the knowledge and application of the Holy Teaching. In this way the Spiritual is limitless just as the New Religion is limitless. This is the foundation for the mystic side of Caodaism.

Disciples will know that our Divine Master has not defined fully the duties which are incumbent on the dignitaries of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* and this causes some lack of understanding in the hierarchy of the ones chosen by God, on the part of the adepts. This is the desired effect, since Our Divine Master makes it clear in this way that all members of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* are their own responsibility and must become worthy of the grade of office attributed to each one. The *Cuu-Trung-Dai* represents the Temporal, the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* the Spiritual. The Spiritual must guide the Temporal in order to establish a divine organisation which has been given the purpose of saving humanity. The salient point is that without the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* Caodaism cannot exist. Heaven and Earth may pass away, but the Divine Way will not pass; humanity may be brought to nothing, but the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* will never be.

The dignitaries of the Temple of the Divine Alliance have the spiritual mission of raising the veil of the Invisible and they act as a unifying bond between Humanity and God. They are Mediators who are to create harmony between the Temporal and the Spiritual. This is why Our Divine Master has recommended all the disciples to obey His Will.

Below are His Teachings :

Divine Text : **The Temple of the Divine Alliance is the sacred place where God is made manifest to give spiritual direction to the New Religion. As long as Caodaism endures the Temple of the Divine Alliance (*Hiep-Thien-Dai*) exists.**

Commentary : The Divine Master is the Unique Creator, the Supreme Head of the Universe and Master of the Invisible. Since He is Master of the Invisible, He is Master of the Esoteric Power. Thus where the Supreme Master is found, the Holy Doctrine is found.

The Temple of the Divine Alliance is the dwelling of our Master and it holds the Spiritual Power of the New Religion. As long as the New Religion lasts, the Seat of our Divine Master exists. Otherwise the world would end. Since the New Religion is eternal, the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* must equally be eternal

Divine Text : **The five branches of the Great Doctrine are given material form through the believers who are heretical and who day by day move further from the Truth, completely perverting the significance of the Holy Religion. For this reason I made the unshakable resolve to come MySelf and teach My children, not to entrust the teaching of My Holy doctrine any longer to Incarnate beings.**

Commentary : This text is clear. Our Divine Master has stated simple the profanation of the Holy doctrine by those very people who were given the task of spreading it. With time, Faith lessens, human passions are born again stronger than ever, the Holy Words are perverted so that it is adapted to material needs. This is the way that the divine Doctrine is gradually changed into human doctrine.

Today the Supreme Master decides to come HimSelf to teach His disciples and no longer wishes to entrust the Holy Mission to human beings.

On this point, if someone says : **“The Supreme Master has said that He no longer entrusts to humans the task of guiding His disciples in the Way of God. Why does He Confide it to the dignitaries of the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* and of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* who are just as human?”** A passage from the discourse of *Ho-Phap* read at the Holy See on the fourteenth day of the second month of the year Mau-Thin (1928) give an explanation for this observation :

“The Divine Master is coming to encourage all the fore-ordained Missionaries which He sent into this world to form His Holy Image, which is the Body of the Saints. Thanks to this Body of the Saints, which must be the members of the Sacerdotal Council, the Supreme Being is avoiding an incarnation throughout this Third Amnesty (or Alliance). Now the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council consists of two visible sections in this world :

1. The dignitaries of the *Cuu-Trung-Dai*: they represent the Material Body of the New Religion;
2. The dignitaries of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*: they represent the element of this Religion which is part-material, part-spiritual (Perispirit).

Finally the third invisible part made up of the Divine Beings of the *Bat-Quai-Dai* (the Council of the Great Spirits which heads the Eight States of Soul of the Manvantara). This group represents the Spiritual or the Soul of the New Religion.

As it says in several passages that have been quoted above, our Master is the Supreme Being, the Omnipotent Creator of the Universe, and He is also by definition Master of the *Bat-Quai-Dai*. Since He is Head and Master of the *Bat-Quai-Dai*, He is the Soul of the New Religion. Now the union of the Soul with the Body can occur only through the mediation of the Perispirit (*Chon than*). The Body must be Holy to have a Holy spirit. Thus the disciples and dignitaries of the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* are only able to reach the Virtue of God through the intermediary of the dignitaries of the *Hiep-Thien Dai*.”

