

## THE PATH OF SPIRITUAL TRANSGRESSION IN TAOIST SPIRITUAL PRACTICES



### **Leonid Mozgovoy**

*Donbass State  
Pedagogical University  
Phd in philosophy Professor, the director  
of the department of philosophy,  
socio-political and legal sciences,  
Sloviansk, Ukraine*



### **Yulia Butko**

*Donbass State  
Pedagogical University  
Senior Lecturer of the Department  
of philosophy  
socio-political and legal sciences,  
Sloviansk, Ukraine*

**Abstract.** The article deals with the spiritual practices of Taoism. It is established that the spiritual path in Taoism has the ultimate goal - the attainment of eternal, indestructible personality through meditative transformation and the erection of lower mental forces to their higher states. To achieve this, the Taoist practices special practices that include, in addition to the techniques of meditative contemplation, and various gymnastic, respiratory and similar exercises, as well as (on a significant part of their history) - laboratory ("external") alchemy. Among the spiritual practices of Taoism the main thing is meditation, which has little in common with those or other external methods.

The topic of transgression acquires anthropomistic processing in the field of the history of philosophy, since it represents the original version of existence and metaanthropology and allows revealing the transgressive foundations of many social practices, as well as justifying the presence of certain destructive aspirations in a person and analyzing the ways of their expression.

**Keywords:** *concept, transgression, anthropomism, Taoism, mystical experience, hermeneutics.*

### **Formulation of the problem**

Taoism was and remains one of the leading directions of the religious and philosophical thought of traditional China. It was Taoism that played a decisive role in the integration and syncretization of various ideological currents of ancient and medieval China. On the one hand, Taoism acted as an intermediary between archaic religiosity preserved in China as a powerful stratum of folk beliefs,

and a "great tradition" of imperial culture, and on the other hand, fulfilled similar functions in the interaction of the actual Chinese cultural tradition and Buddhism that came from India, contributing to its entry into Chinese society and adaptation to its norms and values.

Throughout its history, Taoist philosophical ideas have had a strong influence on the most diverse aspects of the culture of traditional China, which can not be adequately understood without knowledge of the basic Taoist doctrines, Taoist philosophy and Taoist religious practices.

One of the central elements of the concept of spiritual meditation in the Taoist philosophy - the doctrine of immortality - has stimulated the creation and development of a special kind of practice, a complex set of psychophysical exercises aimed at self-improvement of the Taoist, for the return of man to world harmony, the merger with nature. All violations of the normal existence of things in nature (drought, flood, bad weather) are a consequence of the loss of harmony between man and nature. Injustice, violation of public order - also a violation of harmony, but in society. Harmony is achieved by human non-interference in the natural order of things. That is, a person must adhere to "non-action" as the fundamental principle of imitating the path of Tao. Therefore, Taoism approves of desertification - a life that gives man the power of spontaneous development of events.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** The subjects of the philosophy of Taoism were studied by such domestic and foreign scholars as V.S. Skrytuskaya, L.I. Yurchenko, AA Kostenko, B.S. Galimov, SP Kapitsa, AF Kudryashev, MS Kunafin, N.O. Lossky, AV Lukyanov, D.A.Nuriev, R.Yu. Rahmatullin, AI Selivanov, SN Semenov, A.U. Wats, VN Finagents, B.C. Khaziev, K.G. Jung et al. However, it should be noted that there is a lack of extensive national specialized studies of the philosophy of Taoism. The lack of such research leads to the need to fill existing gaps in scientific doctrine and conduct specialized research on this issue.

**The purpose of the article** is to study the doctrine of self-perfection of man in Taoism, to identify the place and significance of this doctrine in it.

#### **Research methodology**

During this research we basically relied on the historical and philosophical analysis of the concept of spiritual transgression in Taoist anthropomorphism. In our opinion, the history of philosophy - this is not only a generalizing picture of centuries-old development of human thought. This is another story of individual philosophical currents, schools and problems. Independent and irreplaceable form of scientific research, through which this story is comprehended, is a historical and philosophical analysis.

