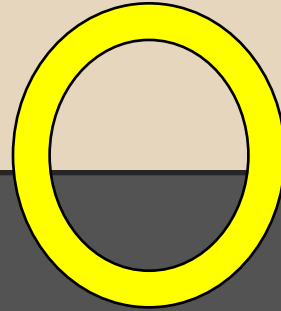


The Best of Times, The Worst of Times... The End of Times? - A Brief Comparison of Eschatology in a Selection of Popular New Asian Religions



Prepared by Rev. Jason Greenberger

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Structure of Presentation- State of My Research

State of
Research



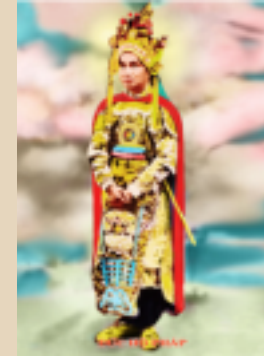
Presentation Structure:

- Categorical vs. Interpretive
- Overview and Background
- Eras of Humankind
- The Significance of the Order in the New Era
- Comparisons

The Early History of Each Religion



Deguchi Nao
(1836–1918)
Deguchi Onisaburō
(1871–1948)
*1892



Ngô Văn Chiêu
(1878–1932)
Lê Văn Trung
(1876–1934)
Phạm Công Tắc
(1890–1959)
*1926



Wáng Juéyī
(1821-1884)
*1883
Zhāng Tiānrán
(1889–1947)
Sūn Sùzhēn
(1895 - 1975)

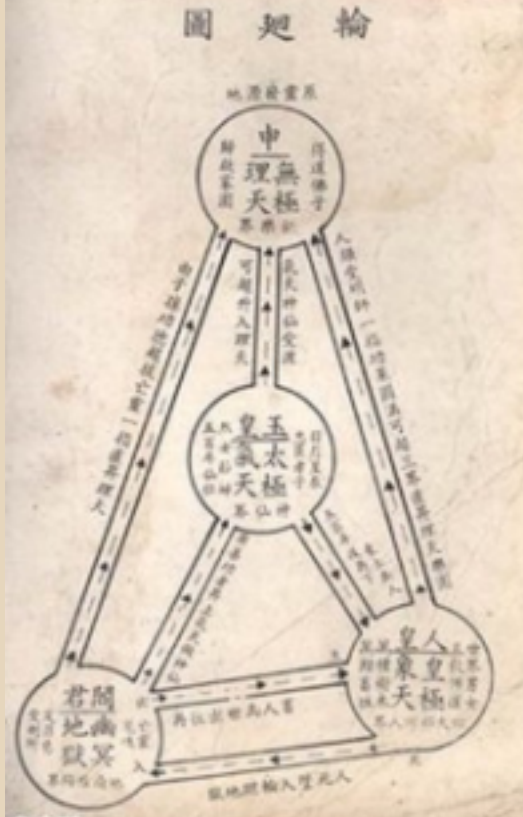


Gang Ilson
(1871–1909)
Jo Jeongsan
(1894-1958)
Bak Udang
(1917-1996)
*1969



Bak Jungbin
(1891–1943)
*1916

Eras of Humanity in Yīguàn Dào



Eras of Humankind

The 3 Sun/Yáng Eras (三陽)
 Era of Blue Yáng (青陽期)
 1,886 years (3,086-1,200 BCE) -
 Dīpaṃkara Buddha (燃燈佛)
 Era of Red Yáng (紅陽期)
 3,114 years (1,200 BCE - 1912
 CE)
 - Śākyamuni Buddha (釋迦牟尼佛)
 Era of White Yáng (白陽期)
 10,800 years, (began in 1912)
 Buddha Maitreya (彌勒佛)
 *129,600 year-long cosmic mega-
 year (元). A cosmic mega-year can
 be broken up into twelve cosmic
 mega-months (會); each lasting
 10,800 years.

Role of Yīguàn Dào in the New Era

And yet, God, our Supreme and Unsurpassable Mother was extremely compassionate. She could not bear to see the good destroyed along with the wicked. Consequently, She allowed the true Dao to be brought down to humanity and ordered Living Buddha Jigōng and Yuèhuì Bodhisattva to reincarnate back into the world to save the denizens of three offices by bringing the great immortals from the realm of spirits, the sentient beings of the world, and the ghosts of the netherworld back to heaven in the same manner. These two great figures, Living Buddha Jigōng and Yuèhuì Bodhisattva, our venerable master and venerable mother, received a mandate from Lǎomǔ to transmit the true Dao and universally liberate the three offices. They were put in charge of this final and ultimate endeavor and thereby, they transmitted the true Dao without relying on scripture or getting caught up in non-essential outside of the scope of doctrine. They pointed devotees directly to their heart-minds (the conscience and spiritual nature possessed by all humans. This enabled the devotees to see into their true self-nature and achieve buddhahood.” 《三寶心法 (回天之道) 》

Eras of Humanity in Caodaism



Eras of Humankind

Role of Caodaism in the New Era

Prehistory-

Harmony with nature. One religion modeled on the Vedic Ṛgveda. Era ends in hedonism and loss of purpose.

The First Universal Amnesty (一期普度)

Several religions emerge: Judaism, Buddhism (Dīpaṃkara Buddha 燃燈佛), Daoism (Tàishàng Dào zǔ 太上道祖), and Confucianism (Wénchāng Dìjūn 文昌帝君)

The Second Universal Amnesty (二期普度)

Śākyamuni Buddha (釋迦牟尼), Tàishàng Lǎojūn (太上老君), Confucius (孔子), and Jesus

The Third Universal Amnesty (三期普度)

Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva (觀音菩薩), Lǐ Bái (太白金星), Lord Guān Yǔ (關聖帝君).