A second observation could be made :

“The Eternal Omnipotent has said that He no longer entrusts His Holy Mission to the Incarnate Ones. Why does He need to found the Temple of the Divine Alliance? Without the Dignitaries of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*, would He not be able, by His Own Power, to form the New Religion?”

Our answer would be as follows :

“The Eternal is Absolute Master of the Spiritual world. He has given Humanity an intelligence which is adequate to direct the corporal world and to rule over other living beings. To effect the harmonising of the Universe, God and Humanity must be united in perfect agreement: Humanity needs the help of God, but God too must depend on the potentiality of Humanity to bring all His creatures towards the Good and the Beautiful.

Humanity which is placed under the spiritual power of God who determines its destiny according to the Karmic Law, has available only the one freedom and the one power: it must become self-mastering and must maintain itself in the way of Perfection. The plurality of existences has as its clearly defined aim the attainment of supreme Wisdom in the Virtue of God and thus unification with the Omnipotent. This freedom of acting and this power over oneself have been given by the Supreme Being to all His creatures and cannot as a result be suppressed. It would be impossible for Divine Justice which cannot belie Itself to stoop to this. Since Good is rewarded and Evil is punished, all children of God must be allowed the freedom to choose their own Way.

Hell and Paradise are the symbols of Perdition and Eternity. Hell is reserved for cruel souls, just as Paradise is reserved for Good Spirits: this is the way the Divine Law is fixed. Nothing forces us into Hell, just as no one helps us to go up to Paradise. The two Ways open before us: it is up to us to make the choice of making ourselves worthy, or of destroying ourselves. The divine beings can only lend us their clear-sighted guidance.

If by his psychic Power and his miraculous Manifestations our Master strengthened the faith of all His creatures, the whole of Humanity would certainly abandon Evil and would do Good. The Divine law would then be one-sided, since our Master would raise all souls to Paradise and would close the gate of Hell. On what base then could Divine Justice be upheld: What would be the use of Karma and of the Law of reincarnations?

What is more our Master and the Divine Spirits have neither body nor words. How can They communicate with the visible World?

The dignitaries of the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* and of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* merely form organisations to assist the Supreme Being and the Great Spirits to found the New Religion to guide Humanity in the True Way of God.

The Law of Reincarnation is a divine mechanism which allows souls to expiate their faults and to make progress along the road of Evolution. If Esotericism were suppressed, what would be the foundation to support the Holy Doctrine?

Humanity understands evolved beings, perverse spirits and impure souls which form different degrees of the bodily society. If our Divine Master made use of his miraculous power to assist all souls to make progress in the Way of Salvation, so that they reached the Heavenly City in one reincarnation, what merit would there be for the Spiritual Hierarchy?

As it is already set down that the Temple of the Divine Alliance (*Hiep-Thien-Dai*) is the Perispirit of Caodaism, the Temple of the Nine Degrees of Evolution (*Cuu-Trung-Dai*) makes up its Body and the Temple of the Eight States of Soul (*Bat-Quai-Dai*) represents its Soul; the union of the Soul and the Body only occurs through the mediation of the Perispirit which is partly temporal and partly spiritual. It acts as a link to unite the Spiritual and the Temporal.

Thus the New Religion receives the Wisdom of the Holy Spirit to spread it through the World.

Divine Text : Humanity must be united with God just as the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* is united with the *Bat-Quai-Dai*.

Commentary : The Invisible Temple of the *Bat-Quai-Dai* is the Soul of the New Religion, placed under the aegis of our Divine Master. It is natural that the Body should be guided by the Soul to that it can be holy. Now as the Soul of the New Religion is formed by the Eternal One, the knowledge of the Holy Doctrine depends not on the Visible World but on the Omnipotence and the Wisdom of God. This is the meaning of the saying of our Divine Master, that he no longer entrusts the teaching of the Holy doctrine to human beings.

Divine text : What is more, the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* is the mystical place where the Pope comes and is placed in spiritual communication with the Thirty-Six Heavens, the Three Thousand Worlds, the Sixty-Seven other Earths and the Lords of Karma so that he can pray for the Salvation of Humanity.

Commentary : This text is already explained in the chapter on the powers of the Pope.

Divine Text : You already know the spiritual powers of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*. I am now speaking to you about the temporal powers of the dignitaries of this Temple.