Also, an analytical method of research was used to review the philosophical and anthropological and cultural-historical material in determining the theoretical and methodological foundations of the study);

#### **The main material.**

Taoism - one of the leading religious and philosophical currents of China - arose

simultaneously with Confucianism (second half of the 1st millennium BC). Its founder is considered by the ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu, the information about which has survived from the legends. According to legend, the mother wore it for several decades, giving birth to the old one (hence the name: Lao Tzu). The content of the leading idea of Taoism lies in the fact that nature, society, each person individually obey not Heaven, but the universal law - Tao, which put order in the chaos of things. Violation of this order causes their abnormal condition. This is especially true in the life of a society when a foolish ruler does not adhere to the "path of Tao." The Tao is not a deity, but something close to reason, nature, path, or law. It is not personified, but precedes all creatures. The Tao is the very beginning of all things, including the sky, everything begins with it, and everything ends with it, it regulates everything that exists. This is the general law of nature, the source of material and spiritual being, their purpose. Tao can not be perceived directly, it is beyond the senses of a person. Therefore, everything that a person feels is not a tao, but only his manifestation. Cognition of Tao can only be given by the Tao itself [4].

According to this doctrine, it is extremely important for a person to become on the way of understanding the essence, living in accordance with his requirements. So it will be good for both people and for the state. Tao's knowledge is due to the consequences of his actions, and they are manifested through "virtue." Where it is, Dao acts, who is virtuous, who performs the law of Tao. Through the imitation of the path of the Tao, the return of man to world harmony, the

merger with nature. All violations of the normal existence of things in nature (drought, flood, bad weather) are a consequence of the loss of harmony between man and nature. Injustice, violation of public order - also a violation of harmony, but in society. Harmony is achieved by human non-interference in the natural order of things. That is, a person must adhere to "non-action" as the fundamental principle of imitating the path of Tao. Therefore, Taoism approves of desertification - a life that gives man the power of spontaneous development of events. Taoism for a long time acted only as a philosophical concept. The idea of Tao more or less accurately reflects the universal connection of phenomena and things of the objective world. This idea leads to an understanding of causality, to the recognition of the objectivity of the laws of the world. However, Tao was interpreted also as the spiritual basis of things. Therefore, the philosophy of Taoism can not be considered entirely due either to materialism, or to idealism. Inaudible in Taoism and the idea of supernatural.

The idea of immortality and eternal youth, longevity occupies a significant place in the Taoist doctrine. According to Taoism, man is the object of the influence of 33 thousand spirits, which bring longevity through proclamation, divination, etc. [1]. For this purpose and special physical exercises, systems of breathing, food rations, covered with Taoist mysticism. Immortality is also the subject of Taoist mythology. It refers to the immortal saints whose earthly life was full of miracles. These saints knew the magical means of immortality, secret formulas and spells, which provided them with transformation into eternal spirits. There is little information about their integrity and high morality, since the main role in their acquisition of immortality belongs to the knowledge of magic.

The path to the development of primitive nature and vitality is "self-improvement" (Xu Shen). The latter is carried out mainly through spiritual meditation and has little in common with those or other external methods (for example, respiratory exercises). The purpose of perfection is the attainment of eternal, indestructible personality, and its means - the meditative transformation and the erection of lower mental forces to their higher states. In this way, the isolation of the individual

overcomes and establishes its strong connection with space and society.

The meaning of meditation is to exclude any possibility of external influence on both the body and the mind, and develop the ability to listen.

Meditation should be done two or three times a day for at least half an hour ("burning time of a smoking stick"); In addition, you should read the book of the teacher's instructions every day [3].

Spiritual perfection under the direction of the "Reverend Teacher" (da tsun) is supplemented by guidelines of a more general, philosophical meaning, in which the mentor of the newcomers (Xue Chang) clarifies the principles of spiritual perfection.

The return to the original nature is achieved not by the assimilation of some moral principles, the fulfillment of moral obligations, the curtailment of the natural beginning in man, but, on the contrary, through the liberation from excessive, excessive, and therefore unnatural desires and passions (from the thirst for glory, wealth, power, malice and envy, etc.).

According to the Taoist notions, a person can achieve enlightenment only if her deepest forces awaken in her, and the whole person, body and soul, undergoes transformation. This process - both physical and spiritual. For the body must have the vital force through which the spiritual, immortal man is born [2].

