

The Interaction of Taoism and Buddhism in the Chinese Culture

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Abstract—The article deals with the problem of the interaction of Chinese and Indian philosophical traditions. The purpose of the work is to clarify the specifics of the interaction of Buddhist traditions in India and China. The relevance of the study of the problem of the interaction of Chinese and Indian philosophical traditions is due primarily to its importance for understanding the process of formation of the Chinese and, in general, Far Eastern forms of Buddhism, their role and place in the ideology, religion, art and philosophy of East Asian countries. It should be noted that, to date, the potential impact of the ideas of Buddhism on Chinese, Indian and world culture has not been exhausted; therefore, the study of the mutual influence of these ideas is relevant for the modern situation. The paper considers tasks that are aimed at identifying the characteristic features of the Buddhist tradition in India in comparison with the Buddhist tradition in China, identifying specific features of the interaction of Taoism, Chan Buddhism in the Chinese Buddhist tradition. The work is based translations of Chinese philosophical texts and interpretations of Taoist, Confucian, Indian and Buddhist texts, performed by Soviet Sinologists L.S. Vasiliev, E.A. Torchinov, and Toporov.

Keywords—*Taoism; Buddhism; cultural tradition; philosophy; culture*

I. INTRODUCTION

For many hundreds and thousands of years, spiritual teachings arose on Earth, expressed in various religious, esoteric, mystical movements — and each of them bore its own unique character. The main object of thought of ancient Chinese thinkers is a person in his various forms. The foreground here is not ontology or epistemology, but anthropological, ethical, social and political issues.

In China, the philosophy of Taoism, Confucianism has been going hand in hand with Buddhism for many centuries, and these cultures play a very important role. Buddhism played an important role in the stage of a fundamental spiritual crisis in China. The teachings of Buddha, which penetrated at the turn of a new era from India to the Far East, had an impact on all aspects of the life of medieval society.

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Buddhism, their role and place in the ideology, religion, art and philosophy of East Asian countries. It should also be taken into account that, as modern events show, the potential for the influence of Buddhist ideas on Chinese, Indian and world culture is far from exhausted; therefore, studying the mutual influence of these ideas is not useless to evaluate their role in current cultural processes. The Buddhist philosophy of India and China offers a completely different way of perceiving the world, but at the same time they influence each other, complement and develop with mutual help.

II. BUDDHISM AND TAOISM AS FUNDAMENTAL TEACHINGS OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

Taoism and Buddhism are fundamental teachings in Chinese philosophy. The religious system of the country is completely built on these teachings, which are very similar to each other. The territory of China is very large, and it was rather difficult to find a common language for different religious communities. That is why separate streams formed in different environs, but after a while they all transformed into one of these philosophies.

Buddhism is a doctrine of spiritual awakening, a method of gradual training of the mind that arose in ancient India in the middle of the 1st millennium BC. The Buddhist tradition in India dates back to the paranirvana of Buddha, which is conditionally defined by UNESCO as 543 BC. e. This trend itself arose in the midst of shramans (the place of origin is Magadhi and Koshal) and has characteristics (non-caste, extracurricular education, extrabiological status) that formed during this period, which ultimately led to the great "exodus" of Buddhism from India. In the period from II to IX centuries AD Buddhism is established in China, from where it penetrates into Japan, Korea and Tibet, where it exists mainly in the version of the Mahayana and Vajrayana, moreover, in Japan, Buddhism merged with Shintoism, and in China with Taoism. For all the variety of forms, the concept of heresy does not apply to Buddhism, since there is neither a single canon, nor general provisions that would have the character of dogmas. Three treasures of Buddhism (triratna: "I resort to the Buddha, his Teaching (dharma) and the Community (sangha), a kind of Buddhist" symbol of faith "is not meaningful and depending on culture and traditions

can be filled with different content. Such a feature of Buddhist teachings as focusing on a specific person in a specific situation was the condition under which it became possible to assimilate a huge number of local beliefs, cults, folk rites, etc. In particular, the principle of the upai kausalya ("skillful means of circulation") says that the teaching of the Buddha is not truth, but just an instrument for gaining truth that is beyond all teachings.

Four important truths spoken by the founder of the creed of the Buddha — Siddhartha Gautama (Sakya-Muni, VI-V centuries BC) — stated, in fact, that life is inseparable from suffering. It is possible to free oneself from suffering only by stopping the cycle of rebirth, which is achieved by exemplary behavior.

Buddhism, which was introduced into Chinese consciousness, led to the expansion of the cultural horizon of the state. The rise of contacts with the peoples of Indochina and India was stimulated by the pilgrimage of learned monks to holy places, for example, in 399-415 years. Fa Xian outlined his trip to India in "Notes on the Buddhist Kingdoms". Foreign merchants came to China together with religious missions. These external relations contributed to the growth of shipping and shipbuilding, expanded knowledge of distant, unfamiliar states.