Commentary : From the spiritual point of view, the dignitaries of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* act as Mediums between the Pope and the Great Spirits of the Invisible World. They are the unifying links between the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* which is entrusted with the conversion of souls, and the *Bat-Quai-Dai* which is concerned with the salvation of souls. The Temple of the Divine Alliance is

also the place where all the Spirits of the Universe are united. This is the spiritual mission of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*

As far as temporal powers are concerned, the dignitaries of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* are entrusted with the maintenance and application of the religious Rules and Laws so that they can watch over the good progress of the adepts in the Way of God, transforming the Cycle of Destruction into the Cycle of Renewal (*The Cycles of Creation, Destruction and Conservation have already been explained in the chapter on the Powers of the Dignitaries of the Cuu-Trung-Dai. The Temples of the Nine Degrees of Evolution has its Religious Tribunal, just as the Great Spirits of the Bat-Quai-Dai have the Spiritual Tribunal. If someone who is accused finds the verdict pronounced by the Cuu-Trung-Dai is unjust, such a person may make appeal to the Hiep-Thien-Dai. If he is still not satisfied, he makes a further appeal to the Tribunal which is under the control of the Bat-Quai-Dai [this is a rare eventually]. As for the formation of the Tribunal of the Cuu-Trung-Dai or the procedure of appealing to the Spiritual Tribunal, this is the legislative power of the Ho-Phap*), to assist Humanity to bring to reality the Era of Peace and to escape from the Era of Destruction.

Divine Text : The *Hiep-Thien-Dai* is placed under the authority of the *Ho-Phap* (Head of the Legislative Body). He is assisted by the *Thuong-Sanh* (Head of the Temporal Section) and by the *Thuong-Pham* (Head of the Spiritual Section). The *Ho-Phap* is concerned with the Laws and with Justice.

Commentary : Just as the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* is placed under the Pope's orders, and the *Bat-Quai-Dai* under the Power of God, the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* is placed under the authority of the *Ho-Phap*. From the spiritual point of view, Caodaism has its divine Laws, just as from the temporal point of view, Humanity has its laws and its justice.

WHO IS THE HO-PHAP?

Ho-Phap is the one who unveils the Mystery of the Invisible and is the Maintainer of the Rules and laws of the New Religion. He is the one who pronounces judgments on the dignitaries and disciples, elevates the dignity of the fervent through their merit and brings sanctions against those who have committed faults. He is actively involved in assuring that the religious Rules and Laws which have become Divine Laws are carried out in detail, in order to keep the dignitaries and adepts free of the sufferings inflicted by the Lords of Karma.

In so acting, he watches over the positive progress of the disciples in the Way of God, and guides all evolved souls to achieve the Divine Phase of the Great Spirits. He holds control over the Legislative Power both exoterically and esoterically.

The *Ho-Phap* presides at all session of the Upper Chamber of Judgments.

Divine Text : He has control over four Lords of the Zodiac, namely :

***Tiep-Phap* (Juridical Legislator)**

***Khai-Phap* (Juridical Reformer)**

Hien-Phap (Juridical Renovator)
Bao-Phap (Juridical Conservator)

Commentary : The Head of the Legislative Body has under his authority four Lords of the Zodiac who support him in his lofty task.

These four dignitaries have the same power as He when they have the duty to represent him to carry out his lofty mission. Each of them as well possesses distinct powers.

The Juridical Legislator (*Tiep-Phap*) is concerned with the application of the religious jurisdiction, and receives all complaints and appeals. He may grade the issues as of lesser importance, or refer them to the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* and he does not involve himself in any but significant situations which merit to be examined or judged again. In this case he is to hand over all the records to the Juridical Reformer (*Khai-Phap*).

The *Khai-Phap* on receipt of the documents transferred by the *Tiep-Phap*, is to study them in detail. If it concerns matters which will be judged by the Tribunal of the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* or which are under appeal, he is first to inform the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* that they must postpone the date of the hearing of the Tribunal for a fortnight, and secondly, advise the *Ho-Phap* who calls an assembly of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* for this purpose.

The assembly of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* makes the decision, after having heard the *Khai-Phap*, whether it is necessary either to make some modification in the penalties awarded by the religious Laws and Rules, or to uphold the verdict to be pronounced. In the latter case, the *Khai-Phap* must hand over in his turn all the documents involved to the Juridical Renovator (*Hien-Phap*).

