

Formation of the Religion Ch'üan-chên-chiao (全真教)

by Noritada KUBO

Ch'üan-chên-chiao was formed about the middle of the twelfth century somewhat later than the formation of the religion Chên-tai-tao-chiao in North China under the Chin dynasty. It was a new sect of the Taoistic group Three Taoistic group including the sect concerned, which newly appeared during the same era, were based upon a kind of amalgamation of three ideas of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Particularly the Ch'üan-chên-chiao imbibed elements of Zen-Buddhism in such a degree that some scholars would not call it a sect of Taoism.

Really, the sect of the Ch'üan-chên-chiao carried with it a character quite different from the other sects that appeared previously. It is true that the sect concerned was very like Zen-Buddhism as it practised *zazen*, the characteristic approach of which is in specific monastic trainings such as pilgrimages and meditations leading to the self-enlightenment. Further, it frequently used Mahāyāna Buddhistic terms. And also there was great similarity between both regarding their aim and mentality. It might well be reasonable to say that seemingly it is not a sect of Taoism.

But the doctrines of authoritative persons in its commencement together with the founder will betray the inadequacy of the theory that the sect was not Taoistic. That is, the founder made Tao-tê-ching a fundamental doctrine and wanted to succeed Lao-tzu's intention or intended to create a doctrinal system according to the ideas that Lao-tzu conceived. It is said that Tung-hua-ti-chün who was regarded as the founder was taught by Lao-tzu. There comes the inference that it was believed in the sect of Ch'üan-chên-chiao that a successor of Lao-tzu was Tung-hua-ti-chün and the latter was the founder of

the sect. We find in the sect some doctrines and attitudes consistent with the meaning of Tao-tê-ching and a certain evidence as well that Tai-shang-lao-chün, an embodiment of a god, was an object of adoration. The supreme god of the sect is not known well. Probably he was Yüan-shih-fien-tsun who was then taken for the supreme god of Taoism. The reason why the monks of the sect were strictly requested to be clean and tranquil (清靜) was to obey the commandments of Ch'ing-ching which had even been respected. In the same manner Yin-fu-ching was also regarded very important. The faithful were advised to read only these two volumes at least.

As all of these show, the sect in question was intimately connected with the Taoism existing although it was really so much influenced by Zen-Buddhism. Therefore the present writer would say it will be wrong to think that the sect concerned is not one of Taoism.

It seems the founder of the sect thought of making a new sect by implanting new elements to the traditional Taoism and thereby purifying its doctrines or canceling the magical elements out of them. His motive seems to the author as follows. He got ever frustrated, absorbed himself in life problems, tried to be saved by the belief of Taoism, but he did not succeed. Then he thought of the way of solution by depending upon the elements of Zen-Buddhism, also, which he had ever studied. By this he succeeded anyhow. After this he wanted to save the people fallen in the same frustration by the same way of solution. This is the author's surmise about how and why the sect Ch'üan-chên-chiao appeared.