The reason for the successful spread of Buddhism was that Confucianism as the official ideological doctrine of the empire during the years of its fundamental decline went by the wayside. Taoism and Buddhism filled this created spiritual vacuum.

Taoism is a Chinese traditional doctrine that includes elements of the religion of ancient China, the ideological source of which was the philosophical doctrine of the sage Lao Tzu, the author of the book "Tao de jing."

The treatise "Tao-de-jing" arose as a result of the movement of its author along the path of knowing the truth. As a result of his comprehension of the living primordial laws of creation, from which everything happened and by which everything develops and exists as a result of his constant recollection of himself and a gradual insight into the essence and secrets of being. This book was intended to inflame the hearts and souls of people in the knowledge of the truth, to encourage them to reveal their own spiritual nature, to realize their spiritual purpose and great role in the total Creation.

In the treatise "Tao de jing" Lao Tzu captured the reflection of his experience, vision and understanding of the world and life. This book does not claim absolute true knowledge. Lao Tzu claimed: "The Tao expressed in words is not the true Tao." [1] The sage sought to indicate the direction and path to comprehending the highest secrets and truths of the universe. Lao Tzu's teaching is intended for all those in whom burns a thirst for spiritual knowledge and a desire for active improvement of oneself, as it is destined for person in Creation.

Torchinov [2] notes that the Japanese researcher, Fukunaga Mitsuji [3], believes that the term "guidao" (鬼

道, "The Way of the Demons"), one of the first names of Taoism, originally meant shamanistic practice — the original substratum of Taoism, to which later (during the late Han dynasty, according to Fukunaga Mitsuji) added the philosophy of Lao Tzu (the doctrine of Tao) and the doctrine of the "spirit" (shen, 神), coming from "I-ching" (shen — the highest expression of the process of change — "and": "the immeasurability of yin-yang is called spirit").

And, finally, cannot completely ignore the role of the Zhou culture itself in the genesis of Taoism, which provided Taoist philosophy with its basic concepts — Tao and de.

Thus, the specifics of the formation of Taoism, as well as the specifics of the formation of Buddhism are associated with the traditions and cultures of the most ancient nations who inhabited the territory of the future united empire and contributed to the formation of the Chinese civilization of antiquity and the Middle Ages.

III. FEATURES OF THE INFLUENCE OF TAOISM AND BUDDHISM ON THE CULTURAL TRADITIONS OF CHINA

What do Buddhism and Taoism have in common? An important feature is the absence of a god to be worshiped. This is a very important point that distinguishes Buddhism from other religions of the world in which there is always a supreme God. Also these teachings are characterized by a philosophical assessment of the world, that is, each person has freedom of choice. And another important feature is that these teachings are equally aimed at developing human potential and self-improvement.

The interaction of Taoism and Buddhism on the culture of China has done its part. In the VI century Buddhism already became an official religion and the mainstream. However, as we already know, this could not happen without the support of the supreme authority. Who contributed to this? Emperor Wu Di of the Liang Dynasty [4] raised Buddhism to a new level. He carried out some notable reforms. Buddhist monasteries became large owners of land; they began to bring income to the imperial court.

If you ask what kind of Buddhism is in China, then no one will give you a definite answer. It was during the emperor of the Liang dynasty that the so-called complex of three religions, or san jiao, was formed. Each of these three teachings harmoniously complemented the others.

The spread of Buddhism in China occurred quite quickly. In a short time, certain schools of Chan Buddhism had time to form, and they had a significant influence on the traditions of the Far East. All schools can be divided into three groups: schools of treatises, sutras and dhyana.

Since the 3rd century, the Buddhist doctrine of Wisdom has become dominant among the intellectual elite of China. During this period, a large number of experts on the Prajnaparamita sutras were noticed. One of the Chinese educational institutions that adhered to this orientation is connected with the name Zhi Ming-do. Thanks to him, the philosophy of the sutras of Wisdom has achieved widespread distribution in China. He accepted emptiness not in

ontological or metaphysical definitions, but likened it to a consciousness devoid of thoughts.

Popular Buddhism achieved a variety of Chinese Taoism very quickly. Buddhism absorbed local rituals, adopted the cult of forefathers and other ethnic cults, incorporating both the holy ancient Chinese sages and mythical heroes into their pantheon. The Buddhist monk, along with the Taoist, performed simple rituals, took on a role in rituals and holidays, served the cult of numerous buddhas and bodhisattvas, and erased Buddhist temples and idols.

The Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, the legendary Chinese Kuan-yin — the goddess of mercy and virtue, the patroness of the suffering and the poor people was especially famous in China. Since about the eighth century having received a female form (earlier in China, as also in India, the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara was considered as a man), Kuan-yin was transformed into the goddess of patronesses of women and children, motherhood and the goddess-bearer.

Having enlisted numerous Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Buddhist saints in their pantheon, the common people in China accepted from Buddhism the key thing for themselves — those thing, in fact, that was associated with the alleviation of suffering in this life and salvation in the life to come.