The enlightened man operates at that point of the cosmos that was set aside for it; "It affects without conscious intention," it is "empty" of all qualities, united with the world, its process and life and its general basis, because it is now outside the physical space itself [5]. Over the centuries, different aspects and schools of Daoism have favored different modes of sacralization and identity formation, each placing its key emphasis on one pattern and paying less attention to the others. Thinkers or literati Daoists, often working in the wake of Laozi and Zhuangzi, thus have opted to formulate belief systems, yet they were also committed to their inspiring models and their myths and followed regimens of ritually formalized self-cultivation to enhance the philosophers' concepts in their lives. The members of the early movements, Great Peace and Celestial Masters, focused on ritual patterns and behavioral models, but they also had a clear belief system – including a new level of transcendence that allowed them to

experiment with new social forms and ethnic integration—and required a strong commitment of members to the group, as expressed in sexual rites and the use of confession rather than medicine to heal diseases.

Throughout history, Daoist communities have been open to others and have welcomed outsiders and non-Daoist ways. Daoist temples, therefore, often were and are community temples; Daoist offerings have included blood sacrifices in adaptation of popular practices; Daoist hand gestures and incantations have integrated Buddhist mudras and mantras; Daoist rituals of salvation of the dead have been similar to Buddhist and popular practices; and even the uniquely Daoist practice of sending announcements, petitions, and memorials to the To delineate a Daoist identity through ritual, scholars must examine the rites for their uniquely Daoist aspects. Thus, for example, Daoist ritual gestures can be

described as unique in that the different parts of the hand are correlated with different aspects of the cosmos, and even though the gesture may have an Indian name and imitate Buddhism, its cosmic meaning and impact on the universe are strictly Daoist. Similarly, there may be offerings of pigs and other animals during a Daoist *jiao*, but they are placed far away from the most holy activity. The ritual banquet, moreover, in Buddhism enacts the welcome that a host extends to his or her guest; in Daoism it is an audience with the celestials. And, most importantly, the Daoist priest becomes, for the duration of the ritual, a celestial officer, his or her task the conveyance of formal orders to the heavenly administration. In all these ways of forming Daoist identity, specific concepts, images, metaphors, and symbols play a pervasive role, constructing a valid network of ideas and a flow of narrative to show how to be Daoist in this world.

## Conclusions

The doctrine of self-improvement of man is one of the most important places in Taoism. According to Taoist doctrine, it is through self-perfection, which is the application of special meditative methods, the return of man to the original nature, which is a prerequisite for the establishment and maintenance of order in the world - both physical and psychological.

Taoists have always looked at the human body as a microcosm, a small universe. But the world, according to the classical Chinese representations, is eternal, and therefore, the eternal should be the body-microcosm - the likeness of this world. The achievement of this state, lost due to the retreat of the human race from the Tao-Path of the universe, is aimed primarily at the practical methods of the Taoist hermits and alchemists. In addition, the triads of deities of civic fields have an important function-creative, life-supporting. They perform it by bringing energy qi in the human body to proper circulation.

## References

1. Ge Hun. Baopuzhi ney nyan tszyaoshi (Ezotericheskie glavyi «Baopuzhi» s kommentariyami). Pekin, 1985. — 284 s.
2. DaoDeTszin / Pod red. V.V.Antonova; Hud. M.Shtil. — Odessa: «New Atlanteans», 2008. — 60 s.
3. Topchinov E.A. Religii mira: Opyit zappedelnogo (psihotehnika i tpsnepsonalnyie sostoyaniya). — SanktPeterburg: Tsentp «Petepbypgskoe Vostokovedenie», 1998. — 384 s.
4. Filonov S.V. Zolotyie knigi i nefritovyie pismena. Daosskie pismennyie pamyatniki III - VI vv. (Orientalia) - 2011. — 660 s
5. Patalon M. On the possibility of judais m and taoism convergence in the future of educatio nal and social development \ \ Ukrainian professional education. 2017. N1. Режим доступу: [https://zenodo.org/record/888311#.WnBxCq5I\\_IU](https://zenodo.org/record/888311#.WnBxCq5I_IU)
6. Lippens R., Hardie-Bick J. Short Editorial Introduction: Transcendence and Transgression // Springer Science + Business Media. Special Issue, 2017. P. 347– 349.