The *Hien-Phap*, after receiving these documents, is to carry out a careful investigation in order to gather all the evidence related to these matters, and to submit it all to the Juridical Conservator (*Bao-Phap*).

The *Hien-Phap* is forbidden to communicate either with the *Hien-Dao* (Religious Renovator) or with the *Hien-The* (temporal Renovator). All matters once surrendered to the *Hien-Phap* become secret, even where the dignitaries of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*.

In his turn, the *Bao-Phap* keeps the files which are handed over under seal of secrecy, and after much deliberation, proposes all the penalties and sentences to the *Ho-Phap* for his judgments.

The Juridical Conservator (*Bao-Phap*) is the Director of the offices of the *Ho-Phap*.

Divine Text : The *Ho-Phap* is concerned with the conservation and application of the religious Laws and Rules, temporally and spiritually. Every transgression of the law must be brought to the awareness of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*.

Commentary : To sum up, the *Ho-Phap* is the Sovereign-Protector of Religious Justice both esoterically and exoterically. He is concerned about the conservation of the Holy Doctrine to help Humanity to follow the Way of God. Every transgression of law on the part of the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* or of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* must be severely punished.

In order to be able to carry out in a divine way this Lofty Mission the Supreme Being requires the *Ho-Phap* and his four fellow-workers (*Chi Phap*) to swear to be impartial during the exercise of their functions.

WHO IS THUONG-PHAM?

(Leader of the Spiritual Realm)

Thuong-Pham is the Representative of the *Ho-Phap* in the formation of virtuous souls of the Priestly Group / Sacerdotal Council.

All children of God converted to the New Religion have their spiritual dignity. To guide evolved souls to move through the various stages of Perfection to attain supreme Wisdom is the aim of the Amnesty of God.

Thanks to *Thuong-Pham* all lofty souls and those in the process of evolution may make their spiritual ascent in peace and tranquillity. *Thuong-Pham* is the one who keeps them alert to any transgression of the divine law, who watches of their spiritual development, and insists that they submit to priestly discipline.

In a word, the Leader of the Spiritual Realm (*Thuong Pham*) helps the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* to live in an atmosphere of happiness; he reveals the Heavenly Voice to virtuous souls, and guides them to the Divine Phase of the Great Spirits, while closing behind them the Door of regression.

All religious offices depend on *Thuong-Pham* if they are to be raised according to the merit of the dignitaries. He considers the priestly laws to take up the defence of all dignitaries and adepts; he prevents all perversion of the Divine Rules, and helps all initiates to attain their aim.

He is simultaneously the President of the Hall of Defence, and Protector of all disciples.

Divine Text : The *Thuong-Pham* is Leader of the Spiritual Power. Under his command he has four Lords of the Zodiac, namely :

***Tiep-Dao* (Religious Legislator)**

***Khai-Dao* (Religious Reformer)**

***Hien-Dao* (Religious Renovator)**

***Bao-Dao* (Religious Conservator)**

He is concerned with the meditation cells /houses(*Tinh That*) and the Temples / Churches (*Thanh That*); he supervises all disciples and defends them against abuses by authorities.

Commentary : All meditation houses/cells depend on the power of the Leader of the Spiritual Realm. He is entrusted with the defence of the adepts against all excessive uses of power. He is the one to allot offices to candidates in the provincial parishes and he apportions work to members of the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* having regard to their talents.

The Leader of the Spiritual Realm symbolises the Holy Doctrine (the *Dao*). Wherever the Heart of the Eternal (the *Dao*) exists, there *Thuong-Pham* is found.

In terms of his office he is ranked with the Legislative Cardinals, and embodies the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* to the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*. This means that he exercises administrative power in the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*, a body which is essentially legislative.

The four collaborators of *Thuong-Pham* have the same power as he does when they represent him, but they have distinct areas of concern.

The *Tiep-Dao* (Religious Legislator) receives and examines all protests and claims about justice. If there are cases worth a defence, he passes them on to the *Khai-Dao* (Religious Reformer).

Once in receipt of the documents passed to him by the *Tiep-Dao*, the *Khai-Dao* must study them in every detail. Where there are issues which involve the intervention of the Hall of Defence, the *Khai-Dao* must first ask the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* to delay the decision for a period of no longer than a fortnight, and secondly inform the *Ho-Phap* who convokes the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* for this purpose.