Caodaism views its order as uniquely qualified to unite the religions which emerged during the previous two universal amnesties. It is believed that though God revealed his truth many times, divine messages in the past always relied upon human frailty, however, the third universal amnesty presents ongoing opportunities for God to communicate with humanity directly.

Eras of Humanity in Daesoonjinrihoe



Eras of Humankind

The Former World (先天)

Later World (後天)

Six Stages of Waning Proximity from Dao (六度數).” They are as follows

- 1.) The Era of Divine Thearchs (皇時代)
- 2.) The Era of Sagely Emperors (帝時代)
- 3.) The Era of Heavenly-mandated Kings (王時代)
- 4.) The Era of Cunning Tyrants (霸時代)
- 5.) The Era of Uncivilized Rulers (夷狄時代)
- 6.) The Era of Beasts (禽獸時代)

*129,600 year-long cosmic mega-year (元). 12 cosmic mega-months (會); each lasting 10,800 years.

Role of Daesoonjinrihoe in the New Era

Skillful Wisdom (權智), Chapter 1 Verse 21

Every time God had an opportunity, he would tell his assembly of disciples, “In governing over the three realms as the Supreme Sovereign, I have rectified all the stages (of humanity’s proximity to Dao) from the Former World, and soon I will open a new destiny for the Later World by building a realm for immortals in this world.” Whenever He said this, the slower among his assembly of disciples would bemoan (what they perceived to be) God’s lack of urgency. They resigned themselves to just hope that God would establish the great opening to the new era as soon as possible.

Prophetic Divination (預示) Verse 6

I have rectified the stages of the Former World and in the Later World, the path to the boundless and eternal realm of immortals will be opened. The grudges born from mutual conflict in the Former World will be resolved, and through the Dao of mutual life-giving, it will become widely known that God has redeemed His subjects.

- Noble Individuals Empowered by Dao (道通君子)
- Noble Populace (蒼生君子)

Bonus Slide: Daesoonjinrihoe

Teaching the Dharma (教法), Chapter 2 Verse 55

The Former World was an era of heroes wherein individuals partook of transgressions in their pursuit of life. However, the Later World is an era of sages wherein individuals partake in goodness in their pursuit of life. Does one become long-lasting by means of pursuing life through transgressions or by means of pursuing life through goodness? Now in the Later World, sentient beings establish themselves according to the standard of living through partaking in goodness.

Prophetic Divination (預示) Verse 13

In the Former World, (humanity's) situation was narrower in scope and matters were easier. Even the application of one method of Dao was enough to bring chaotic matters back under control. In the Later World, (humanity's) situation is broader and matters are more complicated. If all methods of Dao are not united and utilized, then efforts will be insufficient for bringing chaos back into balance.

Prophetic Divination Verse 77

“In the Former World, mālās (prayer/recitation beads) were strung using 108 beads, however, in the Later World, they will be strung using 105 beads.”

Eras of Humanity in Oomoto

Eras of Humankind*	Role of Oomoto in the New Era
<p data-bbox="287 347 1006 440">Age of Maitreya's Construction of a New World (みろくの世建設)</p> <p data-bbox="287 511 1006 1035">Part four, chapter four of Divine Signposts (道の栞) details how God sent down the spirits Izu (巖霊) and Mizu (瑞霊) to create Maitreya's new world as a salvific action performed for humanity. It specifies that the God, Ushitora no Konjin (良の金神) and His consort, Goddess, Hitsujisaru no Konjin (未申の金神) are engaged in the holy work of completing the preparation for the realization of the divine realm on earth.</p>	<p data-bbox="1025 347 1622 696">The Oomoto belief is that in light of this age and God relationship with the Deguchi family, the world's continuation relies upon the unbroken hereditary succession of female Lineage Masters within the family</p>

Eras of Humankind in Won Buddhism



Eras of Humankind*	Role of Won Buddhism in the New Era
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Founding Motto (開教表語) : “With this Great Opening of matter, Let there be a Great Opening of spirit (物質이 開關되니 정신을 開關하자) ● The founding motive (開教-動機) Scientific Civilization (科學文明) ● Paradise (樂園) through expanding spiritual power to conquer material power. ● The Won Era (圓期) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Synthesis of religious thought ● Reformation ● Increased opportunity for liberation/enlightenment

Comparison- General

- Further thoughts on Categorical vs. Interpretive Eschatologies
- The imminent nature of the world to come in Oomoto and Daesoonjinrihoe

Comparison- Terminology

- “先天” & “後天” in Yīguàn Dào and Daesoonjinrihoe. Yīguàn Dào’s competition with the Phoenix Halls (鸞唐) and the claim of “Automatic Writing of the Prior Heaven (先天扶乩)” vs. Automatic Writing of Posterior Heaven (後天扶乩).” Daesoonjinrihoe’s “Later World” as a utopia.
- Cosmic time (一元十二會) in Yīguàn Dào and Daesoonjinrihoe. “The End” or a “New Beginning?” *Shào Kāngjié (邵康節)- “The Book of the Thearchical Ruling Order of the World (皇極經世書)”
- The great opening (of an era) (開闢) in Daesoonjinrihoe and Won Buddhism. Daesoonjinrihoe’s “Lord of the Great Opening (of the New Era) (開闢長).” Paradise through divine intervention or through human endeavor by a spiritually advanced community?

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