

# Divine-philosophical sects and Buddhism in China

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**Abstract**— *In the advancement of Ancient Eastern culture and the system of state ancient China takes the most vital place. This article discusses religious sects that led people to perfection and the spread of Buddhism in Ancient China in the Middle Ages. It makes sense for younger generation to make wise use of the discoveries and achievements of this state, to take from it what we need for the rest of our lives. The political situation was reflected in the spiritual structure of the period and gave rise to new doctrines such as religious Taoism and Chan-Buddhism.*

**Keywords**— sects, Buddhism, religious, priests, shamanistic services, sutras, temples, traditions, meditation.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Taoism was closely associated with the divine sects. The priests who ruled them, often from ordinary people, claimed the existence of revelations sent to them personally from heaven. The “heavenly masters” movement, which began in northern China, took up rapidly entering the south of the country with refugees from the IV century. By the end of the century, popular Taoism already had all the hallmarks of an organized religion. Preserving the elitist doctrine, it provided an opportunity for the general public to use a variety of shamanistic services in daily life. In this environment, the ideas surrounding the apocalypse were popular.

The date of Buddhism's arrival in China dates back to 65 BC, when the famous Baymas (White Horse) temple was built near the city of Loyan. According to legend, the first Buddhist compositions - sutras (a genre of works consisting of letters - thread, aphorisms) were brought to China from India. The fall of the Han dynasty in 220 weakened the position of the aristocracy, which was a supporter of traditional Confucianism, which had a positive effect on the spread of Buddhism in China. The ruling dynasties, which occupied many places, found their support in Buddhism. Thus, in the V century alone, 17,000 temples were built. The recognized centers of Buddhism were the cities of Loyang, Chanyang, and Nanjing. In China, Buddhism quickly adapted to national traditions. Buddhism spread here first in the divine manifestations of Nagarjuna and then in the teachings of Bodhidharma (The first half of the VI century BC, Chinese - "Damo"). Over time, Buddhism found a unique connection with Taoism and then with Confucianism, which allowed it to penetrate the body and blood of Chinese culture.

Thus, Buddhism was originally accepted as a form of Taoism in China. By the VI century, Buddhism had become the dominant ideological movement in China and gained the status of a state religion. Buddhist priests became large landowners. Together with Confucianism and Taoism, Buddhism formed a syncretic unity of the "three religions," in which each doctrine complements the other two religions.

In the second half of the VI century, the main schools of Chinese Buddhism were formed, which influenced the Buddhist traditions of the entire Far East. Among them, the chan-tsun schools are the most common, which promote a view of the world as a perfect whole and emphasize that all living beings can be preserved in this life. Formed at the end of the 6th century, the Amitabha Buddhist school, which promised salvation by faith, has a great influence to this day. This doctrine, which can understand the universe and promises a better destiny for man after death, does not require knowledge of the sutras and the performance of complex religious rites, and is called "meditation on the Buddha," the pronunciation of the name Amitabha only by faith did that man could be reborn in the glorious kingdom.

A new page in the history of Chan-Buddhism in China belongs to the sixth patriarch, Hueynena begins with activity (638-713). He is the founder of the southern chan school, on the basis of which it is impossible to approach it gradually, he followed the principle of "sudden enlightenment." Xueynena is the author of the famous “Altar Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch,” which is one of the most important sacred texts of Chan Buddhism.

Instead of trying to clear mind, Hueynena taught that one should only be given freedom because consciousness is not something that can be possessed. Free mind is about leaving the flow of thoughts and impressions, giving them a chance to go and go, not interfering in their work, not squeezing and holding them. After Hueynena's death, the school was divided into two directions - North and South. The latter managed to unite around the teachings of Hueynena and became a leader in the chan tradition.

From the middle of the VIII century the practice of "questions and answers" (venda, Japanese-mondo) began in the temples of this school. Usually, the teacher gave an unexpected, illogical answer to a student's question. The answer could be given both by gestures (stroke, finger lifting) and by screaming. The main materials for questions and answers were stories from the lives of

chan patriarchs. Many of these collections have been passed down from generation to generation. The two most famous collections were collected in the XI-XIII centuries: "Temple without Gates" and "Inscriptions on the Rock".

Until the middle of the IX century, Buddhism enjoyed the patronage of the imperial court. In 845, Emperor U Szun began a severe persecution of Buddhism in order to destroy the economic power and independence of the Buddhist monasteries and reduce their number. Soon, Buddhism in China began to decline slowly but steadily, merging with the popular religion.

Folk religion was born in the XI century from an alloy of ancestral worship, sacrifice of spirits, belief in ghosts and demons, divination, mediation, Buddhism's concepts of karma and reincarnation, as well as the Taoist doctrine of the hierarchy of Gods. This religion did not have professional priests at first and to this day. The cost of maintaining the temples was covered by the locals. Almost all gods are spirits of dead godly people. At the head of the hierarchy of the gods is the Nephrite ruler (Yu Di). Demons, the spirits of people who have died in violent death, oppose the gods. Their exile is a basic ritual of religion. In the name of some powerful gods, the mediator writes an inscription on the amulet, which is an order to the evil forces to leave the body immediately. After reading aloud, it is lit. Smoke is believed to carry a message to heaven.

Concerned that Buddhism was becoming increasingly popular, some officials and thinkers set out to create a new Confucian philosophy. They adopted the ideas of Taoism and Buddhism and united them into a new system in which Confucian values prevailed. The most famous new Confucian was Zhu Xi (1130–1200). He stressed that the task of every person is to fill life with meaning and order, to strengthen them and to help regulate the family, society and the state. Such a combination of personal self-improvement and social responsibility - neo-Confucianism - appealed to the government. The stability of society was directly related to everyone's commitment to a social role. Later, in the XIV century, the government ordered Zhu Xi's interpretation of Confucian classics to be the basis of the state examination program. Since then, every educated person has had to study them.

## 2. REFERENCES

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