Before this assembly occurs, the Religious Reformer is to provide detailed explanations about the issues in question, and he is to convey in his turn all the documents to the *Hien-Dao* (Religious Renovator) only with the approval of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*.

In order to carry out his role, the *Hien-Dao* is to try to reach a profound understanding of the issues involved, and he conveys all of this to the *Bao-Dao* (Religious Conservator).

The *Hien-Dao* is forbidden to communicate with the *Hien-Phap* (Juridical Renovator) and the *Hien-The* (Temporal Renovator). Once they are placed in the hands of the *Hien-Dao*, all matters become secret, even where dignitaries of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* are concerned.

In his turn the *Bao-Dao* preserves the same secrecy, and after familiarising himself thoroughly with the contents of the files sent to him, makes a draft of all the required conclusions in order to present them to the *Thuong-Pham* who has the responsibility of defending the issue. The Religious Conservator is the Director of the Offices of the Leader of the Spiritual realm.

The *Thuong-Pham* and his four collaborators must swear an oath of impartiality during the exercise of their functions.

WHO IS THE *THUONG-SANH*?

(Leader of the Temporal Realm)

Minerals have their own life just as vegetables do, and animals and birds, and humans. They are all creatures of God which include pure souls (*pure souls have existed since the creation of the Universe*), souls which are in the process of evolution, or impure souls (*souls in the process of evolution or impure souls were formed only after the creation of the Universe*), and vicious or perverse souls (*vicious or perverse souls are souls whose life is evil, and which move along the way of Evil involving both pure and impure souls. The law of suffering is for all, even for pure*

souls after they have been reincarnated, for God forges all great souls in the crucible of suffering).

Pure spirits are Angels of Light incarnate among men who seek of mission of perfection or of Salvation; spirits which are in the process of evolution or are impure are souls which have moved from the stage of vegetal and animal beings to reach the level of humanity. Perverse spirits are pure or impure spirits which become involved in a path of vice and plunge into the state of demons because of their evil actions.

Among all these creatures, the human race occupies the highest rank, and what is more from the temporal point of view humans are the most evolved. In creating the Third Amnesty, the aim of our Divine Master is to lead all souls back to the Way of Salvation, what may be their origin.

Whether it is a matter of pure souls experiencing their purgatory, or of souls in a state of evolution living out their karma, or perverse souls repenting of their evil actions, all these souls must be converted by the Thuong-Sanh in order to be able to cross over the Temporal Stage. He has control of all the laws and rules which relate to the worldly life of all adepts to guide them out of the Abyss of Suffering.

He may present a formal complaint before the religious Tribunal against all those who impede the faithful as they move along the Way of God, and he may ask for sanctions against any office-bearer who gives an example of impiety to [his] co-religionists.

He is the President of the Hall of Accusation, and is responsible for the Public Ministry linked with the Religious Tribunals.

Divine Text : The *Thuong-Sanh* is concerned with the temporal life of the New Religion. Under his command he has four Lords of the Zodiac, namely :

***Tiep-The* (Temporal Legislator)**

***Khai-The* (Temporal Reformer)**

***Hien-The* (Temporal Renovator)**

***Bao-The* (Temporal Conservator)**

Commentary : Everything which involve the temporal life of the New Religion is part of the concern of the *Thuong-Sanh*. His four collaborators have the same function as he does when they represent him to fulfil their temporal missions.

Separately they have different functions.

The *Tiep-The* (Temporal Legislator) receives all suggestions about temporal rules, and all complaints against the dignitaries of the Priesthood. Whatever the rank of those accused, he is to convey these complaints to the *Khai-The* (Temporal Reformer).

The *Khai-The* tries to discover the cause of all these complaints, and if the charges brought have a significant base, first he is to notify the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* of the importance of the affairs, and secondly he is to inform the Ho-Phap who convokes the assembly of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* in order to decide what course to follow. The approval of this assembly must precede the transmission by the *Khai-The* of all the documents to the *Hien-The* (Temporal Renovator).

In his turn, the *Hien-The* opens a serious inquiry to see all the witnesses and proofs involved with the accusations which have been initiated, and directs the whole matter to the *Bao-The* (Temporal Conservator) with a detailed report. The *Hien-The* is forbidden to communicate with the *Hien-Phap* (Juridical Renovator) or the *Hien Dao* (Religious Renovator). Once they have been put into the hands of *Hien-The*, all affairs become secrets, even where dignitaries of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* are involved.