The intellectual elite drew deeper on Buddhism. Exploring the sutras and practicing Buddhist practice, they were eager to get into the essence of Buddhism, to know its spirit, to clear its foundations, rather obscured by thousands of followers from the time of Buddha.

There is no doubt that Buddhism plays a significant role in Chinese culture. The influence of this teaching is most clearly seen in the literature, architecture and art of the country. During the time of Buddhist monks, a huge number of monasteries, temples, cave and rock complexes were built. They were distinguished by architectural splendor. The structure of these times is characterized by elegance and delicacy, which shows the non-conservative nature of Buddhists.

New hieratic buildings literally updated the old and ugly buildings of China. They stand out with multi-tiered roofs that symbolize the sky. All of constructed buildings and underground complexes are valuable historical memorials. Frescoes, bas-reliefs and a specific rounded sculpture very naturally fit the architectural ensemble. Rounded buildings have been popular in China for a long time, but during the time of Buddhist monks they spread in huge numbers.

Today literally in every Chinese temple you can find sculptural images dating back to Indo-Chinese culture. Together with religion a new animal, which can be found in various sculptural works very often, also came to the country — it was lion. Until the penetration of Gautama's belief, this animal was practically unknown among Chinese people [5].

It was Buddhism that instilled in Chinese culture a certain love to fiction, which until then had not been spread there at all. Novels eventually became the most precious type of fiction for Chinese people. At the same time, the

appearance of fiction in China led to creation of larger genres such as a classic novel. It is Chan Buddhism that occupies an important place in formation of Chinese painting.

For artists of the Suna School, the presence of Buddha in all things played a special role, so their paintings did not have linear perspectives. The monasteries became a rich source of information because it was a place where the great monks, artists, poets and philosophers gathered, thought and wrote their works. These people came precisely to the monastery in order to renounce the outside world and follow their inner creative path.

It stands to mention that Chinese monks were the first to invent xylography that is, printing using the reproduction of text through matrices (boards with mirror characters). Chinese oral culture has greatly expanded thanks to Buddhist legends and myths. Philosophy and mythology are closely intertwined in people's minds that even gave rise to some kind of attachment to real historical events. Buddhist ideas about sudden enlightenment and intuition had a great influence on the philosophical thought of China. Surprisingly, even the famous tea tradition of China also originates in a Buddhist monastery. It is believed that the art of tea drinking arose precisely when the monks were looking for a way to meditate and not fall asleep. For this, a healthy and invigorating drink, tea, was invented. According to a legend, one monk fell asleep during meditation, and to prevent this from happening again, he cut off his eyelashes. Fallen eyelashes sprouted tea bush.

Taoism and Buddhism are considered to be thoughts and principles that underlie the national cultural Chinese traditions. In Middle Ages, China was said that Ch'an is the heart of poetry and painting. In the same way we can say that Taoism and Buddhism are the heart of Chinese culture. In the event that Confucianism is the body of culture, then Taoism and Buddhism are the vital principle of life, bringing its whole organism into movement.

It is important to note that Taoism and Buddhism did not influence the formation of cultural Chinese traditions. Impact can be caused by something external, extraneous, alien. Buddhism, it would seem, can be attributed to external influences in relation to the culture of China. But its appearance in the II century AD did not bring radically fresh ideas to the country. China took from Buddhism only that which corresponded to its deep worldview. It is only possible to convey to another only that which resonates in its soul, that which has already been experienced by it. As a consequence of this, "nothing can be taught."

Buddhism turned out to be an incentive for rising of all the creative forces of the state. Its appearance made people turn to the sources of being, to the true foundations of human existence again. The ideas of Taoism were refined and sounded with renewed vigor.

IV. CONCLUSION

Summing up some of the results, it should be said that the philosophy of Ancient China perceives Buddhism as something similar and native. To present the religious and

philosophical ideas of this country without Buddhist thoughts is simply unthinkable. Words such as "China", "religion", "Buddhism" are historically connected and inseparable.

The ideas and principles, on which Taoism and Buddhism are based, are rooted in the depths of being and are checked by personal experience, in "ordinary" life. Taoism and Buddhism are not something special in the world culture. Their manifestation was just the most public and noticeable. The ideas of Taoism and Buddhism were manifested in the "external" — in the art of China, which everyone can understand. In other cultures, similar teachings were more hidden, obscured by the powerful building of official religions, and their manifestation in the culture was less noticeable to the outside eye.

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The civilization of ancient China is a thing of the past. But her wisdom, which has absorbed the spiritual experience and asceticism of hundreds of generations, is alive and continues to live. Taoism and Buddhism, as the most important parts of this wisdom, have not lost their vitality today. Taoist temples, Buddhist monasteries and holy places are visited by hundreds of thousands of believers. Great popularity around the world have acquired such, based on the Taoist teachings of art, as feng shui, qigong (psychophysiological practices related to breathing exercises), some styles of traditional martial arts, wushu, Chinese astrology, etc.

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