The *Bao-The* in his turn keeps all matters under seal of secrecy when they are handed over to him, and he prepares a draft of all the necessary acts of accusation, so that he can submit them to the Leader of the Temporal Realm who has the task of prosecuting the accused, whether before the Religious Tribunal of the *Cuu-Trung-Dai*, or before the High Court of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*.

The *Bao-The* is the Director of the Offices of the Leader of the Temporal Realm.

The *Thuong-Sanh* is the Symbol of the Temporal Realm, that is to say, of Humanity. Thus wherever the Symbol of Humanity is found, *Thuong-Sanh* must be there.

He has the right to control the office-bearers in the accomplishment of their duty and he may ask for the dismissal of any who fail to match the loftiness of their apostolic task. In rank he is classed on the same level as the Legislative Cardinals (*Chuong-Phap*).

The dignitaries of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* derive from the Legislative Group, but *Thuong-Sanh* fills an administrative role. Now *Thuong-Sanh* is the embodiment of the *Cuu-Trung-Dai* at the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*.

Thuong-Sanh and his four collaborators of the Temporal Power must take an oath of impartiality during the exercise of their functions.

Aside from the High Dignitaries whose powers are decided by the Supreme Master, there are other members of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* who are under the authority of the *Ho-Phap*, such as the “*Bao-Van-Phap-Quan*” (Conservator of Arts and Literature), the “*Bao-Sanh-Quan*” (Protector of Public Relief), the “*Bao-Hoc-Quan*” (Protector of Teaching) and other members of the academy whose arrival is expected by *Ho-Phap*.

Divine Text : I advise you to maintain your impartiality in the exercise of your functions. Do not forget that anyone who has great power has a heavy burden of responsibility.

Commentary : This admonition from Our Divine Master is the basis for the Pope Li-Tai-Pe's requirement that all the Dignitaries of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* should swear an oath of impartiality before the Priesthood during the exercise of the duties. And to indicate the greatness of their power, the Pope gives to each of them a sash of command. Wherever they may be, when they wear this sash to carry out their duties, all dignitaries and adepts must obey them in every detail. The Priesthood alone has the right to decide their degree of guilt if they are at fault.

On reception of legislative power from the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* all dignitaries must likewise take an oath of impartiality. The “*Bao-Van-Phap-Quan*” (Conservator of Arts and Literature) must also take an oath of fidelity to the Temple of the Divine Alliance.

Part Six

RELIGIOUS VESTMENTS: CEREMONIAL DRESS of the DIGNITARIES of the *HIEP-THIEN-DAI* (Temple of Divine Alliance / Legislative Body)

CEREMONIAL DRESS OF THE *HO-PHAP*

Description : The ceremonial dress of the *Ho-Phap* includes a full form and a simple form.

For the full dress form, the *Ho-Phap* dresses in a uniform like an old-style marshal. He wears a high gold headdress (*Kim-Khoi*), the top of which ends in the shape of “*Tam-Son*” (three Mountains) and looks like a trident, as a symbol of his power of command over the Three Heavens of the West of the Nirvana (*Tay-Phuong-Cuc-Lac*).

On his feet he wears old-style boots which have the character “*Phap*” (Esoterism) on the toes.

Over his clothing he wears another vestment which allows the left side of his clothing to be seen. On the spiritual side of *Thuong-Pham*, his right hand holds the staff “*Giang-Ma-Xu*” (Rule over Evil) which symbolises the Temporal assisting the Spiritual, while on the temporal side of *Thuong-Sanh*, his left hand holds the string of beads called “*Tu-Bi*” (Mercy) which symbolises the Spiritual guiding the Temporal. Around his waist is the three-coloured commander's scarf (yellow, sky blue and red) which symbolises his great power over the union of the three ancient doctrines. Its knot lies right over the belly.

The simple form of dress is made of yellow silk (the symbol of Buddhism). He wears a head-covering called “*Hon-Nguon-Mao*” (Cosmo-Genesis or World-Creation) which is 10 centimetres high. On the front of this headdress, the three signs of the three ancient doctrines are embroidered: the “*Binh-Bat-Du*” (Golden Bowl of Sakyamuni), the “*Phat-Chu*” (Feather Duster of Purification) and the Book “*Xuan-Thu*” (Spring and Autumn). Above these three signs is the character “*Phap*” (Esoterism).

On his feet are shoes of the type called “*Vo-Uu*”. They are white and the character “*Phap*” is also on the toes. Around his waist is the three-coloured commander's scarf just like the one worn with the full dress form.

The *Ho-Phap* wears the simple form of dress when he presides over the religious Tribunal, while the full form of dress is kept for days of major ceremonial when he presides from his throne.



HIS HOLINESS *HO-PHAP* PHAM-CONG-TAC
Supreme Head of the Legislative Body
Head of the two Powers of Caodaism since November 1934
from the date of the dissolution from the flesh
of the Pope (interim) Thuong-Trung-Nhut
in full ceremonial dress for major rituals
(disincarnated in 1959)



HIS HOLINESS *HO-PHAP* PHAM-CONG-TAC
Supreme Head of the Legislative Body
Head of the two Powers of Caodaism since November 1934
from the date of the dissolution from the flesh
of the Pope (interim) Thuong-Trung-Nhut in simple ceremonial dress

CEREMONIAL DRESS OF THE *THUONG-PHAM*

(Leader of the Spiritual Realm)

Description : The *Thuong-Pham* also has a full form of dress and a simple form.

The full form is made of white silk, and over it is worn a sky-blue chasuble which has an edging of silver-white thread. On his feet are shoes of the type called “*Vo-Uu*”. They are white and the character “*Dao*” (Spiritual) is also on the toes.

Around his waist is the commander's scarf, like the one worn by *Ho-Phap*, with the knot on the right side. His right hand holds the “*Long-Tu-Phien*” (Fan of Exteriorisation) made from thirty-six linked white swan/crane feathers. At the top of this fan is the “*Phat-Chu*” (the Feather-Duster of Sanctification).

When considered mystically the “*Long-Tu-Phien*” has the spiritual power to bring forth completely the souls of those who are released from the flesh, and to send them to the thirty-six heavens of Nirvana.

In his left hand he holds the string of beads called “*Tu-Bi*” which symbolises the presentation of virtuous souls to the *Ho-Phap*.

The simple form of dress is also made of white silk, with the commander's scarf as with the full form. The headdress is a "*Hon-Nguon-Mao*": it is white, like the one worn by the *Ho-Phap*. On the front of the headdress is embroidered the Fan called "*Long-Tu-Phien*" with the character "*Dao*" (Spiritual) above it.

The Superior of the Spiritual Realm wears the simple form of dress when he goes before the religious Tribunal and only wears the full form when he is to sit on his throne.



HIS GREATNESS *THUONG-PHAM* (Cao-Quynh-Cu)
in dissolution from the flesh since 1929
High Councillor of the Spiritual Power to His Holiness *Ho-Phap*
in full ceremonial dress

CEREMONIAL DRESS OF THE *THUONG-SANH*

(Leader of the Temporal Realm)

Description : The Leader of the Temporal Realm also has a full form of dress and a simple form.

The full form looks like the form worn by the Head of the Spiritual Realm. On his head he wears a "*Thanh-Can*" (headdress made of sky blue silk which covers the head), and around his waist is a band of red silk called "*Than-Thong*" (Knowledge of Spirituality).

Like *Ho-Phap* and *Thuong-Pham*, he wears the commander's scarf around his waist, its knot on the left. The Sword "*Thu-Hung-Kiem*" (Sword of Elevation) is at his back, and it symbolises the way wisdom give Deliverance for the self. His right hand holds the "*Phat-Chu*" (Feather-Duster of Sanctification) which symbolises the presentation of the Temporal Realm to *Ho-Phap*, and his left hand holds the string of beads called "*Tu-Bi*" which symbolises the offering of the Holy Doctrine to humanity. He wears white shoes of the type called "*Vo-Uu*" with the character "*The*" (Temporal) on the toes.

The simple form of dress is like the form worn by the Leader of the Spiritual Realm, except that on the front of the headdress are embroidered the Sword "*Thu-Hung-Kiem*" and the "*Phat-Chu*" with the character "*The*" (*Temporal*) above them. Around his waist is the commander's scarf.

The Leader of the Temporal Realm wears the simple form of dress when he goes before the religious Tribunal, and he is dressed in the full form when he sits on his throne.



HIS GREATNESS *THUONG-SANH* (Cao-Hoai-Sang)
High Councillor of the Temporal Power to His Holiness *Ho-Phap*
in full ceremonial dress

CEREMONIAL DRESS OF THE “*THAP-NHI-THOI-QUAN*”

(The twelve Lords of the Zodiac)

The twelve Lords of the Zodiac of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai* also have a full form of dress and a simple form.

Descriptions : The full form of dress is made of white silk with a simple collar edged with silver-white thread. On their heads they wear the white silk Mitre of the Bonze Superiors. Around their waists they wear the commander's scarf, with its knot in the middle, on the right or on the left, depending on the functions of each one. They all wear white shoes of the type called “*Vo-Uu*”.

The simple form of dress is likewise made of white silk. They all wear the commander's scarf. their headdresses are like the one worn by *Ho-Phap*, *Thuong-Pham* and *Thuong-Sanh*, embroidered with the characters “*Phap*”, “*Dao*”, or “*The*”, depending on their functions. They wear white shoes of the type called “*Vo-Uu*”.

The twelve Lords of the Zodiac wear the simple form of dress when they carry out their functions, and the full form for the major ceremonies.



HIS EMINENCE *TRAN-KHAI-PHAP* (Tran-Duy-Nghia)
Zodiacal Lord, Juridical Reformer (*Khai-Phap*) in the Legislative Body
in full ceremonial dress

NOTE : The twelve Lords of the Zodiac of the Legislative Body
wear the same form of dress for the major ceremonies



HIS EMINENCE *CAO-TIEP-DAO* (Cao-Duc-Trong)
Zodiacal Lord, Religious Legislator / *Tiep-Dao*
of the Legislative Body in simple ceremonial dress

CEREMONIAL DRESS OF THE “*BAO-VAN-PHAP-QUAN*”

(Conservator of Arts and Literature)

Description : The full form of dress worn by “*Bao-Van-Phap-Quan*” is made of white silk. On his head he wears the “*Nhut-Nguyet-Mao*” (According to the divine directions received on March 13, 1931, the explanation for this headdress is as follows: The circle which rests on the head represents the Sun, while the shape of the Crescent symbolises the Moon. So this headdress is called *Nhut-Nguyet-Mao* [*Nhut*:Sun, *Nguyet*: Moon, *Mao*: Headdress]) which is like the one worn by the Lords of the Zodiac of the *Hiep-Thien-Dai*, and has a five-petalled lotus flower on each side. On each lotus flower the “**Divine Eye**” is embroidered. In front of the fold right in the centre, the headdress is decorated with another lotus flower, but this one is not embroidered. The headdress has three lotus flowers in all.

Around his waist he wears “*Bach-Tuyet-Thau-Quang*” (Light of the snow pure spirit. Belt made of very fine gauze) which is 3.33 metres long and .333 metres wide. This belt is knotted at the front in the form of a five-petalled lotus. On his feet are white shoes of the type called “*Vo-Uu*”, with a small lotus flower on the toes.

CEREMONIAL DRESS OF THE “BAO-SANH-QUAN”

(Protector of Public Relief)

Description : The full form of dress for the Bao-Sanh-Quan is made of white silk. On his head he wears the “*Nhut-Nguyet-Mao*” like the one worn by the Lords of the Zodiac. On the front of this headdress, 4 centimetres high at the point, is embroidered the “Divine Eye”. This is also embroidered on each side, so that there are three embroideries of the “Divine Eye” on this headdress.

A white silk scarf is knotted around this headdress. Two metres long and eight centimetres wide, it is called “*Tien-Thang*” (Cordon of the Saints), and the two ends fall over the shoulders and allow the “Divine Eye” to be seen in between.

Around the waist is worn a “*Song-Quang-Thao-Thong*” (*Double luminous ray of the Perispirit and the soul*) that is, a white silk scarf which forms two mystical Circles on the thighs.

On his feet he wears white shoes of the type called “*Vo-Uu*”.



DIGNITARY *HO-DAN PHAP-QUAN* (Tran-Quang-Ta)
Master of Ceremonies and of protocol responsible for the order of proceedings at all ceremonies in the Holy See in full ceremonial dress



Dignitary Nguyen-van-Hoi
Thua-Su (Historian) of the Legislative Body
in ceremonial dress



BROTHER PHAN-HUU-PHUOC
Truyen-Trang (Investigator) of the Legislative Body
in ceremonial dress



BROTHER NGUYEN-VAN-HUONG
Luat-Su of the Legislative Body
in ceremonial dress

THE END